

Monergism



A GUIDE TO
GODLINESS

A TREATISE OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE

JOHN DOWNNAME



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Or a Treatise of a Christian Life

Showing the duties wherein it Consisteth, the helps Enabling; and the Reasons persuading unto it ye Impediments hindering ye Practice of it, and the best means to Remove them; Whereunto are added diverse Prayers.

By JOHN DOWNAME

Bachelor in Divinity, and Minister of God's Word.

Jeremiah. 6. 16.

Ask for the old paths, where is ye Good way, and walk therein, and you shall find Rest for your Souls.

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Editor's Note - During the 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> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in antiquated script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

To the most Reverend Father in God,

George, by God's providence, Archbishop of Canterbury his grace, primate of all England, and metropolitan, and one of his majesty's most honorable privy council, J.D. Wisheth all happiness, temporal and eternal.

Seeing there is nothing (most Reverend) so highly to be esteemed, or so much to be desired of all Christians, as the glory of God in the salvation of his people, as being the principal and chief end of our creation and being, of our preservation and continuing in the world; therefore it behooveth all men, who would not fail of their end, and so live in vain, in their several callings wherein God hath placed them, to have this always in their eye, as their chief mark, and to propound it as the principal scope of all their actions, using all good means whereby it may be furthered and advanced. As Princes and Magistrates, by enacting good laws, and seeing them duly executed, making their own lives (as it were) rules of that obedience which they require of the people, and lively examples and patterns for their imitation. Ministers, by leading those which are committed unto their charge, in the ways of truth and godliness, not only by their preaching and writing, instruction, admonition, persuasion and exhortation, but also by practicing those duties which they teach others, and shining before them in the light of a godly life. Finally, the people, by yielding their cheerful obedience to the godly laws of Governors, and by embracing the found and profitable doctrine, and imitating the Christian and religious examples of their godly Teachers. The consideration whereof hath moved me to employ my

talent both by preaching and writing, for the advancing (as much as in me lieth) the glory of my great Lord and Master, and the good and salvation of my fellow servants; or rather, to cast my mite into the Churches treasury, hoping that he will accept it, though not in its own value and worth, yet because I have desired to be faithful in a little, and willing in my penury to offer unto him all that I have. And studying how I might best employ my pains and endeavors for the advancing of the former ends, I could find no one part of Divinity more profitable, in these times, for me to spend my strength upon, then that which consisteth more in experience and practice, then in theory and speculation; and more principally tendeth to the sanctification of the heart, then the informing of the judgment and the increasing of knowledge; and to the stirring up of all to the practice of that they know in the duties of a godly life, and in bringing forth the fruits of faith in new obedience; then to fit them for discourse. For as in the civil state we need not so much to have new laws enacted, as to have the old executed, and observed; nor to have these cleared to the understanding by the learned in that Science, as to have them obeyed and practiced by all estates and conditions; so in the Church, knowledge so far exceedeth our obedience (not that which is saving and experimental, which is never severed from use and practice, but that which is curious and useless) that we more need all good helps to work that we have into our hearts, for the inflaming of them with fervent zeal and true devotion, then to have a greater measure of this light infused into our heads, which being destitute of feeling and practice, in which the power of godliness chiefly consisteth, doth (as the Apostle speaketh) but puff us up, and maketh us rather more learned, then more godly and religious. Again, seeing the Lord, above all other parts, requireth the heart, as being the first mover and chief agent in this little world of man, which ordereth and disposeth of all the rest, me thinks, his Ambassadors cannot better spend their pains, then in wooing and winning, espousing and uniting them unto him in those inviolable and inseparable bonds of fervent love and devout zeal; and in persuading and enabling men to approve the sincerity of these holy affections, in their godly lives and virtuous actions Finally, these

discourses of practical Divinity tending to stir up devotion, and to excite men to the duties of a godly life, are most fit and necessary for these times. First, because the world is already full of such books as do fully handle the Doctrine of Divinity in all the points and parts of it, and also of learned controversies wherein the truth is sufficiently defended, and all errors, which do oppose it, refuted and refelled. Secondly, because our long peace and prosperity have much cooled and quenched the fervor of our zeal and devotion, and have caused us (contenting ourselves with some cold formalities, and slight profession) to neglect the sincere practice of those substantial duties which are required to a godly and Christian life. Lastly, because in these declining times, wherein many men waxing weary of the Truth, and being gluttied with long feeding on the spiritual Manna, do desire to return to the fleshpots of Egypt, and for carnal respects do fearfully relapse into Popery and superstition; there is no means more effectual to stay them from apostasy and backsliding, then that first, by catechizing they should be soundly grounded in the knowledge of the Truth which we profess (In which regard we have just cause to praise God for our Sovereigns care in reviving this holy exercise, which hath long languished in many places through careless neglect) And secondly, that being by this means enlightened in the knowledge of the Truth, they have it by powerful persuasions wrought into their hearts and affections, that they may also practice it in their lives and conversations, without which, all other means will be ineffectual, either for the enlightening of the mind with saving knowledge, or the inclining of the will to embrace it, and to continue firm and resolute against errors and heresies. For whereas sound and saving knowledge of the truth, and the constant acknowledgement and profession of it, are the gifts of God, which none can attain unto, but those upon whom he pleaseth to bestow them; he vouchsafeth these graces unto those alone who love his Truth, and bring forth the fruits of it in their holy practice. To these only this rich talent of truth is entrusted; to these it is doubled and redoubled, who make best use of it for the glory of him that gave it, by causing it to shine in their lives and conversations. As we see in the example of David, who became wiser and of greater understanding then the Ancient, yea

then his Teachers, because he kept God's Precepts. Upon these alone is bestowed the gift of discerning between the saving Truth, and the traditions and precepts of men; according to that of our Savior, If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, &c. As for them, who hide this rich talent without use, the Lord will deprive them of it, and give them over to their own ignorance and errors. And those who allow a place for it only in their heads, and will afford it no room in their hearts, by loving, embracing and practicing it, it is just with God to send them strong delusions, that they should believe lies, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. As we see in the example of many in these times, who having been enlightened with the knowledge of true Religion, have become a prey to Priests and Jesuits; and (though otherwise of good understanding) have been seduced and persuaded to believe the most sottish absurdities in all Popery, of which there can be given no other reason than this, that they did not love the light of God's Truth, nor were careful to walk by it in an holy conversation, but resolved to continue in such profane and wicked courses, even against knowledge and conscience, as would suffer them to find no shadow of peace and comfort in the Doctrine of the Truth; and therefore they have sought it in popish dispensations, and absolutions, which allow them, after that they have, with the harlot in the Proverbs, wiped their mouths, to return again to their former uncleanness; in which regard I doubt not to affirm, that whereas error and ignorance do make one Papist; loose licentiousness and resolved profaneness do make many. Finally, whereas those who have the knowledge of the truth only seated in their brains, and have no feeling of the power and efficacy of it, for the sanctifying of their hearts, and the reforming of their lives, are easily seduced with cunning sophistry, when as they are puzzled with subtle arguments which they are not able to answer: they contrariwise who have found and felt in themselves the efficacy of truth, for the changing of their minds and hearts, and the renewing of their lives, will never forsake it, but will embrace and profess it unto the death, and cheerfully seal it with their blood, when for want of learning and Art, they are not able to defend it against the subtle

objections and cunning sophistry of their adversaries, As we see in the example of many of the holy Martyrs, who being unlettered, have maintained the truth in the impregnable fort of their hearts, when their heads have been too weak to preserve it from violence. In which regard it were much to be desired, that all Ministers, who have the charge of souls committed unto them, would be careful, after that by catechizing they have thoroughly grounded their people in the sound knowledge of the truth, in the next place, to work it into their hearts and affections, and to persuade them unto an holy practice of it in their lives and conversations, both by shining before them in their light of doctrine, and also of an holy example; by the one, showing unto them the way of truth, and by the other, leading them in it like good guides, as it were by the hand. At which marks as I have aimed in the whole course of my Ministry, both by preaching and writing; so especially in these my present labors; the which I have made bold to dedicate unto your Grace; that they may remain unto the world, as a testimony how much I love and honor you, as being in these perilous times, a chief pillar under his Majesty, to uphold the sincere truth of Religion, against all errors, novelties and heresies which otherwise were likely to grow too fast amongst us; and also a principal Patron of sound and solid preaching, which you are ready upon all occasions to countenance both with your authority, and also by your painful practice; as on the other side, to decry, as much as in you lieth, that vain or vanity of such Preachers, which only seek to preach themselves, by making ostentation of their wit, learning and reading, without any care to speak unto the capacity of the people, as though their main end were rather to make the excellency of their gifts known, for their own praise or preferment, then to communicate them unto others, to the Glory of God that gave them, or the good of their fellow servants, for whose sake they were entrusted unto them. The Lord long continue your Grace to be a singular instrument of his glory, by maintaining the purity and practice of his true Religion in his Church, to the joy of all that wish well to Zion, and the increasing of your own glory and happiness in the life to come.

Your Graces humbly devoted in all Christian duty and service,

JOHN DOWNAME.

To the Christian Reader.

It is the duty (Christian Reader) of all who desire to approve themselves faithful subjects and servants to our great Lord and Sovereign, that they consecrate themselves wholly unto his service, not only in the spiritual Warfare, by fighting his battles, even unto the death, against the many and mighty enemies of his glory and our salvation; but also in the time of peace, by doing his will, and performing all holy duties of his service, which in his Word he requireth of them. And therefore as I have endeavored heretofore (according to the measure of grace received) to prepare and fit all those who vouchsafe to peruse my poor labors, that they may perform the duties of valiant Soldiers, in my Books of the Christian Warfare: so perceiving that those my pains have much above their worth found good acceptance with all those that fear God; I have now also been encouraged to undertake the other, and not only to describe the duties of a godly life, in which we ought to serve our Lord and Master, but also to show the means whereby we may be enabled hereunto, and how we may remove the impediments which otherwise might hinder us from entering into, or proceeding in the ways of godliness. The which my labors, if they prove as profitable to those that read them, as they have been painful unto me in framing and composing them, I shall think myself abundantly recompensed, and much more rejoice when I see the harvest of my hopes, then ever I had cause to sigh and groan, through weariness in my laborious seed-time. Of which, though I should fail (as I hope I shall not) yet, as it is said of Virtue, that it always bringeth a reward with it, so may

I truly say of these my labors; out of which, so much profit, comfort, and contentment have accrued unto myself, that I should have no just cause to repent for the scantness of my reward, although no other fruit should spring from them. But if I be not deceived (as we are apt to be no less blinded in judging of our spiritual and mental, then of our natural and corporal births) these my present labors will prove no less profitable unto all that peruse them, then any of the former. Yea, if my affection corrupting my judgment, doth not cause me to look upon them (like Fathers, upon the children of their old age) with an over-partial eye, they are in some respects to be preferred before any of the other, both because the subject on which they entreat, hath the privilege of excellency and necessity, as being the main duties of Christianity, which are to be performed throughout the whole course of our lives; and also because they generally concern all sorts of men, who think themselves bound to do God any service, or to carry themselves so, as that their works and ways may be accepted of him. If any man shall think that I have described the duties of a godly life with more strictness, and in greater perfection, then any can attain unto in this state of imperfection, and so have required more of others, then I can any ways be able to perform myself; let him know, that the work must be fitted to the rule, and not the rule to the work, and that this must be straight and perfect, although by reason of the crookedness of the matter or stuff, no work-man is able to frame it so, but that it will in many places decline and swerve from it. And though the mark of perfection be so small, and so far out of our reach, that none in this life can hit it; yet must it be set before us, and we must strive to shoot at it, as near as we can; seeing they are more likely to have the prize of the best game, who aim at it, then those who look another way. For myself, none can accuse me of so many and great imperfections in my course and practice of these duties, as I am ready to charge myself within the court of mine own conscience; and yet if I would not belie the grace of God in me, I must profess, that I do labor to perform that myself which I propound unto others; and though I cannot attain to the goal of perfection, as I have here described it out of God's Word, yet bewailing my stiffness and lameness in running

the Race, I endeavor and press (in some measure) towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ; and no more than this do I require of others. Now, because we cannot grow in grace and godliness, without the assistance of God's Spirit, and this cannot be had, unless we sue and seek for it; and because also godliness in a great part consisteth in pouring forth our souls before God in humble and hearty, frequent and fervent prayers, therefore lest anything which is necessary, should be wanting to this Treatise, I have in the end of it set down diverse forms, which may serve either for the use of weak Christians, who cannot fit themselves with better, or for some direction to guide them in composing or conceiving others, according to their own particular occasions. If any man think them over-long and tedious, to him, I confess, they are so, (though there is scarce two amongst them that may not be treatably uttered in a quarter of an hour) and therefore I would not torture his devotion, by persuading him to rack and stretch it above its due length and strength; but rather I would advise, if he meet not with shorter Prayers, which better please him, that he divide both the Confessions and Petitions, with some mark of a Pen, so as he may use one half at one time, and the rest at another. And so (Christian Reader) I leave thee to the Lord, and his good blessing upon all thy studies and endeavors, only requesting these two things at thine hands; First, that as I have labored much in giving thee directions for the leading of a Christian life; so thou wilt also strive with all thine endeavor, to walk in this way revealed unto thee. And secondly, that if thou reap any fruit of my pains (as I doubt not thou wilt, if thou read to profit by them, constantly unto the end, and not here and there, by fits and snatches) thou wilt be pleased to afford me the benefit of thy Prayers, that together with thyself, I may continue and hold out unto the end, in the profession and practice of all Christian and holy duties; until having finished our course with joy, we do both of us receive the Crown of righteousness, which God of his free grace hath laid up for us, and for all those who love his appearing.

Octob. 16.1622.

Thine in the Lord Jesus our Head and Savior, J. D.

THE FIRST BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

Containing the grounds and fundamental graces whereby it is supported.

CHAPTER I.

Containing the Preface to the following Treatise, which showeth the excellency, profit and necessity of the subject matter therein handled.

Sect. 1 - That the end of everything is to be preferred before the means which are destinated unto it.

According to the rules of reason, we esteem the end of all things to be the best, and to be preferred before the things which are destinated to the achieving of it; and everything as it doth more or less conduce hereunto, so doth it gain or lose a higher place in the work of excellency; because that which advanceth the end, most furthereth that which is most to be desired, namely, perfection and fruition. Thus the end of Physic is health, and therefore, that Physic is to be esteemed best, which most soundly and surely confirmeth or recovereth it. The end of Law is Justice, that every man may quietly

enjoy his own, and therefore, that Law and practice of it, is to be chiefly esteemed (not which through the help of Sophistical wit and audacious skill, filleth the Lawyers purse, by protracting suites, and hindering or delaying the course of Justice, but) which best helpeth the Client to the speediest and surest recovery of his right. The end of War is Peace, and therefore, that war to be preferred, which being just, always endeth in such a peace as is sure, secure and permanent. Thus man, being the end of all unreasonable creatures in the heavens and earth, they being made for his use and benefit, is in this regard to be advanced in excellency above them all; and every creature to be esteemed more or less good; as they more or less tend to man's benefit and blessedness. And finally, because Almighty God is the supreme end, he is also the chief Good, and all creatures to be esteemed in worth and excellency, as they most serve for the magnifying of their Lord and Creator, and the advancement of his glory for which end they have their being.

Sect. 2 - That the practice of Religion and godliness is to be preferred before the theory and bare knowledge of it.

And thus the end of all arts and sciences is the practice of them, and therefore the habit of skill showed in the exercise of the arts-man, is much to be preferred, because it is the end of theory and speculation. And as this is to be confessed in all other arts, so cannot it be denied of Divinity and Religion, the practice whereof doth in excellency surmount the knowledge and theory, as being the main end whereunto it tendeth. For to what purpose do men spend their spirits, and tire their wits, in discerning the light of truth, if they do not use the benefit of it to direct them in all their ways? Why do they rise betimes to see the Sun, if they mean to sit idly still and do nothing, which better suiteth with palpable and Egyptian darkness? Why do they with such care and labor, heap up these rich treasures of learning and knowledge, if (miser-like) they only look upon them, and never make use of them for the benefit of themselves and

others? Why do they spend their whole lives in sowing the seed, and never reap the crop? Or having brought in the harvest, and filled their barns and granaries: what good will all this do them, if they let it there must and mold, and never eat the fruit of their labors? How vain therefore is their practice, who spend all their strength in polemical disputes, to evince error, and find out the truth, if when they have found it, they will not walk in this light, nor let it be the guide of their lives? Like herein to foolish boys, who strive for a ball, which when they have gotten with much sweat, and have no competitor to contend further for it, they cast into a corner with careless neglect; or having fought even unto blood, to beat others off a Mole hill, as from a fort of strength, do make no further use of it when they have gotten quiet possession? How fruitless are the labors of such Pastors and Preachers, who spend all their time in painful studies, to barrel up that knowledge, which they mean never to use, propounding no other end of their knowledge but to know, and as though they envied all others their esteemed Jewel, never communicate it by painful preaching unto their people; who through their negligence have no more use of their gifts, then poor neighbors have of a misers treasure, which is fast locked up from them in their barred chests; nor are more edified by their knowledge, then if they were ignorant idiots, and destitute of all learning? Herein also rich misers indeed, in that they do not only deprive others of the use of their wealth, but defraud their own souls of the benefit of it, letting it rust without the use and practice of it in a godly life; whereby as they should shine unto others by a good example; so they should make their own calling and election sure, and strengthen their faith in the assurance of eternal blessedness, which is not promised to them that only know, but also do the will of their Master? Finally, how bootless and vain is the practice of such professors of Religion among the people, who in their diligence to hear Sermons, and read the Scriptures, take care only to enlighten their brains with knowledge, which they wholly spend in proud disputes and lavish discourse, but never suffer it to descend into their hearts, to warm and cherrish any holy affections, nor to shine out unto others in the light of a godly

life, to the glory of God, and edification of their brethren by their godly example?

Sect. 3 - That the practice of godliness is an infallible sign of the sincerity of our knowledge and profession.

Again, as the practice of all Christian duties in a godly life, is to be preferred before knowledge and profession of Religion; so is it the sign and seal whereby we may know if our knowledge be sound and saving, and our profession in truth and without hypocrisy. For an idle and fruitless knowledge furthereth not our salvation, but rather leaveth us without excuse, aggravateth our sins, and increaseth our condemnation: for they are not blessed, who know the greatest mysteries of Christ's Kingdom, but they who make a holy use of what they know; not they that know these things (saith our Savior) but they who do them: not they that hear the Word only, but they who keep it, are blessed. Not the hearers of the Law, but the doers thereof are justified, saith the Apostle Paul. And the Apostle James exhorteth us to be not only hearers of the Word, but doers also, seeing otherwise we shall but deceive ourselves, and utterly lose all the fruit of our labors. Without which practice, knowledge puffeth up: not making us solidly wise, but (like bladders filled with wind) easily tossed up and down at the pleasure of those who extol us with their praises: and is no Christian knowledge, though it comprehend the greatest mysteries of Christianity, seeing we truly know only what we practice. For as the Apostle John, teaching us to examine the truth of our knowledge, saith, Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. And he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Finally, the more we know, the more grievous shall our sin and punishment be, if we do not practice it; For the servant that knoweth his masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Our profession likewise, without this practice, is but hypocritical, making us to resemble the stony ground, which brought forth a fair green blade,

but no fruit to due maturity; like the fig-tree, which having leaves but no figs, was accursed; like the tree in the Garden, which cumbering the ground with its fruitless presence, was threatened to be cut down; like Glowworms, which have some luster and brightness, but no heat; seeing such Professors shine with some light of knowledge, but without all warmth of Christian charity. Neither is that pure Religion and undefiled before God, which like an empty barrel, maketh a great sound in an outward profession, but that which exerciseth itself in the duties of Christianity, as to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep a man's self unspotted of the world.

Sect. 4 - That the practice of godliness is the touch-stone of our faith.

Furthermore, the just do live by their faith, which doth ingraft them into Christ their life and righteousness; and a godly life is the touch-stone which discerneth a true and sincere faith, from that which is false and hypocritical. It is the sign of our spiritual union and incision; for they that are engrafted into the true Vine Christ, do bring forth much fruit; and they who do not, are either no branches at all, or such as are dead, and shall be cut off. It is the fruit which the tree of faith beareth, by which we may discern a living from a dead faith, and approve and manifest it unto others. It is the breath of this life of faith, and the operation of this faculty, whereby we may discern whether it be a living body, and lively sacrifice acceptable unto God; or a dead carcass, which hath only the show of a true body, but stinketh in his nostrils, when for an oblation we offer it unto him.

Sect. 5 - That though a godly life is not the cause, yet it is the way to everlasting happiness.

Finally, a godly life, though it do not merit everlasting happiness, with which it holdeth no proportion, yet it is the way that leadeth us

thereunto, in which, whoso travail, shall at the end of their journey surely attain to eternal blessedness. And they who neglect it, being quite out of the way, can never come unto that place of joy: For without holiness we shall never see God. If we have not our part in the first resurrection to newness of life, we shall have no part in the second, to glory and immortality, but living and dying dead in sin, the second death also will seize upon us. And if we walk not in this subordinate way of holiness and righteousness, which leadeth to life and happiness, we can have no part in the chief and principal way Jesus Christ, without whom there is no salvation: For as many as are in Christ, are new creatures; They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts; They that are baptized into him, are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life. They that are in Christ, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and to such only there is no condemnation. Finally, they that are engrafted into the true vine Jesus Christ, shall bring forth in him, the ripe and sweet Grapes of holiness and righteousness, and bearing fruit, shall be more and more purged by our heavenly Father, that they may daily increase in fruitfulness: So that there is no other way to assure us of Christ and his benefits, no other means to make our election and calling sure, then by adding one grace unto another, and bringing forth the fruits of them all in a Christian life and holy conversation.

Sect. 6 - That all God's Ministers should much enforce this doctrine and practice of a godly life.

All which, as it evidently showeth the excellency, profit, and necessity of walking in this way of holiness and righteousness, (as I shall more plentifully prove hereafter) so also how necessary and profitable it is for God's Ministers, who are appointed for guides unto others, that they do not only themselves walk in this way, and shine as lights and patterns of godliness in their holy and Christian conversation; but

also that they shine unto them in the light of their doctrine, teaching them the way which they should choose, and what the acceptable will of God is, unto which they should conform themselves in all holy obedience, persuading and exhorting them to go forward when they are dull and sluggish, that their words may (as the Wise man speaketh) serve for goads to hasten their speed; and admonishing and reproofing them when they leave this way, and wander in the by-ways of sin and wickedness, without which, the godly life of the Minister is not sufficient, and his exemplary actions but dumb signs, and oftentimes (through human frailty) erroneous patterns, if the Word preached do not give light and life unto them. In which regard, among diverse of my worthy and godly brethren, who have profitably labored in this Argument, and offered unto God their free-will offerings of great value, I likewise have adventured to cast my poor mite into this Treasury, that I may not only hereby more and more stir up and provoke myself to walk more carefully, conscionably, and cheerfully, in this path of piety, but also may, as much as lieth in me, both by word and writing, persuade many others to bear me company.

CHAPTER II.

Containing the definition of a godly life, whereby we may know what it is, and wherein it consisteth.

Sect. 1 - What a godly life is, both according to the Law, and also Gospel.

Now that we may more orderly proceed in handling of this Argument, I will first show what this godly life is, and what the duties are, which principally are required unto it; and then propound the

helps and means, whereby we may be persuaded to enter into this Christian course, and enabled to proceed in it conscionably and cheerfully. And first, if we define it in that legal perfection which God requireth: this godly life is an absolute conformity of all our actions, and whole conversation, unto the will of God, which is the perfect rule of holiness and righteousness, as it is revealed unto us in his Word, especially in the Decalogue or ten Commandments, unto which we cannot attain in this state of corruption and imperfection, seeing we are not perfectly regenerate, but are partly flesh, and partly Spirit, and have the relics of sin remaining in us, which as an heavy burden presseth us down in this way, and like fetters on our legs, so hindereth us, that we can but slowly and lamely proceed in our spiritual journey: as we may see in the example of the Apostle, who professeth that he could not do the good which he would, but the evil which he would not; and that whilst he was delighted in the Law of God, he found another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and leading him captive to the law of sin. Notwithstanding we are to walk by this rule, and in our desire and endeavor (as it were with an holy ambition) to aspire unto it; and though we cannot reach unto this Sun of perfection, yet we must choose it for our mark, and shoot towards it as high as we can, and be sorry and ashamed in ourselves, that we can shoot no higher; of which, we have the holy Apostle as a pattern for our imitation, who forgetting those things which were behind, namely, the former part of his race in the way of godliness, and reaching forth unto those things which were before, to wit, that Christian perfection, unto which he had not yet attained, did press towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God, in Jesus Christ. And this is that Evangelical and Son-like obedience, which God now under the Covenant of grace requireth of us, which if we labor to perform, he will accept of us in Christ, and remember our sins no more, but will spare us, as a man spareth his son who serveth him, accept of the will for the deed, and covering the imperfections of our obedience with Christ's perfect righteousness, and washing away the pollution and corruption of it, in his most precious blood, he will be well pleased with us, and approve of us, as though we had attained to perfect righteousness.

Sect. 2 - That a godly life, chiefly consisteth in Evangelical and filial obedience, and what this is.

And in this filial obedience doth that godly life principally consist, which we now entreat of: for it is nothing else but a fervent desire, sound resolution, and sincere endeavor, to conform our whole lives in all holy obedience to God's will, that we may please him in all things, and glorify his holy name by our Christian conversation; or if we would have a more full description of it: A godly life is the life of a Christian, who being regenerate, quickened, and illuminated by God's Spirit, and engrafted into Christ thereby, and by a lively faith, assuring him of God's love, and his own salvation, doth in love and thankfulness towards him, desire, resolve, and endeavor to please him in all things, by doing his will revealed in his Word, and to glorify his name, by walking before him, in the duties of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety, with faith; a pure heart, and good conscience all the days of his life. In which description, we are to consider two things. First, the person that leadeth this godly life, and secondly, the actions in this life performed by him; the person is first named, and then described by his state and properties. Concerning the first; he that leadeth this life, is the Christian only. For as for the life of Heathens and Pagans, seem it never so strict, just, and glorious, as of Socrates, Aristides, Cato, Seneca, and such like, it is void of all true godliness, and not accepted of God, because it is joined with ignorance of the true God, and Jesus Christ, idolatry, will-worship, infidelity, and all kind of heathenish impiety.

Sect. 3 - That the regenerate only can lead a godly life.

Neither do all that bear the name of Christians lead this godly life, but they who are so, not in name and profession only, but in deed and truth; that is, such only who are in that state, and qualified with

those properties which are set down in the former description. As first, that he be regenerate; for they that are unregenerate, cannot perform any duty of a godly life which is pleasing and acceptable to God, because being out of the Covenant, their persons, and consequently their actions are not accepted of him, but are the slaves of Satan, held captive to do his will; the children of wrath, and enemies unto God and his grace, dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore no more able to do the duties of holiness and righteousness, then a dead man is able to do the actions of the living. In which respect, the Apostle saith, that we are not of ourselves able to think a good thought, nor so much as to will that which is good, because it is God only which worketh in us both the will and the deed. Neither can we better our estate by our own strength; for as the Prophet teacheth us, as well may the Ethiopian change his blackness, and the Leopard his spots, as we do well, that are accustomed to do evil: So that the regenerate man alone can lead a godly life, or perform any duty acceptable unto God; for first Abel was accepted, and then his sacrifice: and our persons must first be sanctified, before they can please God by our works of holiness. For as in the ceremonial law, the touching of holy things did not sanctify and cleanse the polluted person, but the person polluted did make the holy things to become unclean, as Haggai speaketh; so the works, which in themselves materially are good and holy, do not sanctify the unregenerate man that doth them, but through the taint and pollution of his sin, they also are polluted and defiled. Now unto this regeneration two things are necessarily required. First, that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us: And secondly, the sanctifying and saving graces of the Spirit, which always do accompany it: for the Spirit of God is the Author of our regeneration, which begetteth us unto God, according to that of our Savior, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. And that of the Apostle; But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. It is the Spirit which mortifieth our sinful corruptions, by applying unto us the virtue of Christ's death, and so by destroying the kingdom of sin, raiseth us out of the state of death, and which giveth

unto us the spiritual life of grace, by applying unto us the virtue of Christ's resurrection, which enableth us to do the actions of the living. It is the Spirit that leadeth us into all truth, and hereby assureth us that we are the sons of God, seeing we perform unto him filial obedience: And therefore they who will walk in the ways of godliness, must have this holy Spirit to be their guide. They who would outwardly move in the actions of piety and righteousness, must have this inward cause to stir, strengthen, and support them: for as well may a blind man travail uncouth ways without a leader, or the body move without the soul, as we go in this Christian way, or do the works of God, unless his holy Spirit be our guide and strength. The which must move us in the first place, to labor earnestly to have this Spirit dwelling in us, and to use to this purpose, that powerful means of effectual prayer, seeing our heavenly Father hath promised to give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, as our Savior hath taught us.

Sect. 4 - That the Spirit of God is the Author of spiritual life.

And if we thus gain his company, and give him friendly entertainment when he dwelleth in us, possessing our vessels in sanctification and honor, that they may be fit Temples for this pure Majesty, and not vexing and grieving this holy Ghost, by quenching those good motions which he suggesteth unto us; then will not he be idle in us, but will direct and guide us in all our ways, and enable and strengthen us unto all Christian duties of holiness and righteousness; nor come alone to dwell in us, but accompanied with the sweet society of all sanctifying and saving graces. And first of all, he will quicken us in the life of grace, who were before dead in trespasses and sins, and give unto us spiritual motion in all holy actions: the which, though at first it be but weak, and scarcely to be discerned (like a child newly quickened in the womb) yet shall it increase by degrees, until we be strengthened for the spiritual birth, and grow up from age to age, and from strength to strength, unto a perfect man,

and unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, of which life the Spirit of God is the principal Author, according to that of the Apostle: If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal body, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you: without the which we cannot once move in the ways of godliness, nor after that we have begun, proceed or grow up unto any perfection. And therefore when we find ourselves dead and dull unto all good actions, we are earnestly to pray with David, that God will revive and quicken us by his grace and holy Spirit, that we may become active, and able to perform the duties of a Christian and holy life.

Sect. 5 - That the Spirit enlighteneth us in the ways of godliness.

Secondly, having given unto us this life of grace, he will in the next place indue us with spiritual light, and illuminate the blind eyes of our minds, that we may understand the will and ways of God revealed in his Word, and attain unto such a measure of saving knowledge, as may be sufficient to direct us in all our thoughts, words, and actions. And this is that voice of the Spirit, which in our conversion unto God, secretly whispereth in the ear of our minds, as it were behind us, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. This is that day-spring, which the Sun of righteousness with his arising hath caused to appear and visit us, to give light unto us, who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. This is that Comforter which our Savior promised to send after his resurrection, who should lead his Disciples, and with them, all the faithful into all truth. This is that grace of God, which hath appeared, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is that holy ointment and precious eye-salve, which openeth and illighteneth the blind eyes of our minds, that we may know all things appertaining to our salvation; so as we need no Tutor to teach us any other doctrine,

but as the same anointing hath taught us of all things. Whereof he is called the Spirit of truth, not only because he is most true, and Truth itself, but also teacheth and guideth us in the ways of truth. And the spirit of illumination and wisdom, not only because there is in him a measure, without measure, of light and knowledge, but also illighteneth our minds darkened with ignorance, and maketh us who were only wise unto evil, wise unto good, and to the eternal salvation of our own souls. And unless we be thus enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have the way of salvation revealed unto us, it remaineth an hidden mystery, of which we are not capable in our natural understanding; for as the Apostle teacheth us, The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, and the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, and they unto whom by the Spirit they are revealed. Unless this light shine in our hearts, we remain in more than an Egyptian darkness, sitting still in error and sin, and not being able to move in the actions of holiness and righteousness; neither is it possible that we should walk in the ways of God, until by the light of his Spirit they be revealed unto us. Finally, we must first know the will of God, before we can do it, and so attain unto everlasting blessedness. And therefore in the next place, if we would lead this godly life, we must desire to be enlightened by God's Spirit in the knowledge of his will, and to have the light of spiritual wisdom added to the life of grace, that knowing it in our understandings, we may yield obedience unto it in our lives and conversations; praying to this purpose without ceasing for ourselves, as the Apostle for the Ephesians; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints, &c.

Sect. 6 - That we must be engrafted into Christ, before we can lead a godly life.

The second main thing required in those who are to lead a godly life is, that they be engrafted into Jesus Christ, by virtue of which union he becoming their head, and they his members, they have communion with him, and are made partakers of the virtue of his death and resurrection, whereby their sins are mortified and crucified, so as they can no longer reign in their mortal bodies, and they quickened unto holiness and newness of life, and so enabled to bring forth the fruits of obedience in the whole course of their conversation. For we are naturally dead and buried in the grave of sin, and not able to stir or move in the actions of godliness; but no sooner are we joined to him, and touch his body crucified by the hand of faith, but presently (like the body touched by Elisha in the grave) we receive such virtue and vigor from him, that we are revived and raised from this grave of sin, unto holiness and newness of life. We are by nature wild vines, who bring forth nothing but sour grapes of maliciousness and sin; but when we are engrafted into the true vine Jesus Christ, we change our nature, and receiving the lively sap of grace from this root of righteousness, we bring forth the fruits of obedience, whereby our heavenly Father is glorified, and we assured of our election and salvation. Finally, without him we can of ourselves do nothing, as he hath taught us; but being united unto him, we may say with the Apostle, that we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. And this is that which the same Apostle teacheth us: We are buried (saith he) with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. And therefore if we would be new creatures, let us put on Jesus Christ, and labor to be united unto him by his holy Spirit and a lively faith; for in him alone we are elected unto holiness; in him only we are created unto

good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Sect. 7 - That only those can lead a godly life, who are in the covenant of grace.

The third thing required is, that we be in the covenant of grace, made with us in Jesus Christ, whereby God hath assured us that he will be our God, and that we shall be his people; he our gracious Father, and we his children, whom he will accept in his best beloved. For until we be in this covenant, our persons are not accepted, we remaining the slaves of sin, and in the state of death and condemnation, and consequently, nothing which we can do, seem it never so glorious, is pleasing in God's sight. We are till then under the law and covenant of works, if not as it was given to the Jews, yet as it was engraven in our hearts in our creation; and consequently under the curse which is denounced against all that do not continue in all which is written in the book of the law to do it, namely, in that perfection which the law requireth. Of which, failing innumerable times, we cannot, according to this strict rule, yield obedience, nor perform the duties of a godly life. But when we are admitted into the covenant of grace made in Jesus Christ, then this rigor of the law is remitted, and we are tied only to the obedience of sons, which consisteth more in our wills, desires, and endeavors, then in our abilities to perform our duty in perfection. The which obedience as this perfect law of liberty doth require, so doth it enable us to do that which it requireth. For in this covenant the Lord promiseth that he will take away our stony hearts, which will rather break, then bow unto his will, and give us hearts of flesh, which will incline to all good motions of his Word and holy Spirit. And that he will give his holy Spirit unto us, to conduct and rule us in all our ways, and to support, strengthen, and comfort us against all the difficulties and discouragements, which do affront and cross us in our Christian course. That he will write his Law, not in Tables of stone, but in our hearts, that we may not depart from

him. And if contrary to our purpose we slip in our way, the Lord hath promised that he will not remember our sins to impute them unto us, but will spare us as a father spareth his son that serveth him. Now what can be a greater encouragement unto the performance of all the duties of a holy life, then to know that we are accepted of God, and that our obedience, though imperfect and mingled with much corruption and weakness, shall in Christ, not only be pardoned, but highly regarded and richly rewarded by our loving Father? And therefore let us labor to be in the covenant of grace, unto which, nothing on our part is required, but a lively faith in Christ, applying all God's promises made unto us in him, and that we bring forth the fruits of this faith in unfeigned repentance and new obedience.

Sect. 8 - That a lively faith is necessarily required unto a godly life.

The fourth thing required in those who are to lead a godly life, is a lively faith; whereby we understand, not only a general faith, whereby we know and believe that the duties which we perform, are agreeable to God's will, and warranted by his Word: but a true, lively, and justifying faith, whereby we are engrafted into Jesus Christ, and made partakers of all his benefits. For we must first by him be made righteous, before we can do the works of righteousness; we must first become good trees, before we can yield good fruits, and be lively branches of the true Vine Jesus Christ, which suck from this root the sap of grace and holiness, before we can bear the sweet and ripe grapes of new and true obedience, which are acceptable to God, and well relishing unto his taste. In which respect the Apostle telleth us, that without faith it is impossible to please God, because whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Besides, our best righteousness is like a polluted cloth, stained with our corruptions, and mingled with our imperfections, and consequently cannot endure the severe trial of God's strict justice, nor be accepted of him (who being infinite in perfection in himself, alloweth of nothing that is imperfect) unless being united unto Christ, we be made partakers of the benefit of his

death and obedience, and so have the imperfection of our actions covered with his perfect righteousness, and their pollution washed clean away in his most precious blood. And therefore if we would lead such a godly life as may be pleasing unto God, we must first labor to be endued with a lively faith, that all our fruits of obedience springing from this root, may be accepted, in and for Christ, and be allowed through his righteousness and obedience, which deserve to be rejected in respect of their own pollution and imperfection.

Sect. 9 - That the duties of a godly life must spring from the fountain of love.

The fifth thing required is, that all the duties of a godly life which we perform, do spring from the fountain of love, which is a fruit of a lively faith, whereby being assured of God's love towards us in Jesus Christ, we begin to love him again, and our neighbors for his sake; and receiving the bright beams of his favor into our hearts, have them enlightened and warmed thereby, and so reflect them back again towards God, in our love of his Majesty and zeal of his glory, abhorring whatsoever is displeasing, and loving and practicing that which is acceptable in his sight. For this love is the end of God's commandments, and compriseth in it the whole sum and substance of the Law, and therefore it is the base and foundation of all true obedience; and whatsoever proceedeth not from love, cannot be accounted any service unto God, seeing it is not done for his sake, but out of self-love, and for worldly respects, which being sinful and corrupt, do pollute all the actions which do spring from them.

Sect. 10 - That the duties of a godly life must proceed from thankfulness.

The sixth thing required unto a godly life is, that we perform all holy and Christian duties out of our thankfulness towards God, as for all

his benefits spiritual and corporal bestowed upon us, namely, our election, creation, preservation, and the rest, so especially for that main benefit, the great work of our redemption by Jesus Christ, whereby he hath made us, of the slaves of Satan, his own servants, of the children of wrath, his own children by adoption and grace, of the servants of sin, the servants of righteousness, and of the heirs of hell and condemnation, coheirs with Christ, and inheritors of heavenly happiness. The which benefits being rightly considered, must needs make us truly thankful unto him of whom we have so great salvation, and out of this thankfulness, truly zealous of his glory to whom we are so deeply indebted, and to express both the one and the other, by our earnest endeavor, and conscionable care to glorify his holy name, by shining before men in the light of a godly life. And that this ought to be the main motive to incite unto the practice of a holy conversation; it appeareth hereby, in that the Apostles do so frequently use it as a forcible argument to provoke us unto it. You are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your Spirit which are God's. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light. And therefore we must take heed that we do not perform holy duties out of an opinion of merit to make God beholding unto us, or to satisfy his justice which is only done by Christ's perfect righteousness and obedience, or to leave our works of supererogation as a treasure unto the Church, to be sold unto those, who most wanting them, will buy them at the highest price; or to purchase by them God's heavenly Kingdom, which is a free inheritance, and the mere gift of grace, which God hath of his sole bounty and good will given unto us, in and for Jesus Christ; but let us do what we are able (and be sorry in our hearts that we can do no more) out of unfeigned thankfulness unto God, for the many and inestimable benefits, which of his free grace and undeserved goodness he hath multiplied on us.

Sect. 11 - That the duties of a godly life must be done in humility.

The seventh thing required unto a godly life is, that all the Christian duties which we perform, be done in humility and lowliness of spirit; for this is a grace most acceptable unto God, which will move him to inhabit in us as his Temples by his holy Spirit, for he dwelleth with him, that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the humble ones. It moveth him to bestow all other graces, and enlargeth our hearts that they may be fit to receive them; for the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. And this Argument the Apostle Peter useth to persuade us to be clothed with humility: Because God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. It is the ornament and sign of all other graces, and of all Christian duties, whereby we may know whether they be counterfeit and hypocritical, or in sincerity and truth: for the oil of saving grace, and the water and wind of pride, will not mix together, and therefore we must be emptied of the one, before we can be replenished with the other. According to the song of the blessed Virgin; He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. So that if we would be enriched with God's graces, and be strengthened by his Spirit unto the duties of a godly life, we must, as we increase in them, increase also in humility, and as our Savior hath taught us, When we shall have done all those things which are commanded us, we must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants, who have done nothing but that which was our duty to do. To which purpose let us often meditate of the imperfections and corruptions of our best actions, which might justly move the Lord to reject them, and us also for them, if in the severity and strictness of his justice he should look upon them. Let us think not only of the good we do, but also of the evil which we commit, and the good which we leave undone, and then there will be no place for pride, but rather for that bitter and lamentable complaint of the Apostle, That which I do, I allow not; for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do; O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Let us consider not so much how far we have proceeded in the Christian race, but rather how much remaineth, and how far we yet come short of the goal of perfection, according to the Apostles

example, I count myself (saith he) not to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the price of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Finally, though we had attained unto some perfection, yet there were no place for pride, but rather for the greater humility, seeing we are the more indebted unto God for his abundant grace and bounty, for (as the Apostle saith) Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what have we that we have not received? Now if thou diddest receive it, why doest thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? For who is proud of his debts? Or the more puffed up, the more he is obliged to another? And as we must in these respects in our greatest perfection be humble towards God, so also towards our brethren, whom we seem to have out-run in the Christian race; seeing we have out-stripped them, not in our own strength, for naturally we are alike, dead in trespasses and sins, and the children of wrath as well as they, but it is God's free grace that hath put this difference between us; which if we be humble and meek in spirit, he will daily continue with increase, but if we wax proud of our gifts and progress in the ways of godliness, and boast with the Pharisee of our good deeds, preferring ourselves before others whom we think do come far behind us; God, who abhorreth pride above all other vices, because it most impeacheth his glory, can stint his bounty, and withdraw his strength, he can put a thorn in our foot which will stay our speed, and cause the messenger of Satan to cross us in our course, and by his buffetings to hinder us in our race, till we have learned to be more humble. As on the other side, he can enrich those whom we have most contemned with a large measure of saving grace, and put such vigor and virtue into them by his holy Spirit, that they shall as much out-strip us in the ways of godliness, as before we seemed unto ourselves to have out-run them.

Sect. 12 - That we must propound God's glory as the end of all our actions.

The last thing required unto this godly life is, that we propound God's glory as the main end of all our actions, not doing them for worldly respects, or our own profit either temporal or spiritual principally, but that God's will may be done in them; for he is the summum bonum, and supreme end of all things, and for his glory we were elected, created, redeemed, justified, sanctified, and shall be glorified. And when we have attained to heavenly happiness, and have the possession and fruition of God's everlasting Kingdom, the main end of all our glory shall be, to glorify God, who hath thus advanced and glorified us. For the four and twenty Elders (in the Revelation) fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and praise; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. The which their practice we must imitate in the Kingdom of grace, if ever we mean to reign with them in the Kingdom of glory; laboring to do God's will in earth, as it is done in heaven, with all alacrity and cheerfulness, speed and diligence, that his name may be hallowed and glorified, and his Kingdom advanced and magnified, as we beg in the Lord's prayer. For as it is the subordinate end of our election, that we may be holy, so the main and supreme end of this end is, that our holiness and glorification may be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, who of his free mercy hath sanctified and glorified us. And therefore in all our actions we must propound God's glory as the supreme end of them, according to that of the Apostle; Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. So our Savior commandeth us, that our lights should to this end shine before men, that they seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. And the Apostle Peter exhorteth us, to have our conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against us as evil doers, they may by our good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. And if thus by our godly lives we glorify God on earth, he will glorify us in heaven; but if in leading these lives, we Pharisaically aim at our own glory, we have all the reward which we can expect; or if neglecting this main end, we principally

aim at our own good, which should be subordinate unto it, as the satisfying of God's justice for our sins, to be registered in the Calender of the Saints, or to merit and purchase for ourselves the Crown of eternal blessedness, we shall hereby derogate from the glory of God's free grace, and the all-sufficient merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and so, after all our pains and labor, be utterly frustrate of our hopes.

CHAPTER III.

Of the main matter of a godly life, namely, that it must be framed according to God's will, in holiness, righteousness, and sobriety.

Sect. 1 - That we can no otherwise please God, then by framing our lives according to his will.

What the person must be that is to lead a godly life, and how he ought to be qualified that must offer unto God any acceptable service, we have showed in the former Chapter. And now it remaineth that we entreat of the latter part of the description, wherein the actions which in this life are to be performed, are generally expressed. And here two things are to be considered, first, the matter of this godly life, or the main duties which are to be performed; and secondly, the form and manner how they ought to be done. The matter is either general, or more special. Generally, it is required, that we please God in all things, conforming our wills and actions, our thoughts, words, and works, in all holy obedience to his will, leaving and forsaking whatsoever is displeasing unto him, and repugnant to his holy will and commandment, and contrariwise embracing and practicing whatsoever is acceptable in his sight; for his will is the perfect rule of righteousness, and whatsoever agreeth

with it, is just and good, but whatsoever swerveth from it, either on the right hand or the left, is crooked, evil, and wicked, and consequently odious and displeasing in his sight. And therefore if we would please God, we must in the first place deny ourselves and our own wills, saying with our Savior, Not my will, but thine be done; neither must we ask counsel of carnal reason, nor when we know God's will, dispute with flesh and blood, whether it be fit or unfit, profitable or unprofitable, reasonable or against reason, to do that which God commandeth, but we must yield unto it absolute obedience, doing God's will, as the Saints and Angels do it in heaven, cheerfully and readily, without gainsaying, doubting, or replying. For if earthly Princes will not endure to have subjects scan their Laws, nor examine their Proclamations, to see with what reason they command, but require absolute obedience in all things not repugnant to the Law of God, and will not be served according to their subjects best intentions, but will have their obedience squared by their Laws: If every master in a family will be served according to his own pleasure, and will not for matter or manner leave it to his servants choice, to perform what service best sorteth with their own humor and liking; And if the Captain of a company, or General of an Army, will not excuse in a Soldier the neglect of their commands, upon the fairest pretense, but severely punish even prosperous disobedience, and successful disorder with great severity; then how much less will the King of kings endure to have his will neglected, and ours preferred in his service? And how much more will he who is the Lord of hosts, be displeased with us, if in our spiritual warfare we regard not what he commandeth, but perform such service as best suiteth with our own conceits? No man that warreth (saith the Apostle) entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Soldier; and if a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully; that is, according to the orders appointed by him who is master of the games. And therefore let us not think to have the Crown and Garland of happiness, if we stint God of this royalty and privilege which we give unto men, not striving for victory according to his will, nor

offering unto him that service which he requireth, but such as seemeth good in our own eyes.

Sect. 2 - That not God's secret but revealed will must be the rule of our lives and actions.

Now whereas I say that we must please God in all things by doing his will, I do not hereby understand his secret will, which being unknown to us we cannot obey. Neither doth this will appertain to us, according to that, The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do the words of this Law. Nor doth it need our endeavor to bring it to performance: for who hath resisted this will of the Lord? What wisdom or understanding can cross his counsel? Seeing he who is infinite in power, and immutable in truth, hath said, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Yea this will is done by wicked men and the devils themselves whether they will or no, and when they most seek to resist it, they accomplish and bring it to pass. Neither are we with Euthusiasts and Familists to expect that the will, which must be the rule of our obedience, should be made known unto us by new revelations: for the Lord hath once spoken unto us by his Son, the true and only Prophet of his Church, and by him hath perfectly revealed unto us his will and pleasure, with all things that are necessary for our salvation. All which is contained fully in the Book of holy Scriptures which were indited by his Spirit, and written by holy men inspired thereby to this purpose, that revealing perfectly the will of God, they might forever serve to be unto the whole Church and every faithful member of it, the sole rule and square of all their actions, from which they are enjoined under that great penalty of God's curse, not to swerve, either on the one side or on the other. So by Moses the Lord commandeth, that the people should hearken unto his Statutes and Judgments to do them, and that they should add nothing to the words which he commanded them, nor diminish ought from them; and restraineth them from

their own will in his service: Ye shall not (saith he) do after all the things that we do hear this day, every man what is right in his own eyes: whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it; you shall not add unto it, nor diminish from it. So Joshua is commanded to do according to the Law, and not to turn from it, to the right hand, nor to the left. So Jerome speaketh to the same purpose; All things (saith he) are directed according to the rule, which showeth whether they be crooked or straight. And so the doctrine of God is a certain rule of speech, which judgeth between things just and unjust, which whoso followeth, shall have peace in himself, that passeth all sense and understanding; and with it the mercy of God which is above all.

Sect. 3 - Reasons proving that we can no otherwise please God then by doing his will.

Unto which testimonies diverse reasons might be added, which evidently prove, that we can no otherwise please God by our lives, then by framing them according to his will, and doing such service as in his Word he requireth, both in respect of the matter, and also the manner. As first, because hereby we shall prefer our own wisdom before the wisdom of God, neglecting that worship which he hath appointed, either in respect of the matter or manner, because in our foolish conceit we suppose that we can devise a better; which is such an indignity offered unto his Majesty, that no earthly Prince would endure it at the hand of his greatest subjects. Secondly, we shall hereby disgrace God's Law and Word, which he hath appointed to be the rule of all our lives and actions, as though it were insufficient to that end for which God hath ordained it; whereas the Apostle telleth us, that they are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. And the Lord himself hath enjoined us to go unto them as unto the only Judge and counselor, to be resolved in all our doubts, and directed in all our actions. To the Law and to the Testimony. And our Savior to the same purpose hath

exhorted us to search the Scriptures, because our ignorance of them, is the main cause of all our errors both in doctrine and manners. Thirdly, whilst we neglect God's Word in serving him, and follow our own inventions, we shall not do God's will, but our own, and instead of doing him service, we shall serve our own lusts which are most opposite unto him, committing herein a gross absurdity, in thinking to please God, by offering unto him a service, not which he in his wisdom hath prescribed as most fit, but that which is devised and appointed by our own fleshly wisdom, which is enmity against him, and our natural imaginations, which are only and continually evil. Fourthly, if we neglect the direction of God's Word, in performing service unto him, though it be, not in the matter, but the manner only, God will neglect our service, as being mere will-worship, and not that which he hath appointed, according to his saying to the Jews by the Prophet Isaiah, Who hath required these things at your hands? Yea he will reject it as odious and abominable, as he did the sacrifices of the Jews, who in serving him, chose their own ways, and in their hearts and souls still delighted in their abominations, when in outward appearance they seemed devout in offering unto him sacrifices and oblations, as elsewhere he protesteth by the same Prophet. Neither will our good meanings, blind zeal, and superstitious devotion, make our will-worship accepted of God, seeing they are in themselves sinful, and one sin will not excuse another. Yea if we have no better guides to direct us, we shall for God's true service, embrace, and even tire ourselves in the service of the devil, as we see in the example of the Jews, whose blind zeal misled them out of the way of salvation, into the way of destruction, whilst neglecting the righteousness of faith in Jesus Christ, they endeavored to establish their own righteousness. And of the Apostle Paul, who by an ignorant zeal was made (as he confesseth) even mad against the Saints, and with all raging cruelty, set himself to destroy the Church of God. And finally, of those honorable women spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, who out of their blind devotion, raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. Fifthly, if we serve not God according to his will and Word, but according to our own good meanings and blind devotions,

it will not be pleasing to God, as not being done in faith, but doubtingly, not knowing whether the duties which we perform, be agreeable to his will or no: or rather without doubting we may know, that our service is not according to God's will; and therefore displeasing unto him, seeing he hath perfectly revealed his will in his Word, both concerning that which he would have us do, and that which he would have us leave undone; and consequently, such service is not only without, but contrary to faith, and most odious unto God. Sixthly, all our pains taken in this service, which is not warranted by God's Word, but done according to our own inventions, good meanings, and traditions of men, are in vain, and all our labor lost, which is thus spent in will-worship and blind superstition; according to that of our Savior, In vain they worship me, teaching for doctrines men's precepts. Yea they are not only vain, and as the Apostle speaketh, perish in the using, but evil, both simply and by accident: for who can bring good out of evil? That which is clean, out of that which is unclean? Or spiritual service unto God, out of the forge of our carnal reason and evil imaginations? Seeing our Savior hath taught us, that, that which is of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. And as it is simply evil in respect of the evil fountain from which it springeth, so also accidentally, in that it is preferred before the Word and will of God, and by taking place of it, doth cause it to be clean thrust out of doors, as we see in the example of the superstitious Pharisees, who in setting up their own traditions, made God's Commandments void and of none effect; and of the Papists, who by making room for their blind devotions, have quite exiled all the parts and means of the true service of God. In which regard, all the labor which is thus spent, doth not only not please God, and so lose all reward, but much displease him and provoke his wrath, and pull down his heavy judgments upon all such as tender such service unto him, both in this life and the life to come. Of the former we have an example in Nadab and Abihu, who were consumed with fire from heaven, because they offered strange fire unto God, and did not use that fire which he had sent down from heaven to this purpose. In Saul, whose kingdom was rent from him, either for offering sacrifice himself which did not belong unto him

(for which sin also Uzziah was smitten with leprosy) or for not staying the time appointed by God and his Prophet Samuel. And in Uzza, who was smitten with present death, because being but a Levite, he took upon him to touch the Ark, which none might do but the Priests, and suffered it to be carried in a cart, which should have been born upon their shoulders. Unto which punishments (and the like) of this life, God will add those eternal punishments in the life to come, upon those that add unto, or detract from his will, which the Apostle John threateneth against those who add unto, or detract from his Prophecy, namely, loss of heavenly happiness, and all the plagues written in that book, among which are the torments of hell fire, and everlasting condemnation of body and soul. And therefore when we come thus far, as to have fervent desires and great devotion to serve God, let us take heed that the devil do not delude us, by persuading us through his instruments, to spend all our labor, not only in vain, but also to loss, nor to lay out our good intentions (as it were) good coin, upon the base trifles of human traditions, will-worship, and our own inventions, as worshipping of Saints and Angels, Masses, Pilgrimages, Popish Fasts, Penances, and punishing of our bodies, mumbling of Latin Prayers without understanding, satisfactions, and such like; seeing these are not only not commanded, but expressly contrary to God's will and Word. And the Apostle also hath given us warning to take heed of, and avoid them, as having only a show of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility, and not sparing of the body, and in truth are mere folly, being flatly opposite to the wisdom of God. But resolving to please God by leading a godly life, let us make his will revealed in his Word, the rule and square of all our actions, resolving and endeavoring to do that which in this Word is commanded and enjoined, and to leave undone what in it is forbidden and condemned.

Sect. 4 - The special duties in which a godly life chiefly consisteth.

And thus we see what is the main and general matter of a godly life, namely, such a carriage and conversation whereby we please God in all things, by doing his will revealed in the Scriptures; more specially a godly life consisteth in our walking before him in the duties of piety, righteousness and sobriety, with faith, a pure heart, and good conscience all the days of our lives. In which words, three things are contained. First, the duties which in this godly life are to be performed. Secondly, the foundation upon which they are grounded, and the fountains from which they ought to flow. Thirdly, their time of continuance, and how long by us they are to be performed. The duties of a godly life are all referred unto three heads. First, piety towards God which compriseth in it all Religion, the whole worship and service of God both public and private, with the matter, manner, time, means, and all circumstances, and in a word, all the duties required in the first table. Secondly, righteousness towards our neighbors, whereby we deal with them, as we would have them to deal with us, and give unto everyone their own, behaving ourselves justly with all, and mercifully with all those who need our help. Thirdly, sobriety and temperance towards ourselves, whereby we possess our vessels in purity and honor, as it becometh the Temples of the holy Ghost. Secondly, there is here expressed certain fundamental virtues, upon which, our virtuous and godly actions ought to be grounded, and from which they must spring and flow, if we would have them acceptable unto God; namely, a lively faith, without which we cannot please him; a pure heart, from which as a fountain floweth all true obedience; and a good conscience, purged from dead works by the precious blood of Christ, which warranteth all our actions done in faith, as approved of God, and so inciteth and encourageth us to bring forth the fruits of new obedience, when as we know that our persons and all our actions are accepted of God in Jesus Christ. And lastly, here is expressed the time how long we are to continue in the doing of the duties of a godly life, namely, not for a while, no nor yet for a long time together, but indefinitely we are to continue in bringing forth these fruits of obedience, throughout the whole course of our lives, and as the Apostle teacheth us, never be weary of well-doing. But of these points I shall have occasion to

speaking more largely afterwards, and therefore will content myself for the present, thus briefly to have touched them, for the explaining of the former description of a godly life.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the form and manner how all Christian duties ought to be performed, namely, with fervency of desire, a settled resolution, and earnest endeavor to please God in all things.

Sect. 1 - That these desires, resolutions, and endeavors are required of all those who will serve and please God.

And so I come from the matter of it, and the duties therein required, to speak of the form and manner, how they may be so performed, as that they may be acceptable in God's sight. And hereunto there concur three things: First, fervency of desire: Secondly, a settled resolution: And thirdly, a hearty and earnest endeavor to please God in all things by doing his will, in the duties of piety, righteousness, and sobriety. First, our hearts must be inflamed with fervent desires to please God in all things, and to do his will in as great perfection here on earth, as the Angels and Saints do it in heaven, although we cannot possibly in this state of sin and corruption attain unto it. So the Church professeth of herself: In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; with my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. The which desires break out into longing wishes after that perfection which we cannot as yet compass, as we see in David; O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! And are accompanied with bitter grief and lamentable complaints, when as we find them crossed with

our corruption, and defeated by the temptations of the devil and the world; as we see in the Apostles example; To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do, &c. for I delight in the Law of God after the inner man, but I see another law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And this fervent desire of the heart to please God by doing his will, is always accompanied with an undaunted resolution and settled purpose of the will to shake off all delays, and break thorough all difficulties which hinder us in our course, and with all care and good conscience, to use all helps, whereby we may be enabled and furthered in God's service. And thus David resolveth that he will keep God's statutes. I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments have I laid before me. I will run the way of thy Commandments; when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Word; yea I shall observe it with my whole heart. And from this desire of the heart, and resolution of the will, there followeth an earnest endeavor in the whole man, of conforming all our powers and parts, words and works, intentions and actions to the will of God, that we may in all things please him, and glorify his name, by having the light of our lives shining before men; according to the exhortation of the Apostle, Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Sect. 2 - That all Evangelical obedience consisteth chiefly in these desires, resolutions and endeavors.

And in these desires, resolutions, and endeavors doth consist the very form and essence of a godly life, it being the top of that perfection which we can attain unto in this state of imperfection. This is that Evangelical obedience which in the Gospel is required of

us, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, where Barnabas exhorteth the Church of Antioch, not to perform that perfect obedience which the Law exacteth, which was a yoke too heavy for any to bear, but that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. Unto which also the Gospel enableth us, being made powerful and effectual by God's grace, and the inward operation of his holy Spirit. This is that son-like obedience which God now requireth of us, which if we perform, we and our service shall be accepted of God in Christ, our imperfect righteousness being covered with his perfect obedience, and our corruptions washed away in his blood. For he spareth us, as a loving father spareth his son that serveth him, who in the duties which he requireth, respects his affection, more than the action, and the intention and desire of his heart to please him, more than of his abilities in performance; according to that of the Apostle; If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. An example whereof we have in David, who having in his heart a desire and resolution to build the Temple, though he did it not, was accepted and rewarded of God, as if he had built it. And in Abraham, whose resolution to sacrifice his son, was as pleasing in God's sight, as if he had been sacrificed. Now the reason why our desires and resolutions are so acceptable unto God, is first, because they are the chief service of the heart, which the Lord respecteth above all other parts and outward performances. And secondly, because all our endeavors and actions are according to our desires, either forward and fervent, or slack and remiss. For as Philosophy teacheth, the love and desire of attaining to the end, is the first cause in the intention of the agent, which setteth him on work, and according to the greatness of this love and desire, to the end at which we aim, such is our care and diligence in the use of all good means whereby we may attain unto it. Moreover, as it will make our persons and actions accepted of God, so our prayers which God hath promised to hear and grant. According to that of the Psalmist; Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. And again, He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him, he will hear their cry, and will save them. And the Wiseman telleth us, that the

desire of the righteous shall be granted, that is, not they who are righteous, according to the rigor of the Law, but they who are Evangelically righteous, and desire and labor to attain unto it, as it is expounded in the prayer of Nehemiah, O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name. And consequently, this being one of their most principal desires, that they may be so freed from their corruptions and imperfections, as that they may perform unto God that perfect obedience which the Law requireth, and their soul longeth after; the Lord will satisfy it; and though for a time they be turmoiled and humbled in the sight and sense of their corruptions, yet by degrees he will bring them unto this perfect age in Christ, and to that height of perfection which they so much desire, when as having put off, with their mortality, all relics of corruption, they shall be clothed with those long white robes of perfect holiness in his heavenly Kingdom. Unto which happy estate in the meantime, their longing and thirsting desires do give them full title and interest: for they are blessed, not who are replenished with perfect righteousness, but who hunger and thirst after it, as our Savior hath taught us.

Sect. 3 - That our desires, resolutions, and endeavors must not be faint and weak, but servant and earnest.

But yet, that we may not in our carnal sloth and security deceive ourselves with shadows instead of substances, we are to know, that not all kind of desires, resolutions, and endeavors are acceptable unto God, nor make us to be accepted of him, but those only which are sound and solid, sincere and upright; unto which, diverse properties are required. First, that they be not faint and weak, fickle and slight; but strong and vehement, earnest and fervent, like the desires of women with child, which are even heart-sick, unless they be satisfied in the things which they long after, as David implieth where he saith; Behold, I have longed after thy precepts, quicken me

in thy righteousness. And again, My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy Word, that is, thy promise, whereby thou hast assured me that thou wilt satisfy my desire. They must not be inferior to the desires of worldlings, seeing the things desired are so much superior, exceeding them in excellency, profit, and permanency, as far as heaven exceedeth earth. Now we know that the desires of worldlings after their riches, pleasures, and preferments, are so fervent and earnest, that they wholly take up their thoughts in thinking of them, and their care in compassing them. Neither is there any pains so great, or danger so desperate, which they will not venter upon, but night and day, by sea and land, labor after that which their soul loveth. They must be like the desires of the Spouse in the Canticles, which made her sick through their fervent heat, and ready to swoon, had she not been stayed and refreshed with the wine and apples of spiritual comforts. They must so enlarge our hearts, that they will be ready to break, if they be not replenished and mollified with the oil of God's grace and holy Spirit, according to that of David, My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgments at all times. They must (as they are compared) resemble hunger and thirst, which make men sick till they be satisfied, and so resolute, that nothing can withstand them, no difficulty or danger so great and desperate, which they will not hazard themselves unto, that they may procure meat and drink to preserve them from famishing; and with such care and diligence use all means tending hereunto, as if they were religiously bound to do it by a solemn oath; as we see in that desire and resolution of David; I have sworn, and will perform it; that I will keep thy righteous judgments. And thus Job, to strengthen his desires and resolutions, in shunning sin, and serving God, bindeth himself and all his members hereunto by solemn covenant; I have (saith he) made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maiden?

Sect. 4 - They must be entire and total, both in respect of the subject and object.

Secondly, these desires, resolutions, and endeavors, must be entire and total, both in respect of the subject and object. For they must proceed from the whole heart and will, so far forth as they are regenerate, and hold place in all our actions and endeavors. Neither will God in his service accept of a heart divided, whereof one part is given unto him, and another to the world; nor of a double heart, one while aiming at his glory, and another while at the glory of the world, sinister and earthly respects. Neither can we after this sort serve God and Mammon, nor with an unsettled resolution, which now inclineth to God's service, and soon after to the service of Satan, for the base wages of sinful profits and pleasures; nor with such a lame endeavor, as maketh us halt between gain and godliness, Religion and worldliness, the praises of men, and the approbation of God and a good conscience. But we ought with such firm resolution go out of the Sodom of sin, that we must not cast a look backward, as relenting in our purpose, and seeming loath to leave it; and so set our hearts and hands to the plow of God's husbandry, that we never give it over, till we bring forth plentiful fruits of holiness, that so after, we may reap the harvest of heavenly happiness. In regard of the object also, they must be entire, and have respect unto all God's Commandments, desiring, resolving, and endeavoring to please God in all things, both in flying and forsaking all manner of sin which he hath forbidden, and embracing and practicing whatsoever duties he hath enjoined and commanded. So that it is not enough, if with Herod we serve God in some things, and take liberty to serve the devil, the world, and our own lusts in others; that we leave some sins which are less pleasant or profitable, and retain others which bring more profit or delight; nor that we embrace and practice some virtues and Christian duties, which are more easy and less costly, and neglect others which are more chargeable, and require greater pains and diligence. And when we are commanded by God to slay all the cursed Canaanites and Amalekites of sinful corruptions, we must not put some only to the sword, and keep others alive to pay the tribute of pleasure or profit to our carnal lusts, neither kill and mortify the leanest of this cursed cattle, which serve us for little or no use, and let the fattest live, as best serving to feed our fleshly appetite: but we

must devote them all unto God as an accursed thing, and desire and resolve (as much as in us lieth) not to leave any one alive to carry tidings to the devil of the slaughter of the rest. Yea if there be an Agag which is more potent and powerful in us than any other, we must take our first and chief care how that may be subdued and killed; or such an Herodias and darling sin, that our flesh more doteth on, then any other of our corruptions; we must with most care and circumspection, yea with most hatred and detestation, in respect of our part regenerate, put that farthest from us, as most hurting our Christian growth, and hindering our proceedings in the ways of godliness. According to the exhortation of the Apostle; Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. As on the other side, the more difficulty we find in any holy duty, by reason of that averseness which we feel in our corrupt nature unto it, the more vehement must our desires, resolutions, and endeavors be to embrace and practice it; even as the traveler taketh willingly most pains in going up the hill that lieth in his way homewards, and the Water-man employeth the more strength and endeavor in handling his Oars, when as he roweth against wind and tide, then when they both favor and further him.

Sect. 5 - That our desires, resolutions, and endeavors, must aim at the means as well as the end.

Thirdly, that our desires, resolutions, and endeavors may be sincere and acceptable unto God, it is required, that we as well aim in them at the means whereby they may be accomplished, as at the end, and take all occasions, and use all helps, which may enable us to God's service, and with like diligence avoid all lets and impediments, whereby we might be hindered in it, as we desire and endeavor to perform the service itself which God requireth. For where he enjoyeth any duty, there he no less requireth the means and opportunities which enable us thereunto; and to think that we can

perform the duty, and neglect these helps, is to imagine that we can live long, and eat no food, or come speedily to our journeys end, and never travail in the way that leadeth unto it. As therefore it was a vain wish of Balaam to die the death of the righteous, when as he never took care to lead a righteous life: so is it no less vain to desire, that we may lead the life of the righteous, when we do not desire, resolve, and endeavor to use the means that enable us to do it. And such are the desires and resolutions of those, who out of blind devotion endeavor to lead a godly life, continuing in their ignorance, and neglecting all good means, whereby they might come to the knowledge of God's will, and so conform their lives in obedience unto it; who thinking it enough to have a good meaning, do tire themselves in their own superstition, and spend all their labor in vain, offering unto God, instead of his pure service, which he hath commanded, their own will-worship, and human inventions and traditions, which he hath so often in his Word forbidden and condemned. But quite contrary was the course and carriage of holy David, in his desire and resolution to lead a godly life: for as he longed, and had his heart even broken with the vehemency of his desires, to keep God's Statutes and Laws; so with like earnestness he hungered and thirsted after the means which might enable him unto it; which was, to come into God's Courts, the visible place of his presence, to hear his holy Word read and preached unto him. As the Hart (saith he) panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? And again, O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.

Sect. 6 - That they must not be lazy and idle, but diligent and painful.

Fourthly, our desires, resolutions, and endeavors to lead a godly life, must not be lazy and luskish, idle and slothful; but exceeding

industrious, painful, and diligent in the use of all good means whereby we may attain unto it. For being a Jewel of such price, we may not think to have it for the bare wishing; but that we must compass it with some difficulty, and have our cost and labor, in some proportion, answerable to this precious pearl, which is much to be preferred before many worlds. And considering what cost and pains worldly men willingly undergo in pursuing their earthly desires, out of a bare, and (often) false hope to obtain them; with what industry and labor, hazard and danger, the ambitious man aspireth unto honors, the covetous man hunteth after riches, and the voluptuous man after pleasures; let us be sorry and ashamed to think any pains or peril too much, in walking in the way of a godly life, which shall assuredly be crowned with glory and immortality, rewarded with heavenly treasures which will never fade, and with such everlasting joys, as our eyes have not seen, nor our hearts conceived. The soul of the sluggard (saith Solomon) desireth, and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. The which, as it is true in respect of earthly riches, so also of spiritual grace and the treasures of holiness, the which we may long idly wish, and yet never enjoy them; whereas if, as our desires be earnest, so our endeavors diligent and laborious, we may have much more assurance to be enriched with them, then to compass, with all our pains, our worldly desires; seeing we have God's promises more absolute for them. Neither do they flee their followers as earthly riches do, which make themselves wings, and fly away as the Eagle towards heaven, deluding their hopes, which with most speed pursue them. Yea slothful desires rather hurt, then help us in the ways of godliness, causing the sluggard to rest in them, as sufficient without using any means to have them satisfied. In which respect, the saying of Solomon is truly verified of them; The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor. For as his body must needs famish, who only wisheth meat, but useth no endeavor to satisfy his hunger; so his soul will soon be deprived of the spiritual life of grace and godliness, who idly desireth to be replenished with this spiritual food, and taketh no pains to attain unto it. The Kingdom of God (saith our Savior) suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Neither shall they enter into it, who sit down idly,

and cry out, Lord, Lord, open unto us, that is, content themselves with a bare profession of Christianity, and labor not to do the will of our heavenly Father, but they who strive to enter in at the straight gate, and take much pains in travailing that narrow path of righteousness which leadeth to God's Kingdom.

Sect. 7 - That our desires, resolutions, and endeavors must not be by fits and flashes, but constant and durable.

Lastly, our desires, resolutions, and endeavors, must not be by fits and flashes, one while hot and earnest, and another while cold and remiss; but constant and durable, like those in covetous men, which never cease, till they be satisfied, or rather because they can never be satisfied whilst we live on earth: therefore they must never cease, but the more we have of these spiritual riches, the more earnestly we must desire and endeavor to have them still increased. For this life is not the time of our perfection, and full age in Christ, but of spiritual growth in grace, from strength to strength, and from a lesser, to a greater measure of godliness and righteousness. We must not, like those who are sick of an ague, be one while cold, and another while hot, nor have a good day for God's service, and an ill day for the service of the devil and the world: for this were a sickness, and no spiritual health, which would prepare us for death and destruction, and not for life and happiness. Neither will God ever accept of it, who can no more endure to have thus our time, then to have our hearts divided between him and his enemies. But our souls (with David's) must break for the longing that they have unto God's judgments at all times; we must with him resolve to keep God's statutes unto the end, and have our hearts inclined to keep his statutes always. We must not, like the hypocrites, of whom Hosea speaketh, offer unto God a righteousness like unto the morning dew, which vanisheth when the Sun ariseth, but such as will endure the heat of the day, like the streams that flow from a springing fountain. For the waters of life which Christ doth give, are never dry, but shall be in him that hath

them, a well of water springing up to everlasting life. And the trees of righteousness, which are of God's planting, are like those planted by the rivers side, which are never barren, but bring forth their fruit in due season; and they that be planted in the House of the Lord, shall like the Palme tree perpetually flourish, and bring forth fruit in their old age, as the Psalmist speaketh.

CHAPTER V.

Of saving knowledge, which is the first main ground of a godly life:
How necessary it is, and the causes of it.

Sect. 1 - Of the main grounds of a godly life.

Having explained the description of a godly life, and in part showed what is required in him that is to lead it, and wherein it principally doth consist; we will now proceed, and more fully handle some main points, before briefly touched, which are necessary to be known of him, who desireth to make any progress in the ways of godliness. And here two things come chiefly to be considered. First, the grounds. And secondly, the parts of a godly life, which contain the duties that are to be performed by those who lead it. The grounds of this godly life, are certain fundamental virtues whereupon it is built, and from which as living fountains, all other virtues and holy duties do spring and flow. And these are principally two. First, saving knowledge of God, his will and works. And secondly, a lively faith in Jesus Christ. From which, two other main graces arise, which as principal causes produce all special duties of a godly life, namely, First, a sanctified heart purified by faith. And secondly, a good conscience, which followeth our justification.

Sect. 2 - That saving knowledge is the prime virtue, and mother grace, from which all others have their beginning.

The first main ground of a godly life, is saving knowledge, which is the prime virtue, and mother grace, from which all others take their beginning. It is the root of this tree of grace, from which, being effectual, lively, and full of spiritual sap, faith springeth (as it were) the main body of the tree, and from it all other virtues and graces, like the boughs and branches, and the profession and practice of Christianity in good works, and the duties of godliness, like the leaves and fruits, do proceed and grow. For first, we know God and his saving attributes, and then by faith we apprehend and believe them. And when by an effectual knowledge we conceive, and by a lively faith believe them, as that Jehovah who is our God, is infinite in all perfection; omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and all-sufficient, most good and gracious, most merciful and true, then do we trust in him, love him, and grow zealous of his glory, obey and serve him, praise and rejoice in him, and in all things submit ourselves to his good pleasure. And so when we know and believe the former attributes, joined with his justice and hatred of sin, they work in our hearts the true fear of God, humility, and awful reverence; moving us to honor and worship him in spirit and truth, to embrace and practice all virtues and holy duties, because they are acceptable unto him, and to fly and forsake all vice and wickedness, because they are odious in his sight. So that saving knowledge, as the root, doth comprise in it the life and sap of all other graces, whereof it is, that in the Scriptures it is put for them all, and comprehendeth in it alone, all Religion, and the duties of godliness. Thus the Lord prohibiteth us to glory in our wisdom, strength, and riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me. And our Savior telleth us, that This is life eternal, to know God, and whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ It is the main ground and cause of all true obedience, and therefore the Lord, before he giveth his Law which he would have kept and performed, prefixeth a Preface,

wherein he describeth himself, that his people might know him: I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. And David exhorting his son Solomon unto God's service, doth first require, that he should know him. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind. Neither will any do him cheerful service, till they know what a mighty and gracious Lord he is, and what bountiful wages, both of temporal and eternal blessings, he giveth unto those that faithfully serve him. It compriseth in it the sum of all God's promises, concerning his gifts temporal and spiritual, in the covenant of Grace. I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c. and they shall all know me, from the least of them, to the greatest of them, saith the Lord. It is the cause of all other virtues: for before we know them, we cannot so much as desire them, as our Savior implieth in his speech to the woman of Samaria, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. More particularly, it is the cause of faith: for we cannot come unto him, nor believe in God, till we know him, and what he is. And affiance; for as the Psalmist saith, They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Of our love of God: for we must know how loving and lovely he is, before we can love him; and as the Apostle saith, We love God, because he loveth us first. And the usual speech is, There is no love of that, of which there is no knowledge. To which purpose Augustine saith, that we may love things unseen, but not unknown. Of our invocation and prayer: for how shall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? It is the cause also of our conversion unto God, and of turning to him from our sins, by true repentance. For the first grace wrought in us by the Spirit, is illumination, whereby our minds are enlightened with a sight of our misery, and our hearts inflamed with a desire to come out of it. And to this purpose it is said, that the Apostle Paul was sent unto the Gentiles, first, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light; and then to recover them, from the power of Satan

unto God, &c. In a word, by knowledge of God, we attain unto all grace and peace requisite to life and godliness; according to that of the Apostle, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. So that grace and glory, holiness and happiness, are derived unto us by this saving knowledge; and that in such measure, as this knowledge is, unto which we have attained. Here in this life our knowledge is but begun, and so with it our sanctification and glory; and that being but in part, these are imperfect also; but when we have this knowledge in perfection, we shall be perfect also in righteousness and blessedness; and when the dim glass is removed, and we see God face to face, and know as we are known, then shall we in his presence have fullness of joy, and pleasures at his right hand for evermore. To which purpose, the Apostle also saith; Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Sect. 3 - That ignorance estrangeth us from God, and the life of grace and glory.

Contrariwise, want of this knowledge, and ignorance of God, and his will, maketh us strangers from God and the Common wealth of Israel, and howsoever we be the Church, yet to be no true members of the Church. For God hath promised to all that are in the Covenant of grace, that he will put his Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and that they shall all know him, from the least of them, to the greatest of them. And our Savior saith, that he knoweth all the sheep of his fold, and is known of them; and that they know his voice, and are able to discern it from the voice of a stranger. And as it makes us strangers from God, and the Covenant of grace, so also from the life of God, or the godly life which he commandeth, as we

see in the example of the Gentiles, who, having their understanding darkened, were alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart. And contrariwise, thrusts us headlong into all manner of sin; for as the Apostle saith in the same place, When the Gentiles, through their ignorance, were thus estranged from the life of God, they became past feeling, and so gave themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. So Hosea, having set down a Catalogue of many grievous sins, which made the Jews liable to God's heavy judgments, doth after show, that the cause of all their sin and punishment was, because they lacked the true knowledge of God in the land. Whereof it also is, that sinners of all kinds, are included under the name of ignorant persons, who know not God. So the Psalmist: Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. And the Apostle saith, that the Lord Jesus shall come with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God. And therefore if we would have any portion in God's saving graces, or part in heavenly glory; if we would not be strangers from God, and aliens from his Church; if we would perform any duty of a godly life, or not be carried headlong into all wickedness, if we would not be subject to God's judgments, and fearful destruction, nor exposed to the imprecations of the faithful in this life, nor to the vengeance of a terrible Judge, when Christ shall appear at his second coming; let us not live in ignorance, but use all our endeavor to attain unto the saving knowledge of God and his will. Neither let us with ignorant people, content ourselves with our own good meanings and blind devotions, as our guides in godliness; for then our service of God will be but will-worship, and the carnal conceits of our own brains; and all our Religion, being nothing else, but bodily exercise, and ignorant superstition, will be rejected of God, as odious and abominable.

Sect. 4 - That God is the chief Author and efficient cause of saving knowledge.

Seeing therefore knowledge is so necessary unto a godly life, we will a little further insist upon it, showing what it is, and the nature and properties of it, whereby we shall be the better able to labor after it in the use of all good means, and know to our comforts, when we have attained unto it. Saving knowledge then is a grace of God, wrought in us by his holy Spirit, which enlighteneth our minds, to know those things which are revealed of God and his will, by his Word and works, that we may make a holy use of it, for the sanctifying of our hearts, and direction of our lives, in all duties of holiness and righteousness. Whereby we may perceive, that not nature, but God only is the Author and efficient cause of this knowledge, and so much only do we know of God, as we are taught of God. According to that covenant of grace, in which God promiseth, that he will put his Law in our inward parts, and write it in our hearts, and that we shall know him from the least to the greatest. So our Savior speaking of his Elect, saith, that they all shall be taught of God. And again; No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he unto whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Neither is this knowledge a natural habit of the mind, but a grace of God, which is not purchased by us or our own merits, or therefore bestowed upon us rather than others, because God foresaw, that we would use it when we had it, better than they, but God's free gift promised in the covenant of grace. The which he worketh in us first, by sending his Son, his true essential wisdom, who hath revealed unto us his Fathers will, and being the great Prophet of the Church, hath made known unto us the counsels of God, and all things necessary for our Salvation; and that not only, nor chiefly, to the wise of the world, but to the weak and simple; according to that of our Savior; I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. And secondly, his holy Spirit, who was and is sent from the Father and Son, to teach and lead us into all truth, as our Savior promised his Apostles. And this is that holy

anointing, of which the Apostle speaketh, whereby we know all things, and need not that any teach us, but as this anointing teacheth us of all things. And that Collyrium, or precious eye-salve, which Christ promiseth to give to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, to enlighten their blind eyes in the knowledge of the truth. So the Apostle telleth us, that we cannot see nor conceive the things which appertain to God's Kingdom, but God hath revealed them unto us, by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. And hence it is, that he is called the Spirit of wisdom, revelation and illumination, and the Spirit of truth, because he is both light and truth himself, and also enlighteneth our minds which are naturally full of darkness, and leadeth us into all truth needful for our salvation. And therefore if we would have this saving knowledge, we must go to the chief Fountain and Author of it, and pray often and earnestly that he will for his Son, and by his holy Spirit take away our natural blindness, and open our eyes, that we may see the wonderful things of his Law.

Sect. 5 - Of the instrumental causes of saving knowledge.

The instrumental causes of this knowledge, are first, the Book of nature: secondly, the Book of Grace. The Book of nature; for even this light being sanctified by God's Spirit, is helpful to the regenerate for the revealing of God and his will unto them. And that both the eternal book of nature, which is the conscience, and the external Book, which is the great volume of the creatures. For if there be in all men some relics of the light of nature shining in their consciences, which convince them that there is a God, and that this God is most good, powerful, just, bountiful, a liberal rewarder of good, and revenger of evil, according to the saying of the Apostle; That which may be known of God, is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them; then how much more clearly doth this light shine in the faithful, when as it is renewed and made much brighter and clearer by God's holy Spirit? The Book also of the creatures doth convince all

men that there is a God, and that he is infinite in wisdom and power, omnipresent and full of goodness; according to that of the Apostle; The invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. And therefore how much more may the faithful profit by learning and reading this Book, who have the holy Spirit for their Tutor, which openeth their eyes, that they may see God's wisdom, goodness and power shining in them; and their hearts, that meditating on them, they may make an holy use of this knowledge, for the stirring of them up to render unto God praise and thanksgiving? The Book of grace also is either the internal writing of God's Law and will, in the heart and inward parts, by the Spirit of God, which the Lord promiseth to do in the covenant of grace; or the outward Book of the holy Scriptures, in which are contained all things necessary to be known of God and his will, for the salvation of our souls. And lastly, God's Ministers are his instruments whereby he revealeth himself and his will unto us; who do expound unto us his written Word, and unfold the mysteries and difficulties thereof that we may understand them. And therefore if we would attain unto the knowledge of God and his will, we are to use the help of those instruments which he hath ordained for this purpose; especially we are to desire that inward writing of the Spirit in our hearts, and to make use, by reading, and meditation, of the Scriptures, and by often hearing of them expounded and applied unto us by God's faithful Ministers.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the object of saving knowledge, namely, God himself and his attributes, his Word and works

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Sect. 1 - That there is a God, and how we may know it.

And these are the causes of saving knowledge. The object of it is God, his will and works. Where first we are to know, that there is a God, who is to be worshipped and served of us. Unto which we attain by the light of nature, which revealeth this principle unto us, and convinceth all men of this truth, by the Book of the creatures, in which the infinite wisdom, power and goodness of the Creator shineth; by the terrors of conscience following the commission of heinous sins though never so secret; by the series and dependency of causes one upon another, in the disquisition whereof there is no end, till we come to the cause of causes, who having his being of himself, giveth being unto all things; by the goodly order which may be observed in the creatures, and the motion of the heavens and the celestial bodies; by the final causes, one thing being referred to another, till we come to the summum benum and supreme end of all things, which is God; by the accomplishment of Prophecies foretold long before their events; by the consent of all Nations, in acknowledging this principle; and finally, by the judgments and punishments executed upon the wicked, even in this life: by all which we come to the clear understanding of this truth, that there is a God; although in truth it is so evident in itself, that no argument can be brought to illustrate it, seeing nothing is so clear and manifest.

Sect. 2 - Who this God is, and how he may be described.

Secondly, we are to know what this God is, or rather who he is; For what he is in his own essence, he hath not revealed in the Scriptures, neither are we capable of this knowledge, nor any other creature, seeing he is infinite and we finite. But who he is, he hath made known in his Word; namely, that he is Jehovah Elohim, a Spirit infinite in all perfection, one in nature, and three in persons, the Father, Son and holy Ghost. By which description it appeareth, that God is primum ens, and the first being, who hath his essence of

himself, and giveth being to all things, as his name Jehovah signifieth; that he is uncreated, and a Spirit, as our Savior, the wisdom of the Father, hath made him known unto us, not so much thereby showing his essence what he is, which is ineffable and incomprehensible, as distinguishing him from all corporeal substances. That he is but one, because he is infinite in all perfection, wisdom, power, presence and the rest: and it is against the nature of infiniteness to be more than one; because he made and governeth all as supreme Monarch, in which Monarchy there can be no copartners; and because he is the cause of causes, from which all things have their being, and upon which they wholly depend.

Sect. 3 - Of God's attributes, and how they are ascribed unto God.

Thirdly, we must know, that this divine essence is infinite in all perfection. The which perfection is seen in his properties, which are not properly in God, who is all essence and no qualities: for whatsoever is in God, is God, but according to the capacity of our shallow understanding: neither do they differ from his essence, nor one from another; for God is one, and of a most simple nature, admitting no division into parts, faculties or properties, nor yet any essential distinction, but only in our comprehension or manner of understanding. So as we must not take his properties to be any parts of his essence, seeing every essential property is his whole essence, and therefore howsoever distinguished in respect of his diverse manner of working towards the creatures, yet not in themselves, but are inseparable one from another. In which respect, the wisdom of God, is the wise God; the power of God, the powerful God; and so in the rest. And his wisdom, power, mercy, goodness, justice, truth, are all one in their essence, there being in God but one most simple and pure act, unto which, diverse names are given in the Scriptures, to show unto us how it is diversely exercised towards the creatures.

Sect. 4 - Of God's primary attributes, and how they may be described.

Now these Attributes are of two sorts. First, primary: Secondly, secondary. Primary, are those which declare unto us the essence of God, as he is absolutely in himself, of which there being no similitude in the creatures, they are attributed unto God alone, without communication to any other. And in this number are God's Simplicity, Infiniteness, Eternity, Immensity, Immutability, and Omnipresence, all-sufficiency, and omnipotency. His simplicity is an essential attribute, by which is signified that the divine essence is undivided and absolute, without composition, parts or accidents, invisible, impassible, and all essence, so that whatsoever is in God, is God. His Infiniteness is, whereby is signified, that he is in his essence uncircumscribed, and above all measure of time, place or anything else, but simply immense and incomprehensible. The Eternity of God is an essential attribute, which signifieth that he is infinite and uncircumscribed by time, first and last, without beginning or ending, absolute without succession, wholly all, always and at once. His immensity is an essential attribute, whereby is signified, that the divine essence is without dimension and circumscription of place, wholly everywhere present, within the world, and without the world, containing all things, and being contained of nothing. His Immutability is an essential property, whereby is signified, that the divine nature being infinite, absolute, most simple and perfect, is subject to no change of generation, corruption, augmentation, or diminution, passion or alteration, but ever remaineth one and the same. His all-sufficiency is an essential property of the divine essence, whereby is signified, that in himself alone he is most perfect and absolute, and in all things sufficient, both for himself and for all creatures. Finally, his Omnipotency is an essential property of God's nature, whereby is signified his infinite and transcendent power, whereby he is able to do all things which are not repugnant to his nature and will.

Sect. 5 - Of God's secondary attributes, and how they differ from those shadows of them which are in the creatures.

The secondary attributes of God, are those which are spoken of God in a secondary relation, as he is the first and the chief Agent working in the creatures, especially man, some similitudes and resemblances of his own essential attributes, which are therefore (though improperly) called communicable, in respect of some analogy and likeness that they have with the properties which are in the creatures. For there is no perfection or good thing in them to be desired, of which the Idea and arch-type is not in God most absolute, infinite and eternal. But as they are essential properties of God's nature, they cannot be communicated to any creature, seeing they are most simple and indivisible, but only (as it were) some shows and shadows of them; which in many respects differ from those attributes which are in God; for in him they are his essence, and by it he liveth, understandeth, and is good, gracious and just: but in the creatures they are qualities, and bare properties. In him they are all most perfect, infinite, absolute, and most excellent, immutable and eternal; in which regard he may be said, not only to be wise, just, good and blessed, but wisdom, justice, goodness and blessedness itself. So that these secondary attributes in God, being his nature and essence, are to be understood by the primary, as by their rule and measure, and therefore are to be attributed unto him, most perfectly, simply, infinitely and absolutely: But in the creatures, the qualities which are some similitudes of these attributes, are mixed, imperfect, finite and mutable. In God all and every, his attributes being his essence, they can be but one, as his essence is one, simple and indivisible, so that by the same essence whereby he is wise, he is also true, and that, by which he is good, he is also just, merciful, and blessed: But in the creatures their properties are diverse, and differ from one another in their forms and operations. For by one faculty a man is wise, and willeth by another, and his qualities of justice, mercy, goodness, truth, are different properties one from another.

Sect. 6 - What God's secondary attributes are, and how they may be described.

Now, these secondary attributes of God, though they be all but one in him, yet in our comprehension and conceit, who can only judge of them according to their several kinds of working towards the creatures, they are manifold, as God's life, and immortality; his wisdom, truth, will, goodness, holiness, beneficence, love, grace, mercy, clemency, long suffering, patience, his justice, anger and hatred; all which are needful to be known of every Christian, not only that we may take notice of God's actions and operations towards us, but also may accordingly frame our actions and lives, that so being agreeable to his pure and holy nature, they may be acceptable in his sight. And therefore I thought it necessary to describe them briefly and severally, referring the Reader, who desireth to have them fully handled, to such Treatises as purposely entreat of this argument. The life of God is an essential attribute: whereby is signified, that the divine nature liveth, worketh and moveth in himself, and giveth unto all things life and motion. The immortality of God is his essential property: whereby is signified that he liveth eternally, and never dieth, but hath, doth and shall forever live, work and move himself, and give life, action and motion to all things that have life and motion. The wisdom of God is his essential property: whereby is signified, that God truly and perfectly with one eternal act of understanding, at once doth know himself and all things; and that not only externally, but also internally in their essence; not successively by discourse of reason, but at once most distinctly and clearly. Of which wisdom there are two parts. First, his prescience, whereby he hath from all eternity, seen and known all things which are, have been, or shall be, with infallible knowledge, as being all present to him, though past or to come, in respect of us. Secondly, his counsel, whereby he resolveth to rule and govern all things in the best and most wise manner, for the setting forth of his own glory. The truth of God, is his essential attribute, whereby he is made known unto us, to be in himself most true in all his words and works, yea, truth itself, and the Author of all truth which is in the creatures.

The God, is his essential attribute, whereby is signified, that God with one will of most free and just act, willeth all things, approving or disapproving whatsoever he knoweth. The goodness of God, is his essential property, whereby is signified, that he is infinitely good in and of himself, and the Author of all good, in and towards all the creatures. The holiness of God, is his essential attribute, whereby is signified, that his nature is wholly and most perfectly just, infinite in all virtue, justice, truth, mercy and purity, free from all vice, iniquity, and spot of any corruption, and therefore a lover of all purity and sanctity in the creatures, and a hater of all vice and impurity, as being contrary to his most holy nature. The beneficence of God, is his essential attribute, whereby he is known to be in himself the fountain of all bounty, and infinitely and absolutely good to the creatures, towards whom he exerciseth freely his beneficence and goodness. The love of God, is his essential attribute, whereby is signified, that he loveth himself chiefly, as being the chief goodness, and the creatures as they are good, freely approving, rewarding and delighting in them, and willing and performing all good unto them. The grace of God, is his essential property, whereby he is known to be in himself infinite in grace, and extendeth his favor and benignity freely unto his creatures. The mercy of God, is his essential property, whereby he is known to be most pitiful in himself, and in his own nature delighteth to help them that are in misery. The clemency of God, is his essential attribute, whereby is signified, that he is in his nature most gentle, and benign towards his creatures, in anger remembering mercy, and graciously pardoning us when we deserve punishment, willing rather the conversion than the death of sinners. The longsuffering and patience of God, is his essential property, whereby is noted, that he is patient in bearing with sinners, expecting their repentance, that he may have mercy upon them. The Justice of God, is his essential attribute, whereby he is known to be infinitely just in himself, and exerciseth Justice towards the creatures, being also the Author of all righteousness which is in them. The anger of God signifieth, his just and free will in punishing sin, and all injury offered against himself, or his Church and people.

The hatred of God, signifieth his just will, whereby he disalloweth, detesteth, and decreeth to punish evil and sin in his creatures.

Sect. 7 - Of the persons in Trinity.

And so much concerning God's attributes, whereby his nature is made known unto us, that we may accordingly serve him, and so carry ourselves, as that we may be acceptable in his sight. Now further we must know him in his persons, namely, that howsoever he is but one in nature and essence, yet he is distinguished into three persons, the Father, Son and holy Ghost. For the better understanding whereof, we are to know, that a person in the deity is a subsistence in the divine essence, comprehending the whole divine nature and essence in it, but distinguished by an incommunicable property from other persons, unto which it hath relation. Or it is the Godhead restrained or distinguished by his personal property. And therefore every person, containing in it the whole divine essence, it followeth, that whatsoever agreeth absolutely to, or is spoken of the whole divine nature, in respect of its outward actions and works towards the creatures, doth alike agree to every distinct person, and whatsoever agreeth to, or is spoken of every of the persons, that likewise agreeth to the whole divine nature. And from hence also it followeth, that these three divine persons, are in glory and all other attributes coequal, and in respect of time coeternal; but yet everyone is distinct from other, by their personal property. So that the divine nature being considered with the personal property of begetting, is the Father, and not the Son, nor holy Spirit; being considered with the personal property of being begotten, is the Son, and not the holy Ghost nor Father; and with the personal property of proceeding, is the holy Spirit, and neither the Father nor the Son. The Father then is the first person in Trinity, who having his being of himself, hath communicated his whole essence unto the Son, and so hath begotten him by eternal generation. The Son is the second person in Trinity, who is begotten of the Father. The holy Spirit is the third person in

the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, who is therefore called the Spirit, because he proceedeth, and (as it were) is breathed from them both; and the holy Spirit, because he doth immediately sanctify the elect, and make them holy, and the Father and Son do it mediately by him.

Sect. 8 - Of the knowledge of God's works, and first of his decree.

And thus have we briefly spoken of the knowledge of God, in respect of his nature and persons: now with like or more brevity, we are to entreat of the knowledge of God, in, and by his works and actions. The which are either internal, as the actions of the divine persons one towards another; or external, which are his operations and works towards the creatures. And these are principally two. First, the decree of God. And secondly, the execution of his decree. The decree of God is an act of the divine will, whereby he hath from all eternity purposed, that all should be done, which is, hath been, or shall be done, ordaining all things to a good end, and the means also, with all circumstances, whereby they attain unto it. And this is either common to all, or special to the reasonable creatures, as Angels and men. God's decree, which respecteth men and Angels, is called predestination, which is God's eternal purpose, whereby he hath ordained the reasonable creatures to certain ends, and to the means which conduce unto them. Of which, there are two parts, election, and reprobation. Election is God's eternal decree, whereby of his free grace, he hath purposed in Christ, to bring some to everlasting life, and to the use of the means, whereby they may attain unto it, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Reprobation is God's eternal decree, whereby he hath purposed in his election to pass by some men, and to leave them in their sins, that they may justly be condemned, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

Sect. 9 - Of the execution of God's decree in man's creation, fall, and misery.

The execution of God's decree, is an action or work of God, whereby in time, he bringeth to pass all that he hath eternally decreed, according to the counsel of his will. The which is either temporary or eternal. God's temporary decree is general or special. The general, is either the creation of all things of nothing, or the gubernation of them, being made by his providence. The special execution of his decree, respecteth either Angels or men. To say here nothing of Angels, we are to know, that God having created the earth of nothing, did make man of the earth, in respect of his body, and breathing into him the breath of life, did create him a living soul; that man was created according to God's own image, in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness, made Lord of all the creatures, and happy in the vision and fruition of God and his favor, and of the joys and pleasures of Paradise. That being created good, and yet but mutable, God left him to the freedom of his will, and to be tempted of the devil. Unto which temptation when he had yielded, by transgressing God's commandment, in eating of the forbidden fruit, he fell from this estate of happiness, into the state of sin, misery, and death. The which sin is imputed unto us who sinned in his loins, he being no private person, but the root of mankind; and the corruption of his nature, derived unto all his posterity by natural propagation, the which we call original sin, whereby God's image is defaced in us, and we disabled unto all good, and made prone unto all evil. From which original corruption, which is the fountain of all maliciousness, have sprung the cursed streams of actual transgressions, whereby we have broken God's whole Law, and every commandment of it, in thought, word, and deed, both by omitting the duties which are commanded, and committing the sins which are forbidden. Whereby we have made ourselves subject to the curse of the Law, and all the plagues and punishments therein threatened, both temporal and eternal; out of which miserable estate and condition, it was altogether impossible to recover by our own means, or the help of any, or all the creatures.

Sect. 10 - Of our recovery out of our misery.

And this was the execution of God's decree, in respect of man's creation, fall, and misery. Unto which, we must adjoin the knowledge of our recovery out of this wretched condition. To which purpose we must know, that when we were thus deeply plunged into this state of death and condemnation; and in respect of ourselves, or any means of our own, hopeless, and helpless, for our recovery, it pleased the Lord, of his mere grace and free mercy, to send his Son into the world, to take our nature upon him, and therein to work that great work of our redemption. The which he did perfectly perform, both by his merits and efficacy. The former he did by satisfying God's justice, both by his active obedience, in fulfilling the Law for us, and by his passive obedience, in suffering death in his body, and the anger of God in his soul. The which is a sufficient price of redemption for all that do apply it, because he that did this for us, was God and man. And so as his human nature made him capable of these sufferings, so the divine nature, which was the Altar upon which this sacrifice was offered, sanctified the gift, and gave unto it infinite value and dignity, so as it became a sufficient and fit satisfaction for sin. For as sin being nothing in itself but a privation, became of infinite guilt, in respect of the infinite Majesty of God, offended by it; so the sufferings of Christ's human nature, though temporary, became of infinite value, in respect of the dignity of the person who suffered, being God and man. And as thus Christ saved us by his merits, so also by his efficacy, applying the virtue of his merits unto us by his Spirit and Word; which begetting in us a lively faith, that bringeth forth the fruits of unfeigned repentance, we perform thereby the Covenant of grace, and so are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits, which are therein promised. For in the preaching of the Gospel, this covenant is proclaimed, and we are effectually called to the knowledge and participation thereof, God giving Christ unto us to be our Savior, and us to Christ to be saved by him, yea, uniting us unto him in one mystical body, whereof he is the Head, and we his

members, by virtue whereof, as we are partakers of him, so have we also right and interest unto all his benefits. Of which union, the chief bond on God's part, is his holy Spirit, and on our part, a lively and justifying faith; which is wrought in us by the preaching of the Gospel, made effectual by the inward operation of the Spirit of God, and confirmed and increased by the use of the Sacraments, which are the seals annexed to the Covenant, to assure us that God will not fail to perform all his promises. And these things are the object of our saving knowledge, or the main points which we are to know unto salvation, and to enable us to walk in the way of a godly life that leadeth unto it. The which I would not here have touched, were not this knowledge necessary hereunto; or would have handled them more fully and exactly, but that I feared, that they would cause this Treatise too much to swell, and far to exceed the limits which I have proposed unto it; and also considered that there are already published many Catechisms and sums of Divinity, in which, all men at their pleasure may find these, and many other the like points of our Christian Religion thoroughly discussed.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the quantity and quality of saving knowledge, and how necessary it is to a godly life.

Sect. 1 - Of the quantity of knowledge, and the diverse degrees of it.

The next point to be considered in our knowledge, is the quantity and measure of it; the which is imperfect in the greatest perfection which in this life can be attained. For as the Apostle (though he had received abundance of the Spirit, and such revelations as were not lawful to be uttered) confessed of himself, together with others, We know but in part; and see through a glass darkly; and if any man think that he knoweth anything (namely in perfection) he knoweth

nothing as he ought to know. For, we walk by faith, and not by sight. And, faith is of things unseen, and not in vision and fruition. Neither can we attain to perfect knowledge, until we attain unto perfect happiness, which is not in this life, but the life to come, when we shall see God face to face, and shall know as we are known; not by the knowledge of faith, which is but by hearing, signs, semblances, and revelations; but of vision, fruition, and most firm experience. For the perfection of our knowledge here, consisteth most in the knowledge and acknowledgment of our imperfection, and not in the high degree of quantity, but in the sincerity and truth. The which knowledge discovereth our ignorance, that we may bewail it, and causeth us (not in pride and self-conceit, to content ourselves with that we have, but seeing our imperfections) to labor in the use of all good means, after a greater measure, till by attaining to one degree after another, we do in the end obtain, with perfection of knowledge, perfect happiness. But yet in this imperfect knowledge there are diverse degrees, which accordingly are diversely required, that they may be acceptable unto God, and sufficient for us and our salvation. First, in respect of the diverse times of illumination, for in the twilight of the Law, when as the Sun was not yet risen, there was not so great a measure of knowledge required, as in the broad day of the Gospel, when as God requireth some proportion between our sight of knowledge, and the light of his truth shining unto us. Otherwise we can have no assurance that we are in the number of his Church, and of those with whom the Covenant of grace is made, unless the Prophecies foretold of such, be verified in us, and among the rest, that we, who are taught by his Son and Spirit, shall know God and his will in far greater perfection, then they did which were under the Pedagogy of the Law. So in respect of the means, God requireth a greater measure, according to their greatness; expecting much, where he hath given much; as more of those where the Gospel is freely and openly preached, then of those, who living in times of persecution, have it only by stealth, and with many difficulties and dangers. And in a flourishing Church (such as ours is) he requireth the greatest measure, where he hath planted the most faithful Ministry. And therefore in this clear light of the Gospel, and liberal

means which God alloweth us, we are to labor after a like measure of knowledge, as the Apostle exhorteth the Colossians, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom: to which end, we must not cease to pray for ourselves as the Apostle for them, that we may be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Finally, that our knowledge may be acceptable, there is a diverse measure required, in respect of diverse callings. As that the Ministers must exceed the people, seeing they are appointed their teachers and guides, and the Priests lips must preserve knowledge, that the people may seek the Law at their mouth. That the rich exceed the poor, because they have more leisure, liberty, and opportunity to use the means; that the husband exceed the wife, and the father the children, because they are bound by their places to teach and instruct them. And finally, that they who have been long Scholars in Christ's School, do excel those who are novices, and but newly admitted, for want of which proficiency, the Hebrews are sharply reprov'd by the Apostle. But yet we are to know, that in all true members of the Church, who are of age and capacity, it is required, that they understand the main principles of Christian Religion, which are contained in ordinary Catechisms, that they may be able to render an account of their faith to those that ask them; to instruct those who are under their government, and to know and discern the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger, to try the spirits whether they be of God or no, and not hand over head receive whatsoever is delivered by those who are in the habit and place of a Minister, but to discern, at least, in main points necessary to salvation, the sound doctrines of their faithful teachers, from the errors and untruths of false seducers.

Sect. 2 - Of the quality of our knowledge, that must be effectual.

The last thing required in our knowledge, respecteth the quality of it, that it be sanctifying effectual, and saving knowledge. Neither doth every kind of knowledge make us and our lives acceptable unto God;

for there is a false knowledge, consisting in vain speculations, fables, quirks, and conceits of wit, endless and useless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than edifying which is in faith, and making men rather more proud and contentious, then more holy and religious, which is odious unto God. And there is a literal or speculative knowledge swimming in the brain, which not being effectual for the sanctifying of the heart, and amendment of the life, doth not profit, but rather hurt those that have it, puffing them up with pride, and making them disdain those that want it. The which, as it increaseth their sin, because it is committed against knowledge and conscience, and leaveth men without excuse, so doth it make their punishment more grievous, and their condemnation more intolerable; for the servant that knoweth his masters will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; and it shall be more easy for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of Judgment, then for Chorazin and Bethsaida, because, hearing Christ's Word, and seeing his works, they repented not. This knowledge, though it be true in respect of the object, which is the Word and truth of God, yet is it vain in regard of the effect, being ineffectual to a godly life, and to the assuring us of life eternal; in which, when we excel never so much, yet shall we come short of many wicked men, who are in the state of death and condemnation, yea of the devils themselves, who in theory and speculation know more then we. Yea, in truth such knowledge is no better than ignorance in God's estimate, seeing we know only so much in Christianity as we bring into use and practice, according to that of the Apostle; Hereby we do know that we know God, if we keep his Commandments; he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. And again, Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth (that is, in whomsoever sin ruleth and reigneth) hath not seen him, neither known him.

Sect. 3 - That saving knowledge is necessary to a godly life.

And therefore if we would be accepted of God, and have our lives and ways pleasing in his sight, we must not content ourselves with such a knowledge as swims in the brain, but labor after such a saving and effectual knowledge, to be the guide of all our works and actions, which maketh use of all we know, for the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, and the reforming of our lives and conversations. For example, knowing that there is a God, we must worship and serve him, and professing him with our lips, we must not deny him in our lives. Knowing that he is a Spirit, we must not rest in bodily exercise, which profiteth nothing, but worship him in spirit and truth. Knowing that he is infinite and omnipresent, we must with Enoch walk with God, and in all things carry ourselves, as before him. Knowing that he is all-sufficient, we must trust in him for all things, both in the presence and absence of inferior means. Knowing that he is omniscient and the searcher of our inward parts, we must approve our hearts as well as our works unto him, and make conscience of committing secret sins, as well as those which are open and manifest to the world. Knowing that he is omnipotent, we must depend upon him for preservation from all evil, and defense against all enemies; and that in greatest difficulties and dangers, because things, even impossible to men, are possible with God. Knowing that he is the chief Good, we must love him above all things; knowing that he is true, yea truth itself, we must believe his Word and promises. Knowing that he is just, we must fear to offend him; that he is merciful, we must hope in him; that he is bountiful, we must do cheerful service to so gracious a Master. Knowing that he is but one God, we must worship him alone, and not false gods and graven Images, and set up no Idols in our hearts, as the earthly Mammon with the covetous, worldly honors and vain glory with the ambitious, and carnal and sinful pleasures, with those that are voluptuous. Finally, knowing that he is one in essence, and three in persons, we must worship the Unity in Trinity. Knowing that God the Father, is our Father in Christ, we must reverence, fear and love him; that God the Son is our Redeemer, we must worship and serve him, in holiness and righteousness, before him, all the days of our lives; and knowing that the holy Ghost is our Sanctifier, and dwelleth in us, we

must possess our vessels in purity and honor, that we may be fit temples and habitations for this holy Ghost, &c.

Sect. 4 - Of the means of saving knowledge.

And this is that saving knowledge which is necessary to a godly life; the which we have not of ourselves; for every man is beast in his own knowledge, wise unto evil, and unto any good without understanding; but it is a grace and free gift of God, as before we have showed. And therefore if we would obtain it, we must carefully and conscionably use all good means which he hath appointed for this purpose. And first we must beg this grace of God by fervent and effectual prayer, according to that of the Apostle James, If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him; as we see in the example of Solomon: and desire him to send his holy Spirit into our hearts, which will lead us into all truth, and like a precious eye-salve, will open and illighten the blind eyes of our understandings; that we may see the wonders of God's Law. The which our prayer will be more effectual to prevail with God, if we crave this knowledge to this end, that we may glorify him by it, according to that of David, Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous works; and make our knowledge the rule of our lives, practicing the things we know in the whole course of our conversation, to which end David beggeth it of God: Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end; Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I will observe it with my whole heart. Secondly, let us be diligent in hearing, reading and meditating of God's Word, which giveth light and understanding unto the simple, and is sufficient to make us wise in all things unto salvation; and to make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Thirdly, we must use holy conferences with others, whereby we shall enrich our minds by communicating with them in their stock, and more firmly imprint in our memories that which we know

already, according to that of the Apostle, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. Fourthly, we must labor to be reconciled unto God in Christ, and then becoming his friends, he will make us acquainted with his will and counsels, according to that of our Savior; I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. Fifthly, let us labor to have our hearts fraughted with God's fear; for if any man fear the Lord, him shall he teach the way that he shall choose. Sixthly, let us deck ourselves with humility, for he giveth his grace to the humble, and teacheth him his way; he revealeth his secrets to little babes, and hideth them from those who are wise and prudent in their own conceits. And therefore we must be fools to ourselves and to the world, if we would be wise to God and our own salvation. For there is no true wisdom, but in the saving knowledge of God and his will, and holy obedience yielded unto them, according to that of the Prophet, The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom, is in them? Seventhly, we must labor after holiness, for God revealeth his mysteries unto his Saints, but will not suffer his wisdom to enter into a profane and malicious soul, as we see in the experience of the greatest Prelates and Doctors of the world, who living in profaneness and all sensuality, have not so much feeling, saving and experimental knowledge of God, and the mysteries of his Kingdom, as many silly women and simple Idiots. Lastly, we must put those things in practice which we already know, and then will God reveal more unto us, and fasten that which we know already, in our hearts and memories; for as our Savior saith, If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine; and we shall with David, be wiser then the ancient, yea, then our teachers, if we have more care then they in keeping God's Commandments; For the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil, is understanding. And as David saith, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of a lively and justifying faith, which is the second main ground of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That without faith we cannot perform any duties of a godly life.

The second main ground of a godly life, is a true and justifying faith, without which we cannot perform any duty acceptable to God. For before our works can be acceptable, our persons must be accepted; neither can the actions of an enemy be pleasing unto him with whom he is at enmity, before they be reconciled: we must first be good trees, before we can bring forth any good fruits, and have our hearts sanctified by faith, before we can do the works of sanctification. For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one, saith Job. And what is man, that he should be clean? And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? As Eliphaz speaketh. First Abel's person must be accepted, before his sacrifice could be acceptable. And we cannot be accepted in ourselves, being dead in sin, and the children of wrath as well as others, till being by faith united unto Christ, God accepteth of us in his best Beloved. Without faith therefore it is impossible to please God, for till our persons please him, our actions cannot. Again, Whatsoever is not done of faith, is sin; and our best actions which seem most glorious in the eyes of men, will not endure the sight of God's justice, because they are imperfect, and stained with the filth of our corruptions, till having applied Christ unto us by faith, our unrighteousness be covered with his perfect righteousness, and our corruptions be washed away with his blood. And this was the cause why the Jews, who followed after the law of righteousness, did not attain unto the

law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith in Christ, but by their own works of the law. Moreover, we are wild vines, till we be engrafted into the true Vine Jesus Christ; and can bring forth no good fruit, for without him we can do nothing. But being planted into this living Stock by a lively faith, we derive from him such sap of grace, that we are made fruitful in all holy obedience; and as without him we can do nothing, so with him we are enabled to the performance of all good duties, according to that of the Apostle; I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me. Furthermore, faith is the prime grace that is (after we are illuminated) wrought in us by the Spirit; and the only living Fountain, from which all true obedience floweth: for till it purifieth the heart, we have not so much as a desire to please God in the performance of any duty; nor any power to produce a good action, till faith worketh by love, and giveth unto us life and motion. And finally, without faith there can be no love, for we cannot love God, till first we be assured that he loveth us; and without love there can be no obedience, for love is the fulfilling of the law, and therefore the want of love, is the root of all disobedience and transgression. But when by faith we are persuaded of God's love in Christ, then do we love God again who hath so loved us: and this love worketh in us a desire to please him in all things, both by hating and forsaking that which he hateth, and by loving and embracing that, which he loveth and commandeth. So that according to the measure of our faith, such is the measure of our love; and if our love be great or small, such also will be the fruits of our obedience.

Sect. 2 - That faith and a godly life are inseparable companions.

Faith therefore and a godly life are inseparable companions, being united together in the bond of love, which is stronger than death itself; and as a godly life cannot possibly be without faith, no more than the fruit without the tree, or a well-built house without a foundation, or breath without a living body: So neither can a lively

faith be severed from a godly life. For being by faith assured of God's love, we cannot choose but love him again, and approve our love by our new obedience. Being by faith engrafted into Christ, and so become trees of righteousness, of God's own planting, we cannot but bring forth good fruits; For as an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit, seeing the fruit always followeth the nature of the tree. And as men do not gather Grapes of thorns, nor Figs of thistles; so neither Crabs of Apple trees, nor wild and sour grapes, of a good and fruitful vine. Finally, faith and the fruits of obedience in a godly life, are the one the cause, and the other the effect, which have such mutual relation, that they argue and prove, either the presence or absence one of another; as if there be a Father, there must needs be a child of which he is a father; and if there be a child, there must needs be a father of whom he is a child. If there be a Sun, there must needs be beams spreading from it; and if there be beams, there must needs be a Sun from which they are spread. If there be a living body, it must needs move and breathe, and if there be a vital breath, then must there needs be a living body from which it is breathed. And therefore as we may conclude that if there be no father, son nor body, there can be no child, beams nor breath; so where there is no faith, there can be no fruits of obedience, seeing these, as effects, do arise and spring from that cause. And contrariwise as we may infer, that if there be no child, beams or breath, there can be no father, light or body; so also that if there be no fruits of obedience in a godly life, there can be no faith, but only some show and shadow of it, as a man, though wanting a child, is like a father, the shadow of the sun in the water, like unto the sun in the firmament, and a dead carcass, like a living body, nor yet a godly life and true obedience, without faith, but some glorious resemblance of it in outward appearance. As a fatherless boy is like a child who hath a father, the lightening hath some similitude of the beams of the Sun, and the breath of the wind, hath some resemblance to the breath of life.

Sect. 3 - That all those deceive themselves, who disjoin faith from a godly life.

Where by the way we may perceive that diverse sorts of men are notably deceived, and cozen themselves of their own salvation. As first, carnal gospellers and profane protestants, who brag of their faith as being strong and certain, and yet live in all impiety and unrighteousness, bringing forth no fruits of their faith in good works, and the duties of a godly life. Secondly, civil worldlings, and superstitious Papists, who pleasing themselves with their blind devotion, will-worship, human inventions, and some outward shows of good works, as fasting's, penances, alms deeds, hospitality and such like, do think God also pleased with them, and will reward them with heavenly happiness; when as they are destitute of true faith, and utterly ignorant of God and his will, making no conscience of the duties of the first Table, to perform them in that manner which God hath required; but either neglect them altogether, or else do them according to their own meanings, wills, and human inventions and traditions. Thirdly, such as being touched with some inward guilt of conscience for their sins, through some affliction, or upon the hearing of some powerful Sermon, do somewhat grieve for their sins, and so betake themselves, at least in many things, to a new course of life. The which, their sorrow accompanied with this reformation, they think pleasing to God, and sufficient to secure them of their salvation, though they be destitute of the saving knowledge of God, and a lively faith in Christ, and do these duties, not out of love towards God, following their assurance of his love towards them; but out of self-love, and servile fear, either of temporal punishments, or eternal death and condemnation. But let them all know, that a lively faith, and a godly life, are inseparable companions, which never go asunder; for as well may we part the heat from the fire, the light from the Sun, and make a good tree, retaining still its nature, barren of fruit, as separate true faith, and a godly life one from another. And therefore that the strong faith of carnal Protestants, is nothing else but fruitless security, and fond presumption; that the devotion and good works of civil worldlings and ignorant Papists, are blind

superstition, will-worship, and glorious sins; like trees that have no roots, and fair buildings that have no foundation; and that the sudden flood of sorrow, raised by some tempest of conscience, or storm of affliction, and springeth not from the fountain of faith, is but worldly sorrow that causeth death, which commonly lasteth but a while; and when the causes of it are removed, doth easily give place to the contrary extreme of worldly rejoicing, and carnal liberty.

Sect. 4 - Of a general faith.

Now the faith that is required unto a godly life, as the ground and foundation of it, is either general or special. The general faith is a common gift of the Spirit, by which we believe and give firm assent to the whole Word of God, as true and certain. It is called general, because the object of it is general, even the whole Word of God, and every part of it; and but a common gift of the Spirit, because it may be in the reprobate as well as in the elect, seeing it applieth not Christ and his benefits for our justification. For by this faith Ahab believing and assenting to the truth of God's threatening's, outwardly humbled himself, and so adjourned his punishments. And the Ninevites believing the truth of God's Word in the mouth of Jonah, repented, as they believed, that is, after a general and legal manner, out of fear to be attached with those heavy judgments which were threatened, and so escaped them. Yet this faith is more than a doubtful opinion, seeing it firmly assenteth to the whole truth, and is to be preferred before natural knowledge and persuasion, grounded upon the evidence of sense and reason, seeing it resteth upon the sole authority of God's infallible truth, and consequently, is more firm and undoubted, because sense and reason may be deceived, but the truth of God can never fail. Again, though it be not a sanctifying gift of the Spirit, yet it is more properly then the other, a gift of the sanctifying Spirit, and necessary unto justifying faith, as being a degree leading to it; as also unto a godly life, seeing it is required, that not only all we do, be agreeable to the Scriptures, but also that

we believe and be persuaded, that they are agreeable; for as the Apostle teacheth us, whatsoever is done in doubting, whether it please God or no, and hath not this warrant of faith to make us confident, it is, though materially a good action, yet formally no better than sin in God's sight.

Sect. 5 - Of justifying faith, what it is, and what are the things required unto it.

The special faith, which is the main ground of a godly life, is a true, lively, and justifying faith, which is a sanctifying grace infused by God's holy Spirit, whereby we do firmly and effectually believe, and assent unto the promises of the Gospel, especially those which offer Christ and his benefits unto us, and also them particularly unto ourselves, with assurance that they all do belong unto us; and so rest wholly upon them for our justification and salvation; whereby it appeareth, that there are four things required unto justifying faith. First, knowledge of God's Word, especially the gracious promise of Christ and all his benefits, to all that will receive him as their Savior, and rest upon him for their salvation. For first we must know the promises, before we can believe them, according to that of the Apostle, How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? Namely, by the preaching of the Gospel: for as faith cometh by hearing, so this hearing is only of the Word of God. Secondly, assent to the truth of the Scriptures, especially the promises of the Gospel; for after that our minds are enlightened with the knowledge of God's truth, (by which is revealed unto us, first, our sin and misery, and that we cannot by ourselves, nor the help of any creature come out of it, to the end that we may be humbled and despair of our own strength; and secondly, the infinite love of God, and his free mercies in Jesus Christ, together with the gracious promises of the Gospel made in him, whereby is offered unto us, mercy, reconciliation, the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, to all that believe, and will receive them by the hand of faith,

bringing forth the fruits thereof, in hearty repentance and new obedience) then doth God's holy Spirit, by his secret operation, make the Ministry of the Word effectual, to work in us a firm assent to this truth of God, respecting our salvation; not so much in respect of the clear evidence hereof in itself, or the forcibleness of the arguments which are brought to convince and persuade natural reason; as in regard of God's authority, who is most infallible in his truth, infinite in his goodness, and almighty, to perform whatsoever he hath promised. Which assent being effectual in us, doth work in our understandings, a persuasion, that our sins, though in themselves heinous, yet compared with God's infinite mercies, and the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, are pardonable; in our judgments a precious and high esteem of these mercies and merits above all worldly things: In our hearts an hungering and thirsting desire, to be made partakers of them for the remission of our sins; in our wills a firm resolution to renounce all other means, and to rest wholly upon God's mercies and Christ's merits for our justification and salvation. And in our actions, a careful endeavor, to use all good means, whereby we may be more and more assured of God's love in Christ, and among the rest, in all things to please God, in all our thoughts, words, and works, that so we may glorify him from whom we expect so great grace and mercy, and make our calling and election sure. The third thing required, is an apprehension and application of the promises of the Gospel, the infinite mercies of God, and all-sufficient merits of Christ unto ourselves in particular, which is the form and very life of faith, and maketh the things thus applied, useful and effectual for our justification, and without which we shall have no more benefit by them, then a man hath by a sovereign salve and cordial medicine, not applied and taken, or by warm clothes which are not put on. The last thing required, is affiance and confidence, when as knowing, assenting unto, and applying God's mercies and Christ's merits unto ourselves, we rest and rely wholly upon them for our justification and salvation.

Sect. 6 - That after illumination there are three degrees of faith; and the manner how they are wrought in us.

So that after illumination there are three degrees of faith, the first is an effectual assent to the promises of the Gospel, which worketh in our hearts a hungering desire after Christ and his benefits, and in our wills a resolution to cast ourselves upon him alone for our salvation. By which the Christian truly liveth, but yet like a new born babe, who weakly performeth the actions of life, but knoweth not, that he either liveth or moveth. And so weak it is in apprehension and application, that he can hardly discern it, and often calleth in question whether he hath any hold at all or no. It is strong in desiring, but feeble in performing; resolved by all means to stick unto Christ, but yet scarce sensible of any union. It admireth the glorious beams and brightness of God's love shining in the Word, but feeleth little warmth of joy and comfort by it in his own heart and conscience. It worketh in the weak Christian, a hungering after the sincere milk of the Word, that he may grow up thereby, but with little or no sense, that he is nourished, or any whit increased in the spiritual growth. He seeketh earnestly for grace and peace, but they seem to fly from him, and is still wishing for more and more, but hath little comfort in feeling and fruition. His desires so far exceed the proportion which he hath received, that it is swallowed up of them, so that nothing in appearance remaineth: And (like covetous men) he thinketh not on what he hath, but upon what he hath not, and spends a great part of that time in complaints of his wants, which should be employed in praising God for that plenty which he hath received. But this faith is still in growth, though they that have it, do not see it growing; for the Lord is no more ready to enlarge our hearts with hungering desires after grace, then to satisfy them; this being his main end why (like the Merchant) he stretcheth out these empty bags, that he may replenish them with a greater portion of these hid treasures. And therefore when the weak believer carefully and conscionably laboreth in the use of all good means, for the strengthening and increasing of his faith, as hearing the Word, Sacraments, Meditation, Prayer, and such like, the Lord with his Spirit so blesseth them unto him, that

from this first degree of faith he cometh to the second, namely, to a comfortable apprehension of God's promises, as belonging to himself, to some sense and feeling of the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the holy Ghost, and to some assurance that he in particular hath part and interest in God's mercies and Christ's merits, whereby he is justified and shall be saved. And this is the second degree of faith, which being but weak in the apprehension of Christ and his righteousness, and in the sense and feeling of God's love, is assaulted with much doubting, and oftentimes shaken with grievous temptations, whereby the Christians hold seemeth for the time wholly lost, and his faith in the operations of it almost quite extinguished; and therefore having attained unto this degree, he resteth not in it as sufficient, but laboreth in the use of all good means, whereby his faith may be more and more strengthened and increased, until it come to the third and last degree of perfection, which is that plerophory, and fullness of persuasion of the remission of our sins, of our union with Christ, and God's unchangeable love towards us in him, from which, nothing in the world shall be able to divide us, as we see in the Apostle Paul's example. Upon which followeth Christian security, in the assurance of God's protection, and peace of conscience, that passeth all understanding, which though it be assaulted, yet is seldom impeached and impugned with any violence of temptations, trouble of mind, or terrors of conscience. And from hence springeth inward joy, unspeakable and glorious, out of our assurance and sweet feeling of God's love, and the certain persuasion of our own salvation, whereby we are made cheerful and constant, not only in doing all which God commandeth, but also in suffering whatsoever he inflicteth.

Sect. 7 - That the duties of a godly life hold a proportion with our faith, whether it be weak or strong.

And these are the degrees of a lively faith, without which, or someone of them, we cannot do anything pleasing unto God, or set one step

forward in the way of godliness: for faith is a cause and an inseparable companion of a godly life, of which, if we be destitute in the least degrees, well may we be ignorantly devout, and zealously superstitious, but we shall never perform any one duty in such sort as God will accept of it. And according to the degree and measure of our faith, such also will be our fruits of godliness, they holding a proportion the one with the other: for as a weak hand may as truly live and move as a stronger, but yet is not so powerful in motion, nor possibly able to do so much work; and as a little tree newly planted, may bring forth good fruit, as well as one that is come to perfect growth, yet cannot do it in equal quantity: So he that hath the weakest faith, liveth an holy life, doth some good works, and bringeth forth some fruits of godliness and righteousness; but his works are not so many, not his fruits in such plenty and abundance, as theirs whose faith is grown to an higher degree. Neither in truth is it possible, that it should be otherwise, seeing weaklings in faith have more to do, and less ability to perform. For the devils policy binds him to use all means to supplant them when as he hath most hope, and to pull up faith by the roots, when it is newly planted; and his malice rageth most against those who have newly escaped out of his bondage, and refuse any longer to be governed by him. The world more vehemently laboreth to hinder the good proceedings of those, who have newly separated from it, as conceiving more hope of their reclaiming; and the corruptions of their own flesh, are much stronger to betray them into the hands of their foreign foes. So that they are in the same case with Nehemiah and his fellows, who must in one hand hold their working instruments, and in the other their weapons, that they may be ready to repel their enemies. And therefore having these and so many other difficulties, with innumerable discouragements to hinder them, and fewer and weaker comforts to hearten them on in their Christian course; it is no marvel if they do not make so good riddance of their work, nor bring forth such plentiful fruits of godliness in their lives, as those who are stronger in faith, and have overcome these difficulties, and after the conquest of their spiritual enemies, have now attained to some peace and rest. And hereof it is, that they that are weak in faith, are more unsettled in the Christian

course, one while going forward, another while intermitting their labor; one while standing still, and soon after slipping and falling in their way, or wandering out of it into the by-ways of sin; because they have strong opposition, and are weak to make any resistance: only the Lord, who hath promised that none of his shall be tempted above their power, and delighteth to glorify his might in their infirmities, doth assist them with his Spirit, and thereby enableth them to overcome all difficulties; and when they slip, preserveth them from falling, or being fallen, raiseth them up again; reneweth their strength when it is decayed, and giveth them, in the end, a good issue out of all their temptations, and an happy victory over all their enemies.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the means whereby we may obtain a lively faith, and daily increase it from the least to the highest degree.

Sect. 1 - Of five special means whereby we may obtain a lively faith.

Seeing then faith is so necessary to a godly life, and higher degrees of it, for attaining of higher perfection, and making of a further progress in the ways of holiness and righteousness; it behooveth everyone, who desireth to lead a life acceptable unto God, to use all good means whereby he may attain unto faith, and having the first degrees of it, not to rest in them, but to use all endeavor, whereby he may grow from faith to faith, until he attain unto fullness of persuasion. Now the means of attaining faith are many. The first and principal is prayer, which is not only in itself a powerful means to obtain it of God, but also of making all other means effectual to those ends for which we use them. For faith is not of ourselves (as the

Apostle teacheth us) but it is a free grace and gift of God; and as our Savior saith, It is his work that we believe on him whom he hath sent. And none have it, but they unto whom it is given, according to that of the Apostle; Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. Now the way to get God's gifts, is, to beg them at his hands by effectual prayer, according to that, If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth all men liberally; seeing he hath tied himself by his gracious promise, that if we ask, we shall receive; and that whatsoever we desire in his Sons name, he will give it us. And therefore if we would have faith, we must be frequent and fervent in prayer, and after that by God's Spirit it is, like a small seed, sown in our hearts, and scarcely to be discerned, being hidden from our sight under the clods of our corruptions; we must use the same means to bring it to some growth, saying with the Apostles, Lord, increase our faith, and with the father of the possessed child, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. The second means is, that we adjoin ourselves to the true Church of God, where the Word is sincerely and powerfully taught, and the Sacraments duly and rightly administered. For howsoever our faith is not built upon the Church, yet doth it prepare our hearts to the receiving of it, not only in respect of that authority which it hath, to move us to the embracing of that which it embraceth and commendeth unto us; but also as it offereth the means which only are effectual for the begetting and increasing of our faith, being the Master of the Rowles, which hath the custody of all our spiritual evidences, and the keeper of God's Seals, whereby our faith is assured of the truth of his promises. The third means, is the careful and conscionable hearing of God's Word, with a desire to profit by it; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; in which respect the Preachers of the Gospel are called Ministers, by whom the people believe; because their Ministry is the ordinary means of begetting faith in them. The fourth means, is the use of the Sacraments, which are as Seals annexed to the Covenant of grace, whereby we are undoubtedly assured, that God will make good unto us all his promises of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. The fifth is, Christian conferences and holy examples, whereby we gain subjects

to Christ's Kingdom, and build up one another in our holy faith, as we see in the example of the woman of Samaria, who by her sayings, drew many to believe in Christ: and of Aquila and Priscilla, who by their holy conferences, informed Apollos more perfectly in the way of the Lord.

Sect. 2 - Of the last means of obtaining faith, which is meditation on diverse subjects.

The last means is often to meditate upon these points following. First, upon God's everlasting and undeserved love, which moved him, even whilst we were sinners, the children of wrath, the vassals of Satan, and enemies to God and his grace, to send his only begotten, and dearly beloved Son into the world, that taking our nature upon him, he might therein redeem and save us, by satisfying his justice, in paying for us an all-sufficient price for our redemption. And therefore he that sought us when we were lost, will not cast us away when he hath found us. He that so loved us when we were enemies, will not forsake us now, if we seek his favor. He that out of mere love gave Christ to redeem us by his death, will not, when he hath bought us at so dear a price, suffer us to perish, if we apply Christ and his merits by faith, when as a free gift he offereth him unto us. Secondly, let us meditate on God's infinite mercy, which causeth him to delight, not in death and destruction, but the conversion and salvation of sinners. The which his mercy being above all his works, and infinitely greater then all our sins, is freely offered unto us, and we are sure to receive it, if we do not reject it by unbelief. Thirdly, let us meditate on God's immutable and infallible truth in his promises, and his omnipotent power, whereby he is able to perform them. Fourthly, upon the all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness and obedience, whereby God's justice is fully satisfied, and his wrath appeased, of which we shall be partakers, if we believe in him as our only Savior and Redeemer. Fifthly, let us meditate on the Covenant of grace, wherein the Lord promiseth the pardon of our

sins, and the salvation of our souls, not upon the condition of our works and worthiness, nor with exception of our sins, but upon the alone condition of a lively faith, which bringeth forth the fruits thereof in unfeigned repentance. Sixthly, let us meditate upon the generality and indefiniteness of God's promises, which exclude no sorts of sinners, who do not exclude themselves by their unbelief, rejecting God's pardon when as it is offered, and pulling off the sovereign salve of Christ's merits and obedience, so as it cannot cure their sores of sin. Lastly, let us meditate upon faith, not only as it is an instrument, whereby Christ is applied, but also as it is a duty, which is not arbitrary to be done or not done at our free choice, but expressly commanded by God, as the condition of the covenant which he hath made with us, the which we also in our baptism have undertaken to perform. And therefore setting all doubts and disputes aside, we must believe in obedience to God's Commandment. And so much the rather, because God hath not only required it at our hands, but hath also used all means enabling us to perform it. For he hath made his covenant with us of grace and salvation, and though he be truth itself, and cannot fail of his promises, yet respecting our imbecility and weakness of faith, he hath, to put away all doubting, confirmed them by his oath, and by annexing unto his hand-writing, his seals the Sacraments.

Sect. 3 - Of the means whereby we may attain unto fullness of persuasion.

And these are the means of begetting and confirming of our faith, that it may not only assent unto the truth of God's promises, but also apply and apprehend them to our own particular use. Now, that from these two first degrees we may grow unto fullness of persuasion, which, in assurance of our perseverance in the fruition of God's love, doth make us, with the Apostle, to triumph over all difficulties and dangers, there are diverse other things required. As first, that we esteem faith our chief riches; and this will make us spiritually

covetous, and careful by all means to add unto this treasure. Secondly, we cannot come to this fullness of faith, but by often experience of God's love, shining in the riches of his mercies, especially in things appertaining to grace and eternal glory. To which purpose we must be sensible of God's goodness, and diligently observe his favors towards us, and so by induction of particulars (that seeing so often and many ways he hath been gracious, and hath given unto us such innumerable testimonies and pledges of his love, hence) we may gather an experimental conclusion, that being immutable in his goodness, we shall live and die in his favor, and nothing shall be able to separate us from it. Thirdly, we attain unto this fullness of persuasion, by becoming more and more acquainted with God in the use of his holy ordinances, as prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament of the Supper, and meditation; for hereby our communion and acquaintance with God is increased; and the better we know him, the more firmly will we trust and believe in him, tasting hereby the sweetness of his goodness, and the infallibility of his mercy and truth. Fourthly, we attain unto certain and full assurance of God's love toward us, by our often testifying and approving of our love towards God, in our care to keep all his Commandments, that thereby we may glorify his Name, by having the light of our holy conversation shining before men: seeing we could not possibly love him, if he had not loved us first: and whom he loveth, to the end he loveth them. Finally, we attain unto it by continual exercising ourselves in good works, and by the daily practice of Christian duties, and leading of a godly life. For as faith justifying us, by applying Christ's righteousness, doth cause a good conscience, after we have peace with God; so when we keep our consciences, purged with Christ's blood, clear and unspotted of any known, willing and gross sin, it doth marvelously confirm our faith in the assurance of God's love, seeing we are careful to maintain our peace with him, and therefore assuredly he will be at peace with us; according to that of the Apostle; If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.

Sect. 4 - Of that special faith whereby we apply Christ for our sanctification.

And so much concerning justifying faith, which is the ground and foundation of a godly life. Besides which generally considered, there is a special faith, or rather a branch of the other, which is very profitable and necessary to uphold and further us in our course of Christianity; namely, when as we do by faith apply Christ, not only for salvation; but also for sanctification, and apprehend the promises, both for justification and life eternal, and also for the subduing of our corruptions, and renovation unto newness of life in this World. In which respect also it may be truly said, that the just do live by their faith, and that they cannot lead their lives in holiness and righteousness without it. For there are so many mighty enemies that encounter us in this way, so many difficulties and dangers which we must overcome, so many duties contrary to our corrupt nature to be necessarily performed, and so many strange corruptions to be mortified and subdued in us, that if we respect our own strength, it will plainly appear to be utterly impossible to go forward in the course of godliness, or to attain unto any measure of that sanctification which we labor after; whereas contrariwise, if we renounce ourselves, and our own strength, and by a lively faith rest upon the power and promises of God, for the beginning, continuing and perfecting of this work, then need we not to be discouraged by our wants and weaknesses, from undertaking or proceeding in it, nor by the malice and might of our spiritual enemies, or any other difficulties which meet us in the way; seeing we are assured that the Lord our God is all-sufficient to remove all impediments, to give us strength against all opposition, to make things in themselves impossible, to become possible and easy unto us; and not only able, but also willing to bring us on in the ways of godliness, and to perfect that good work of grace in us which he hath begun. In which respects, we have great cause with all courage and cheerfulness to undertake this work, and to go on in the ways of godliness, if by faith we are once persuaded, that we shall, in God's good time, overcome our spiritual enemies, subdue our strong corruptions, perform with

ease and comfort, those duties which seem yet so difficult, and in some good measure attain unto that sanctification, and holiness of life, which we labor after.

Sect. 5 - Of the means whereby we may strengthen our faith in the assurance of our sanctification.

Now the means to attain unto this faith, and to be more and more confirmed in it, is to consider, that God the Father hath elected us as well to the means as to the end; and as he hath ordained us unto life eternal, so also that we shall walk in the way of holiness and righteousness, that leadeth unto it; according to that of the Apostle, he hath chosen us before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and without blame. And therefore as his election is certain to bring us unto everlasting happiness, so also to conduct us thither by this way of holiness, either by a shorter cut, as the thief upon the Cross, who was not converted before he suffered; or by a longer way, as Simeon, John the Apostle, and many others. So in that golden chain of salvation; whom he did predestinate, them also he called; whom he called, them he justified; and whom he justified, them he glorified: the decree of God is coupled and linked unto the end by the means which come between them. Again, we have God's promises, upon which we may build our faith as well for our sanctification, as for our salvation, and that not only, as the promises of life eternal include the promise of holiness and a godly life, as the way that leadeth to that end, but severally and in special manner. For in the Covenant of grace, the Lord promiseth to write his Law in our hearts, by which phrase is signified, that we shall not only know his will in our understandings, but incline unto it with our affections, that we may practice it in our lives; even as the law of nature written in the heart of Adam by creation, enabled him both to know it, and also to embrace and obey it. So God promiseth, that under the Kingdom of Christ, he will take away their corruptions of nature, and make them to become new creatures. Yea the Lord hath not only

said, but sworn it, that all who are redeemed out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, shall worship and serve him in holiness and righteousness, before him, all the days of their lives; that is, not by fits and starts, but from the day of their conversion, to the day of their death. Again, the Lord promiseth to give his Spirit to those that ask him: and our Savior, that he will send the Comforter, who shall lead us into all truth, so that he shall not barely teach us the way, but guide us in it; subduing the flesh with the lusts thereof, and enabling us to withstand the temptations of Satan and the world, to overcome all difficulties, and to hold out in our profession and practice of true godliness unto the end. Moreover, we may have a sufficient ground for this special faith, if we consider, that the virtue of Christ's death being applied by faith, is as effectual for the mortifying of our flesh and sinful corruption, as for the taking away of the guilt and punishment of our sins; and that his resurrection is as powerful to raise us up to newness of life in this world, as to the life of glory in the world to come; and therefore they that have part in Christ, may apply him unto themselves by faith, for assured sanctification, as well as for justification or salvation; according to that of the Apostle: But ye are in Christ Jesus, who is of God made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that is, not only sufficient to make us holy by imputation of his holiness, but by working in us inherent holiness by his Spirit. Finally, the holy Ghost who dwelleth in us, is all-sufficient to perfect the work which he hath begun, and will not willingly lose his labor, in giving it over before he hath attained his end. And therefore though our flesh be never so rebellious, he both can and will tame and mortify it; though our enemies be never so many and malicious, he is all-sufficient by his own strength, in our greatest weakness to overcome them. And though we meet with never so many difficulties, he will so assist and strengthen us, that they shall not be able to hinder us from proceeding in the way of holiness, till we come to our place of happiness. Now if by these considerations we strengthen our faith in this special persuasion, that if we will wait God's leisure in the use of all good means, we shall certainly attain unto that sanctification which we labor after, it will be a notable encouragement to make us

go on cheerfully in the practice of all duties, which concern a Christian life; for who would not courageously fight, that is beforehand assured of victory? Or run a race, that is sure to come to the goal, and win the garland? Or undertake weighty and necessary enterprises, though of great difficulty, if he be thoroughly persuaded, that he shall overcome them? Whereas on the other side, for want of this faith, or rather this special art of application, many dear servants of God are hindered and discouraged, from going on, in the duties of holiness and righteousness, or else proceed with much uncomfortableness and disquietness, because comparing their weakness, with the difficulty of the work, they think that they shall never achieve it in any measure acceptable to God; though in the mean time they want not faith to rest upon the promises of the Gospel, the mercies of God, and merits of Christ, for their justification, and the bringing of them to everlasting happiness?

CHAPTER X.

Of the third ground of a godly life, which is a pure heart.

Sect. 1 - Of a pure heart, what it is; and whence it ariseth.

Besides those main grounds of a godly life before spoken of, saving knowledge, and a lively faith, there are two other which arise and spring from them, a pure heart, and a good conscience. By a pure heart, I do not understand such an one as is free from all sin and corruption: for who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? But such a heart as being regenerate by God's Spirit, is in part purified and sanctified, hating sin, and loving virtue and holiness in the inner man; feeling the weight of corruption, and desiring to be cleansed from it, and the want of grace, and resolving

to use all good means, whereby it may be supplied. And this is a fruit of saving knowledge, which discovereth unto us how ugly sin is in itself; and pernicious unto us, and the beauty and excellency of grace and godliness in its own nature, with the profit which redoundeth unto us by it; and also of a justifying faith, which applying the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, doth mortify our carnal corruptions, and quicken us in the life of grace, making us to hate that sin which we formerly loved, and to love and embrace that grace and virtue which in time past we loathed; and answerably to resolve, that we will use all good means to be freed from the one, and furnished with the other. All which proceedeth out of our assurance of God's love, which being shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, doth work in them unfeigned love towards God again, whereby we desire, resolve, and endeavor, to leave and forsake what he hateth and forbiddeth, and to embrace and practice whatsoever he loveth and commandeth.

Sect. 2 - That all true fruits of godliness spring from a pure heart.

And this is that pure heart which is necessary to a godly life, as being a chief pillar that supporteth it, and a lively fountain, from which all good and virtuous actions do spring and flow. For if the heart be pure, it will purify all our words and actions: but if it be defiled, we can expect no pure streams from a polluted fountain; according to that of our Savior, Those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth of the heart, and they defile the man: for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. And therefore as it is in vain to purge the streams when the fountain is defiled, because it will soon again pollute them, whereas if the spring be clear, it will soon cleanse the streams, though much defiled, that issue from it; so is it with the fountain of the heart, and the words and actions, which from it, as streams do spring and flow. The heart is the root and tree, and the words and works are the fruits it beareth, which discover what it is; for a good tree bringeth forth good fruits, and a corrupt

tree bringeth forth evil fruits; neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit, nor a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit, as our Savior hath taught us. It is the treasury of all our thoughts, speeches and actions. And a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil, for of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. It is the King and Monarch in the little world of man, which giveth laws to all the other members, reigning and ruling over them as it seemeth good unto it. It is the primum mobile, and first mover, which giveth motion to all other parts as inferior spheres; and as it were the first wheel of the clock, whose motion all the rest follow, standing still when it standeth, and going as it goeth. So that if the heart be an inditer of a good matter, the tongue will be the pen of a ready writer; if the heart be prepared, so also will be the tongue to sing and give praise; if it nourish evil thoughts like unto discords, there can be no good music: but if it be well tuned, we shall, in singing Hymns, Psalms, and spiritual Songs, sing with grace, and make sweet melody in God's ears. And therefore David desiring to make good speed in the way of godliness, desireth first to have his heart enlarged with the love of it; I will run (saith he) the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Sect. 3 - That God chiefly desireth the heart above all other parts.

And hereof it is that the Lord chiefly requireth the heart, according to that of Solomon, My son, give me thy heart. The which also David chiefly required of him in the service of God; And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. It is, above all other parts, the sacrifice which is most acceptable unto God, according to that of the Psalmist, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. An upright heart is his chief delight, and though he requireth sincerity

both in our words and works, yet above all, he desireth truth in the inward parts. And if the heart be sincere, and desireth to offer unto God perfect service, the Lord passeth by and pardoneth our imperfections, and accepteth as perfect, our weak and worthless endeavors; according to that of the Apostle, If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. An example whereof we have in Jehoshaphat and Asa, who though their inward corruptions did break out into diverse open sins, yet because they prepared their hearts to seek the Lord, he esteemed them as perfect, and what they did, seemed just and right in his eyes. Whereas on the other side, how glorious soever our words and actions seem to be, yet if we regard wickedness in our hearts, the Lord will not regard us nor our prayers; if we will not lay God's Word to our heart, to give glory to his name, he will send a curse upon us, by which, even his blessings shall be accursed.

Sect. 4 - That God respecteth no duty, unless it proceed from a pure and sincere heart.

Neither can any duty of a godly life which we perform unto God, be approved of him, until our hearts be first approved. And as David would not accept of Abner's service, nor let him have the favor of seeing his face, except he brought his wife with him; so neither will the Lord regard any service which we offer unto him, if we leave our hearts behind us, which are above all other parts espoused unto him by solemn Covenant. In all our obedience the heart is chiefly required. These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ye shall lay up these words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And again, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day. In our conversion unto God, the heart must first turn unto him. Turn ye unto me with all your heart, &c. and rent your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. Break up your fallow ground, and sow not

among thorns; circumcise yourselves unto the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts. In our spiritual warfare against the enemies of our salvation, the Court of guard must keep the carefullest watch about the Castle of our hearts, that it may not be surprised, neither by the secret treason of the flesh, nor the open violence of the devil or the world, seeing if we lose this fort, we shall lose the life of grace which is preserved in it; according to that of Solomon, Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. The curing our souls of their spiritual diseases, must begin at the heart; and the inward cause of corruption must thence be purged, before there can be any true reformation, or sound health in the outward parts: Even as the heat of the face is not much abated, by casting upon it water or cooling things, but by allaying inwardly the heat of the liver. Finally, our service of God (if we would have it accepted) must not be performed only with the outward man: for as the Apostle speaketh, Bodily exercise profiteth little: but it must be the service of the heart, and performed in spirit and truth. Otherwise it will be vain, and but lost labor, according to that of the Prophet cited by our Savior; This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they worship me, &c. If we wash our hands, and not our hearts, and make clean the outside of the cup and platter, and let the inside be defiled with corruption and sin, we shall not exceed the Pharisees, who by our Saviors censure, did not exceed the hypocrites, and were worse than Publican's and professed sinners: and if we gild the outside by a glorious profession, and inwardly in the heart nourish our corruptions, we shall with them be rightly compared to painted sepulchers, which were outwardly glorious, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Sect. 5 - That all true reformation and repentance must begin with the consecrating of our whole hearts unto God.

And therefore when we go about the reformation of our lives, let us first begin with the purging of our hearts, and offer them unto God, as a free-will offering, and the first fruits of our new obedience, if we mean to have a good crop of godliness, and the whole harvest sanctified to our use. And this was David's practice, watching chiefly over his heart, that he might consecrate it, above all other parts, to the Service of God. I delight (saith he) to do thy will, O my God, yea thy Law is within my heart. And again, I have inclined mine heart to perform thy Statutes always even unto the end. My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. So Moses prayeth unto God, in behalf of himself and the people, Teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. Neither is it sufficient, either to please God, or to attain unto sanctification and a godly life, to consecrate our hearts in part only unto God's service, and to reserve part for the service of the world. For we cannot serve two masters so contrary in disposition, nor at once please God and Mammon, as our Savior hath taught us. We must not halt between two opinions, but if God be God, we must serve him: If Baal be God, we must serve him. God is a jealous lover, and will endure no rivals in the heart, which above all parts he chiefly loveth. And therefore if we intend to lead a godly life, and to please God in all our courses, we must set our whole hearts to seek and serve him, and as he requireth, love him with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. So David; With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandments. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. And thus Asa and his people entered into a Covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul.

Sect. 6 - That we must take special care for the purifying of our hearts, and wherein it chiefly consisteth.

By all which it appeareth how necessary it is, that intending to lead a Godly life, we devote and consecrate our hearts, yea, our whole hearts, to the service of God. And because he being most pure, can endure no corruption or pollution, and therefore will abhor our most formal service, if our hearts continue and delight in their abominations, yea, will as much hate the heart itself polluted with sin, if it be offered unto him, as Swine's blood, or a dogs head; therefore from hence also it appeareth how necessary it is, when we set ourselves to please God by a godly life, to take special care to have in the first place, our hearts purged, and purified from the filth of sin. For naturally our hearts are full of all uncleanness, fountains of maliciousness, and sinks of sin, spiritually blind and foolish, but unto all impiety, witty, sharp-sighted, and, as the Prophet speaketh, wicked and despiteful above all things; averse unto all good, and prone to all evil, dead and dull to God's service, and full of life and vigor to the service of the devil, the world, and our own carnal concupiscence. Finally, they swarm with all noisome lusts, as pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, voluptuousness, ambition, malice, envy, disdain, worldly love, and all manner of carnal corruption. And therefore it is most necessary that our hearts be first cleansed and purged, before we can offer unto God any acceptable service: for what can issue out of these sinks and puddles of corruption, but all manner of sinful impiety? And what streams of God's service so pure in themselves, which will not be polluted, if they run thorough these dens and ditches of all abominations? Now this purging of the heart consisteth in the mortification of the flesh, and its sinful lusts, and in spiritual renewing unto holiness and new obedience, whereby we begin to hate all that evil which we formerly loved, and to love that good which we formerly hated; to loath the tyranny of sin and Satan, unto which, with all willingness we subjected ourselves in time past, and to embrace the true service of God, in all sincerity, which before, we either neglected, or performed after a formal, cold and careless manner: And finally, have our hearts and affections weaned from the love of the world and earthly vanities, upon which, in the days of our ignorance, we wholly doted, as on our chief delight and treasure, because we now see that they are uncertain, momentary and

mutable, worthless and unprofitable; yea, to those that set their hearts upon them, hurtful and pernicious. And contrariwise, adhere and cleave unto the Lord, with all our souls, as being all-sufficient, and infinite in all perfection, choosing him for our portion, and inheritance, our rock and refuge, and far preferring him before all earthly treasures and delights. And thus the Lord, when he called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to be his servant, withdraweth his heart from the love of worldly things, as being insufficient to preserve him from evil, or to furnish him with any true good, by promising that he himself would be his shield and exceeding great reward. And thus he persuadeth him unto uprightness of heart, and to walk before him in holiness of life, because, if he would choose him for his portion, he should find him almighty, and all-sufficient, and therefore able to preserve him from all danger, and to relieve and supply all his wants, though for his profession and practice of God's true Religion, he should be abandoned of all worldly helps, and exposed to the malice of many and mighty enemies. And thus Moses contemned the world, and refusing the pleasures of Egypt, and the honors of Pharaohs Court, adhered unto God and his pure Religion, choosing rather to suffer affliction with his people, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. So David being in his heart and affections, like a weaned child, and loathing the worlds breasts, from which he had formerly sucked the sweet milk of earthly vanities, with so much delight, doth with all his heart and soul cleave unto the Lord, choosing him for his portion, and inheritance, and esteeming him as his sole treasure. The Lord (saith he) is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage. And when he was forsaken of all worldly helps in the day of trouble, he was not (like worldlings) as a man forlorn and desperate, but, he cried unto the Lord, and said, Thou art my refuge and my portion, in the land of the living. So elsewhere he professeth, that all his joy and comfort was in the Lord, and the assurance of his love, the which was better and greater, then was incident to worldlings in all their posterity. There be many (saith he) that say, Who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou

hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. And thus the Church in the Lamentation, was not in her greatest misery, left hopeless and helpless, but cleaving to the Lord with her heart, she crieth out; The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.

Sect. 7 - Of the causes of the hearts purity.

And these are the things wherein this purity of heart doth consist. The principal efficient which worketh it in us, is the whole Trinity, the Father, Son and holy Spirit. God the Father beginneth this sanctification and holiness in our hearts, by taking away their hardness, and making them soft and tender, and by giving unto us his Spirit, to purify them from the filth of corruption, and to quicken them in the life of grace; according to that promise; I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their bodies, and will give them an heart of flesh. And again; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. And therefore if we would have this grace, we must with the Apostle have our recourse to God, praying for ourselves, as he did for the Thessalonians: The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Son purifieth our hearts by shedding his precious blood, that it might be a Lauer of regeneration, wherein our polluted hearts might be cleansed. For so deeply are they engrained in the scarlet die of sin, that nothing else will take away their spots and stains, and bring them unto snowy whiteness. It is only his Cross, that crucifieth these carnal corruptions, and the virtue of his death, that killeth and mortifieth sin in us. And this is that Fountain which the Lord promiseth should be opened to the house of David and Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness: in which if our hearts be not washed, they will remain in their natural filthiness. God the holy Ghost purifieth our hearts, by uniting them to Christ, and by dipping

and washing them in this Fountain of his blood; and so maketh the death and merits of our Savior, which are sufficient in themselves, effectual unto us for our purification. For as the Poole of Bethesda had, by the moving of the Angel, virtue in it to cure diseases, but yet did good to none, but those only which were put into it; so though the blood of Christ be sufficient to cure the heart of the leprosy of sin, and to make it clean, yet it is of no efficacy unto any, saving those who are by the holy Spirit dipped and washed in it; seeing, like the poor lame cripple, we are naturally impotent, and cannot make any use of these means of our recovery, unless we be assisted by the holy Spirit. The instrumental cause of this purification is a lively faith wrought in us by the Spirit to this end, the which we may apply unto ourselves, Christ his death and precious bloodshed, for our spiritual purging from sin: which is perfected in our justification, in respect of the guilt and punishment, and begun in our sanctification, by purifying our hearts from their natural corruptions. In which respect, faith is said to purify our hearts, not materially or formally, by any virtue inherent in itself, but instrumentally, by applying unto us the virtue of Christ's death and bloodshed. And until we have this faith wrought in us by the Spirit, whereby we are assured of the riches of God's grace in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come, our hearts remain in their natural filthiness, and are full of all carnal and worldly lusts, neither is it possible that they should be persuaded to contemn the baits of worldly vanities, and to tread under-foot the pleasures of sin, with which they are naturally so much delighted, till they have an offer of better things from God, and have some assurance, that upon their renouncing of the world and fleshly lusts, and seeking after these richer gifts, they shall most certainly attain unto them; according to that of the Apostle, Blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. And this purged Moses heart from the love of the world, and made him willing to suffer afflictions with the people of God, because with the eye of faith he looked upon the recompense of reward. And this

caused the Saints of God to content themselves to dwell in tabernacles, and not to regard any earthly mansions, because they looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: and the holy Martyrs, to endure with patience and joy most cruel persecution, not accepting deliverance, because by faith they were persuaded, that they should obtain a better resurrection. Of which comforts of faith, we have great need to be thereby supported under the Cross, and persuaded unto the contempt of the world; seeing Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith, who was free from all worldly lusts and carnal corruption, was by his heavenly hopes encouraged in his earthly sufferings: for as the Apostle testifieth, He, for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosses, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the signs of a pure heart, and the means whereby we may both obtain and preserve it.

Sect. 1 - Of the inward signs of a pure heart.

And these are the causes of a pure heart. The signs whereby we may know whether our hearts be thus purified or no, are either inward or outward. The inward signs are first the love of holiness and purity; for as when our hearts are defiled with natural corruption, we loath sanctity, and love and delight in impure lusts, and the pleasures of sin; so when our hearts are purified by faith, they are chiefly pleased with those things which please God; and loving purity and piety, they delight in the exercises of holiness and righteousness. And therefore when we love purity and holiness, it is an evident sign that our hearts are pure and holy, seeing the cause of love is likeness; and where

there is no similitude, there can be no love. The second sign is hatred of sin, which upon the same ground we naturally love; especially of those sins unto which our corrupted nature is most inclined, because they most molest and trouble us, and polluting the heart with their defilements, hinder most our progress in sanctification and holiness. And thus Paul, when his heart was purified, abhorred all corruption, and delighted in God's Law, hating that sin most, which he did most commit, because, like a Rebel, it warred against the law of his mind, and made him captive to the law of sin. The third sign is, our careful avoiding all means and occasions of spiritual pollution: for as he that hath filthy hands, careth not to handle filthy things; but when they are washed clean, will not willingly touch that which will defile them: so an impure heart shunneth not the occasions and means of impurity, because they cannot make it worse than it is in its own nature, in the quality, though they may increase the pollution, in respect of the degree, yea, rather being like filthy hogs, naturally inclined unto filthiness, they seek the occasions of more uncleanness, and purposely wallow themselves in the sink and puddle of sin, as often as they have opportunity of satisfying their carnal lusts. More especially, he that hath a pure heart, delighteth in the company of those who are pure and holy, by whose Christian conversation, his purity and sanctification may be more and more increased, and cannot endure the society of the wicked, no not when, like filthy dogs, they fawn upon him, because he knoweth that the leprosy of sin is of an infectious and spreading nature, that he who toucheth pitch, shall be defiled with it, and that worldly men most defile, when they most fawn, and do us least hurt, when they are farthest from us.

Sect. 2 - Of the outward signs of a pure heart.

The outward signs of a pure heart, are the fruits of sanctification and holiness: for the tree is known by the fruits, and the fountain by the streams that flow from it, whether they be good or evil, for a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit, as our

Savior hath taught us. If therefore the fruits we bear be pure and holy, it is an evident sign that our hearts be purified and sanctified; if the streams be clear and sweet, such also is the fountain from which they spring; and if the coin we outwardly spend and use in our Christian trading one with another, be currant, of pure metal, and the right stamp, then is the treasury of our hearts good, out of which we bring it. More especially, the purity of our hearts appeareth in the purity of our words, when as we delight in the language of Canaan, and cheerfully entertain one another with holy conferences; and when as our speech is powdered with the salt of wisdom, and ministereth grace unto the hearers, edifying one another in our most holy faith. So also pure hands are a sign of a pure heart, being inseparable companions, that always go together, and both infallible notes of a Citizen of heaven; and the works of holiness and righteousness are signs of an holy and righteous heart, even as clear streams are a sign that the fountain is pure from which they spring. Whereas if the hands be full of blood, cruelty, and oppression, bribery and extortion, fraud and deceit, it is more than manifest, that our hearts remain still polluted with fleshly lusts, whatsoever profession we make of purity and sincerity.

Sect. 3 - The means of a pure heart, is, highly to esteem it.

Now when by these signs, as it were, by the pulse, we come to know the state of our hearts, whether they be choked up with the gross humors of sinful lusts, or enlived and quickened with purity and holiness, as it were the vital spirits of grace, which enable us to the actions of a godly life: in the next place we must carefully use all good means, whereby we may attain unto this purity of heart, if we have it not, or preserve it in us, if we already have it. And first, we are to have it in high esteem, as being a most precious jewel, not to be valued with any worldly wealth. For it is the fountain of love, from which all true obedience floweth, according to that of the Apostle; The end of the Commandment is love, out of a pure heart, a good

conscience, and faith unfeigned. So that if the heart be not purified by faith, this holy ghost of divine love will not lodge in it, without which, we cannot perform any duty commanded towards God or our neighbor; or if we do, yet not growing from the root of love, it faileth of its end, and consequently is done in vain. It is the chief place of residence where God's holy Spirit dwelleth, exercising his virtue, and showing his divine power and Majesty; for if our bodies be the temples of the holy Ghost, then sure our hearts being purified, are the Holy of Holiest, which being his own peculiar, no man may enter or pry into it; and if we be the habitation of his holy and glorious Majesty, then is the sanctified heart his privy chamber, in which he suppeth with us, and his bedchamber, in which he lodgeth. It is that pure Crystal Fountain which purifieth all our actions, making them accepted as white in God's sight, which in themselves are spotted, and causeth all other gifts of God to be pure unto us; for to the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Finally, it is this purity of heart, whereby we attain unto assurance of blessedness; according to that of our Savior; Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. And the Psalmist propounding this great question, Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Thus resolveth it: He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, &c. And if thus considering the excellency of this Jewel, we do esteem it according to its true value, it will be a notable means to attain unto it. For according to that estimate which we set upon God's rich gifts, such is his bounty in bestowing them; if we think them much worth, we shall have much; if of little value, we shall have them but in little measure; but if we contemn and neglect them as things of no price, (and as those Ruffians, who object purity as an imputation, and esteem this cleanness of heart and hands, the foulest blemish and aspersion,) the Lord will give unto us none at all, but will pronounce against us that fearful saying, He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. For he will not cast his Pearls before swine, that will tread them under their filthy feet; he will not give much of his graces to them, who have but small esteem of them; but to those who prize them highly, he will give them liberally, because the

thankfulness of their hearts, will hold proportion with that price which their judgment shall set upon them. In which respect David was never nearer slipping into the puddle of impurity, then when he preferred worldly prosperity before sanctity and cleanness of soul; Never was he nearer to a polluted heart, then when he concluded that he had cleansed it in vain. Besides, the more we esteem this purity, the more dearly will we love it, and the more earnestly will we labor in the use of all good means, whereby we may be plentifully enriched with it, begging it of God, who is the sole giver of it, by fervent prayer, and desiring that he will work it in our hearts by his holy Spirit. And so the Lord, liberal in himself to bestow his gifts upon them who esteem them, will give this purity unto us with a much more bountiful hand, having freely bound himself hereunto by his gracious promise, that if we ask, we shall have, and if we seek, we shall find, the Lord being as ready to bless the means, that they may be effectual to their ends, as we can be to use them.

Sect. 3 - Of the manifold evils accompany a polluted heart.

On the other side, let us consider of the manifold evils which do accompany a heart that is polluted and defiled with sin; for it maketh all appearances of graces, though never so excellent, to be nothing less in truth, and but sole semblances and shows, wherein is nothing but mere hypocrisy. Our humiliation, like Ahab's, which was not in the heart, but only in the outward habit; and like the Israelites, who hanged down their heads like a bulrush, and afflicted their souls, only in the day of their fast, their hearts remaining full of pride and cruelty. Our zeal, like Jehu's, who destroyed Idolatry, to build up his own kingdom. Our obedience, like Herod's, which was but to the halves, and only so far as would stand with his carnal lusts. Our profession and following Christ, like that of Judas, which was no further then he saw it would stand with his ambition and covetousness. Our bounty, in the works of mercy, like that of Ananias, which was to be praised of men, and not to be approved of

God. It maketh our prayers unacceptable to God; for if we regard wickedness in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us. It polluteth all our actions, as the corrupted fountain polluteth all the streams that issue from it; and maketh all the creatures to become unclean; for unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Finally, it profaneth all our vows of holiness, and maketh all our desires, resolutions, and endeavors to lead a godly life, unsettled, fickle, and unconstant, like unto the burning of an ague, which proceedeth not from natural heat, but from distemper, and therefore endeth in unnatural coldness, the harbinger of death. For these flushing's and flashings of devotion, are not caused with that kindly heat of divine love, but with the scorching fire of blind and distempered zeal, kindled with self-love and worldly respects, and therefore last no longer than they last. Whereof it is, that the righteousness which is grounded on it, is like a goodly house without a foundation, which falleth to the ground, when the tempest of trial ariseth; like the Cake, of which the Prophet speaketh, which though it may seem outwardly scorched, and more than enough, yet is it not half baked, and therefore heavy, and not to be digested by God's stomach; and as the morning dew or cloud, which vanisheth away, and like the blade, springing from the seed sown in stony ground, which for want of earth and moisture withereth, when the sun of affliction and persecution riseth.

Sect. 4 - The second means of a pure heart is a lively faith.

And these are the arguments which may move us to esteem and seek after a pure heart, and to hate and avoid the contrary. Now when our hearts are inflamed with the love of it; the means to obtain it, is a lively and justifying faith, which purifieth the heart, as the Apostle speaketh; not by any virtue that is in itself, but by applying unto us the blood of Christ, which alone is sufficient to purge our hearts from all corruption, and to kill and crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof. And therefore seeing so long as we continue in infidelity, our hearts

will also continue in their impurity; this must make us labor to come out of this estate, and to use to this purpose, all good means whereby this faith may be begun and increased in us. Secondly, let us wash them in the tears of unfeigned repentance, bewailing those sins, in which formerly we delighted, and hating those corruptions, which in time past we loved. And because we cannot at once purge the deep sink of our polluted hearts from all their filthiness, therefore we must make it our daily work, and do it by degrees. And seeing we cannot in one assault overcome these cursed Canaanites, we must continually make war against them, and cast them out one after another, as God by his Spirit shall enable us. Especially let us not, out of fear and cowardice, suffer the sons of Anakim, our great and Giant-like corruptions, fortify themselves in the castle of our hearts; nor let those Agags, which have ruled and reigned most in us, live out of any carnal respects; but let us even at the first strike at these main roots, which being cut off and plucked up, many of the branches will die, for want of that sap of bitterness which they sucked from them; and let us drive out these master Bees, and whole swarms of carnal lusts will issue after them.

Sect. 5 - Of the means to preserve the purity of our hearts.

Now when our hearts are thus purified, our next care must be to preserve them in this purity and cleanness: for as the cleanest house will gather soil, if it be not sometime swept; and the brightest armor and weapons are apt to take rust, if they be not often scoured and oiled: so much more will our hearts remove to their natural uncleanness, and even rust again in their corruptions, if we once only take pains to cleanse them, and afterwards be careless to maintain them in their purity. First therefore we must keep a narrow watch over our hearts, and as the Wiseman exhorteth, above all observations, observe them, that they be not carried away from God with loose wanderings, and so (Dinah- like) be defiled with carnal and worldly lusts. For these spiritual enemies are conquered, but not

quite killed; they are beaten and expelled (as it were) out of this city, but not quite banished out of our coasts. For they lie lurking in secret corners, and in ambushment; and no sooner do we neglect our watch, and leave the gate of our hearts unguarded, but presently they take the advantage, and entering into them in whole troops, they surprise them at unawares. And therefore it behooveth us to keep daily our watch strong, and to nourish and preserve the garrison of God's graces in us, that they may either be discovered and defeated before they approach, or be repelled and beaten back in their first assaults. For if with loose Christians we neglect this watch and guard, and let our hearts rove after worldly lusts, and suffer them at pleasure to riot in them; if we keep them under no government, but suffer them like masterless men, to wander at their pleasure, we shall never reserve them for God's use, nor fit them for his service: But like loose vagrants unaccustomed to work, it will be death unto them to take any constant pains, save only by fits and starts; and when we would settle them to prayer, hearing, reading, and meditation, with such like holy exercises, they will by no means be kept in, unless they be held strictly in their bounds by the strong chain of some sharp afflictions, but every hand-while, they will start aside, and according to their accustomed course, wander abroad after worldly vanities. Whereas if we keep a careful watch over our hearts, we shall keep them from wandering away from God, or when they begin to stray after the pleasures of sin and worldly vanities, we shall check them in their course, and bring them back unto God's service. We shall be still in readiness to repel and beat back the temptations of Satan, and to keep out worldly and carnal lusts from entering at all, and so preserve our hearts in their purity from their defilements; or if they have entered at unawares, they shall not have time to fortify themselves, but being like secret traitors observed, and (as it were) taken in the watch, we will examine them; and finding out their treason, and that they are come in to defile our hearts, and to betray us to our spiritual enemies, we will kill and crucify them, and that pollution which they have left behind, we will presently purge away, by renewing our faith and repentance. And thus by this careful watch we shall either be preserved from receiving hurt by our carnal lusts

and the devils temptations; or if we have, yet we shall with great ease recover our losses, when they are no sooner sustained then espied. For these stains of sin will easily be washed out, if we take them in hand when they have first tainted our hearts. Our enemies will without any great danger be beaten out, when they are first entered, and have had no time to fortify and intrench themselves. Our wounds, whilst they are green, will be soon cured; and if as soon as we have drunk the poison of sin and carnal lusts, we presently cast them up again, before they have had time to work, or use our antidote of faith and repentance, it will not be able to do us any great harm.

Sect. 6 - The second means is to preserve them from all sin.

Secondly, if we would preserve our hearts in purity, we must labor to keep them from all sin; not only those reigning and raging lusts, which waste the conscience, and extinguish the vital spirits, like strong poisons; but even from those lesser corruptions which most men regard not, thinking no sin so small that we may live in it, nor giving allowance to the least carnal and worldly lusts. For these also will defile the heart themselves, and make way for the pollution of fouler sins, whilst they lessen our care to keep them out; even as when the house is already somewhat fouled, men care not greatly though it be fouled more, whereas when they see it clean, they more carefully keep it so from all annoyance. But most especially we must labor to preserve our hearts pure from those sins, with which they have formerly been most tainted, and unto which they are still most naturally inclined. And as men take most care to prevent hereditary diseases; and that they do not by relapse fall into that sickness, out of which they have newly recovered, because they are more prone unto them than any other: so also must we do in keeping our hearts pure from those special corruptions, which have made them sick to the death, and have fearfully hazarded their everlasting salvation. In time of war we most strongly man that part of the wall, which being

weakest, hath most often been attempted by the enemy; and if a breach be made, we keep it with a narrow watch and strong guard, till it be again repaired. So the experience of our enemies policy and power in putting us often to the worst, doth make us more vigilant and diligent in our warlike preparations, that we may be able to make resistance. But if our friends, whom we have formerly loved, and are acquainted with all our secrets, knowing our outgoings and comings in, do become our enemies, with what care and circumspection do we prevent their mischiefs, because we know that by their ancient familiarity with us, they are acquainted with all advantages? And thus must we do in warring with our corruptions, if ever we mean to get victory, and to preserve our hearts from being surprised by them.

Sect. 7 - The third means is, to avoid the occasions of sin.

Thirdly, we must not only labor to keep our hearts pure from the sins themselves, with which formerly they have been defiled, but also avoid all the occasions and means whereby we may be drawn unto them, hating even the garment which is spotted with flesh. For as in vain he fleeth the plague in himself, who haunteth the company of those that are infected; as he fondly shunneth to be burned, who maketh it his sport to play with fire and gunpowder; and he foolishly protesteth against whoredom, who delighteth in the kisses and wanton embracement of some common Strumpet; So it is in vain to think, that we can preserve our hearts from the infection of sin, and from the fire and filth of burning and polluting lusts, unless we shun the means and occasions, as well as the corruptions and sins themselves.

Sect. 8 - The fourth means is, often to examine our hearts in God's sight.

Finally, if we would preserve our hearts in their purity, we must often examine them in God's sight, and for the approving of their purity and integrity, often offer them to his trial. For as the husbands eye and presence, allowing or disallowing all the wives particular actions, and behavior to strangers, is the best and surest means to preserve her chastity: so if the heart betrothed unto God, have all the affections and desires of it scanned and examined before him, it will not easily be polluted with strange and unclean lusts. And thus David kept his heart in purity and integrity, by provoking and offering it often to God's trial. Judge me (saith he) O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity, &c. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and mine heart. And again, Search me, O God, and know mine heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Whose example if we follow, it will be a notable means to preserve our hearts in purity. For as we are extraordinary careful to have our houses cleansed from all filth, when we prepare them to give entertainment to an honorable and respected friend, who hating all sluttishness, will curiously look into every corner; so will our care exceed in cleansing our hearts, when as we invite our God to visit and lodge in them: yea, we shall have hereby the benefit, not only of our own care and diligence for the cleansing of our hearts, but of the Lord's assistance to make them more clean, when we have cleansed them as well as we can. For he is not a curious carper at our infirmities, but a cheerful helper to reform and amend them; and therefore he that inviteth the Lord to try and search his heart, doth in another place desire his assistance for the purging of the filth and guilt of sin, which lurked in such secret corners, that it was not subject to his own view. Who (saith he) can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

Sect. 9 - The fifth means is, continually to be taken up in holy exercises.

Lastly, if we would preserve the purity of our hearts, our care must be to have them continually taken up in holy exercises, either about the general duties of Christianity, or the special duties of our callings: of the former sort are the diligent and attentive hearing and reading of the Word, which is a special means of our sanctification, as our Savior noteth, and of the strengthening of our faith, by which our hearts are purified; and also prayer at ordinary times either public or private, receiving the Sacrament, holy conferences one with another singing Psalms, and doing the works of righteousness unto all, upon all occasions, and the works of mercy unto those, who do in any respect stand in need of our help: of the other sort are inward exclamations, and lifting up our hearts in our secret prayers at all times, and upon all occasions, and holy meditations of God's mercies or our own miseries, or on the means whereby we may be enriched with all grace, and enabled unto the performance of holy duties. For this privilege the heart hath above all other parts, that whereas they cannot exercise their duties, but when fit opportunity is offered, as the ear cannot hear the Word, but when it is preached, nor the hand perform works of mercy, but when it hath means to do them, and fit subjects to work upon, the heart needeth never to be idle and out of holy exercise: but even when our bodies are taken up with the works of our callings, or honest recreations, we may on all occasions pray, give thanks, and exercise our hearts in holy meditations, either rejoicing in the Lord and his mercies, or sighing and sorrowing in the sight and sense of our own miseries. And if our hearts be thus exercised, being wholly taken up with God's service, they will have no leisure for the employments of the devil, the world and the flesh; whereas if they be swept clean of all spiritual grace and holy duties, the devil will easily enter with whole swarms of noisome lusts, and so pollute them at his pleasure with all manner of poisonous abominations.

CHAPTER XII.

Of Conscience in general, the nature, properties, and effects of it.

Sect. 1 - That the nature of Conscience may partly be known by the name.

The last ground of a godly life, is a good conscience, without which it is impossible to please God, or to perform any duty acceptable in his sight. In speaking whereof, we will first generally show the nature of conscience, and then more particularly entreat of a good conscience. The nature of conscience may be partly known by the name, which signifieth to know together, or with another: for as the mind, understanding the nature of things, is said to know them: so when another joineth with it in this knowledge, they are said to know together. Now there is no creature that can join with man in the knowledge, that is secret in his mind, according to that of the Apostle; No man knoweth the things of a man, but the Spirit of a man that is in him. Whereof it is, that human laws take no notice of the thoughts of the heart, either to reward or punish them; but it is only the Lord that searcheth the heart and reins, who knoweth and taketh notice together with our minds, of all the secrets which are known unto it. Whereby the nature of conscience in part appeareth, namely, that it is such a faculty in the soul, as taketh notice of all our actions, and beareth witness of them before God's Judgment seat, either with us, when they approve them as good; or against us, when as they condemn them as evil. So that the conscience is a certain divine power, which is placed by God in the soul of man, as a third party indifferent between him and us, sometime speaking for us, and sometime against us, as the equity of the cause requireth. It is God's Monitor, which he hath set over us, to take notice of all we do, that he may either reward our well-doing, or punish that which is done amiss. And because simple knowledge might see and conceal what it seeth and knoweth, God to this science hath added conscience, which being placed in us on the behalf of the great King of heaven and

earth, will not let anything lie hid and smothered, but giveth impartial witness of whatsoever is done before his Tribunal, either excusing us when we do well, or accusing us, when we have sinned against him: Not that the Lord needed any such witness or Monitor to inform him of our actions; for he seeth and knoweth all things past, present, and to come, with one perfect and simple act; but because he would in the administration of his justice, proceed in a legal manner, that we hereby might be convicted of the uprightness of his judgments, having in ourselves a witness that justifieth and approveth them.

Sect. 2 - What conscience is, being generally considered.

But that we may yet more clearly discern the nature of conscience, what it is, we will thus define it. Conscience is a faculty, or power placed by God in the soul of man, which reflecteth the understanding upon itself, causing it to apply its general and contemplative knowledge of truth and falsehood, good and evil, to practical use, for the aiming and determining of all our particular actions, according to the general rules of reason, either with us or against us. It is a faculty, and not a natural habit which may be got and lost: for howsoever the operations of it may be hindered and deadened for a time, by carnal security, hardness of heart, and the violence of our lusts and passion: even as reason itself cannot exercise its functions in the time of sleep or drunkenness; that it never utterly faileth; but when it is awakened by affliction, it showeth itself in the actions of accusing, condemning, and terrifying, as in former times. Neither is it a bare art of understanding, as some would have it, but a distinct faculty and working power, which in its own virtue produceth diverse actions. For when the understanding, in the Thesis and Theory, by way of general contemplation, approveth of any action, as good, or condemneth it as evil, the conscience applieth it in the Hypothesis unto a man's own particular actions, and by virtue of those general notions in the understanding, determineth of them, either with or

against us, that they are good or evil. And this it doth (as the schools speak) in a practical Syllogism, in which the reason or contemplative understanding (so called, because it is exercised in contemplation, and in seeking out the principles of all knowledge, and is in respect of this office, named also by Divines, <H&G>, because it is the keeper and conserver of those notions implanted in us, concerning good things to be embraced, and evil things to be shunned of us) this contemplative understanding (I say) doth in this Syllogism offer unto us the Major or Proposition. The conscience which they call <H&G>, because (as I have showed) it knoweth not to itself alone, but with God, maketh the Minor or assumption, and the faculty of judgment determining of the fact, inferreth the conclusion: As for example. The understanding suggesteth this Proposition; He that serveth God, who is the supreme cause and chief Good, performeth a good duty. The conscience assumeth, But thou hast served God, the supreme cause and chief goodness; and so the judgment inferreth; therefore thou hast performed a good duty. Again, on the other side; the understanding saith, Whosoever will worship God truly, must worship him according to his revealed will, and not according to his own inventions; the conscience assumeth, But thou hast not worshipped him according to his revealed will, but according to thine own inventions; whereupon the judgment inferreth, Therefore thou hast not worshipped God truly. Or thus; Whosoever breaketh the Law, is accursed, saith the understanding; But thou (saith the conscience) hast broken the Law: therefore, saith the judgment, thou art accursed.

Sect. 3 - Of the diverse offices of conscience.

Now this faculty of conscience performeth diverse offices, in respect of the diverse parts, wherein it exerciseth its power and virtue. For in the understanding, before our actions are achieved, it playeth the part of a friend, or gentle Monitor, telling what is to be done or left undone, with the penalty or reward which will follow our

commission or omission. After the deed is done, it becometh a Judge, approving or disallowing the action, and either absolving or condemning us, for the doing or not doing of it. In the memory, it performeth the office of a Notary and Register, in setting down and keeping upon Record, what we have done, good or evil; and also of a witness, giving evidence, either with or against us, according to the nature of our fact, accusing us when we have done ill, and excusing us when we have done well. In the will and affections, it is the deputy of God's Spirit, to suggest and enjoin us good duties; and when they are done, to reward us by comforting, cherishing, and replenishing our hearts with joy; and when we have done ill, especially by committing sins which are heinous and against conscience, it executeth the office of a Jailor or tormentor, filling the heart with shame and sorrow, with fear and terror, with final desperation, hellish perturbation, and intolerable tortures, that no rack nor gallows, no hot pincers or scalding lead may be compared with them, as we see in the example of Cain, who out of a despairing conscience, crieth out, that his punishment was greater then he could bear; and of Judas, who, to ease his torment, which the gnawing worm of conscience caused, hanged himself. And with this office of conscience the Heathens were acquainted, which gave occasion to that fiction of hellish furies, which endlessly haunted and tormented those who had committed heinous sins against the light of nature. The which also appeareth by their writings, wherein are many notable sayings to this purpose. What doth it profit, saith Seneca, to hide a man's self, and to avoid the eyes and ears of men? A good conscience calleth in the multitude, and an ill is solicitous and fearful even in solitude. If the things thou doest be honest, care not though all men know them; if dishonest, what skilleth it though no man know them, seeing thou knowest them thyself? O miserable man that thou art, if thou despisest such a witness! And again, It is the greatest security to do no man wrong. They that cannot abstain from it, do lead a life full of confusion and perturbation, so much fearing as they have hurt. Neither are they at any time quiet. After they have done mischief, they fear, they are troubled. Conscience suffereth them not to intend any other things, but every hand while to review

themselves. He suffereth punishment that expecteth it, and he expecteth that hath deserved it. It is possible, by some means, to be safe with an ill conscience, but never secure. For he thinketh he may be taken with the manner, though yet he be not. In sleep he is troubled, and being awake, as oft as he nameth any man's wickedness, he thinketh of his own. It never seemeth enough blotted out, never sufficiently covered. A guilty conscience hath sometime the hap to be hid, but never assurance. So the Satirist; Whatsoever crime is committed by evil example, it first displeaseth the author. This is the first punishment, that no man guilty can be absolved, himself being Judge, although by the favor of the corrupted Judge he be acquitted. In which regard Cato was wont to say, that every man ought to fear and respect himself most when he doth any evil, because, though he may shun others, yet from himself he cannot flee.

Sect. 4 - That conscience hath all its power and authority from God only.

Now this power of conscience in judging, witnessing, binding, and punishing, it hath only from God which is the Lord of it, and hath seated it in man as his Viceroy and Deputy, to rule him in all his ways; and, if he will not obey, to be his Notary, to keep upon record all his faults, his Witness to give testimony against him, and his Executioner to torment him, when in the Court of conscience he is condemned. Neither hath any creature power over conscience, either to bind it, or set it at liberty, but God only; nor hath the conscience itself any authority to execute these offices, till it have a Commission engrossed and sealed from God, which is either the Law of nature, written in the heart in our first creation, or the divine Oracles of God, contained in the books of the Old and New Testament. And if without these, conscience doth anything against us, either by unjust judging, or false accusing, we may revoke it all by a Writ of error, and make our appeal from this false judgment in the Court of conscience, to our supreme Lord, to be judged by him according to his Law. For

howsoever in the creation, conscience was an upright Judge and true witness, yet after the fall, the understanding being darkened with ignorance, and the judgment corrupted, do offer unto the conscience false rules and Principles, and so cause it to give wrong evidence and erroneous judgment, justifying when it should condemn, and condemning when it should justify, excusing those whom it should accuse, and accusing them whom the Law of God excuseth and absolveth. The which cometh to pass, because the light of nature is through the fall almost extinguished, and the book of the Law written, according to which, conscience should judge and testify, is not understood and known, or because it is blinded by lusts and passions, or being corrupted, hath the mouth stopped with the bribes of worldly vanities, or finally is become seared and senseless with customable sinning and habitual wickedness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of a good Conscience, which is a main ground of a godly life; what it is, and the causes of it.

Sect. 1 - What a good conscience is; and of the cause efficient which works it in us.

In which regard, conscience thus corrupted and disabled, cannot be a sufficient ground of a godly life, till after our regeneration, it be renewed and restored in some measure, unto that integrity and perfection which it had in our first creation. And this we call good conscience, which is a main foundation of godliness, guiding and enabling us to the performance of all good duties which God requireth. In speaking whereof, we will first show what it is, and then the causes of it, the effects and fruits which spring from it, the

properties and signs whereby we may know it, and the means by which we may obtain it, if it be wanting; or preserve and keep it, if we already have it. Concerning the first; A good conscience is that, which being renewed by God's Spirit, and a lively faith, applying unto us the virtue of Christ's death and obedience, doth speak peace, and truly testify unto us, according to the Scriptures, that we are redeemed out of the hands of all our enemies, reconciled unto God, justified, sanctified, and shall persevere in grace unto salvation, and that all our actions are warranted by the Word, and accepted of God in Jesus Christ, though in themselves imperfect; whereby we are comforted in all things, made cheerful and diligent in God's service, and willing to do all things which may be pleasing unto him. The causes of a good conscience are diverse. The principal efficient is God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit. The Father bestoweth this gift upon us, who as in the beginning he first created, and placed it in us, as an uncorrupted Judge, and impartial witness between him and us; so it is he alone that doth renew and repair the ruins thereof, contracted through the fall of our first parents, by which, together with all other faculties, conscience was corrupted, and either so deadened, seared, and benumbed, that it had no sense and feeling at all; or when it awakened out of this deadly swoon, did nothing but accuse and terrify us, or unjustly excuse and encourage us in our sinful courses, by presenting unto us false comforts.

Sect. 2 - Of the meritorious cause of a good conscience.

The meritorious cause of it, is God the Son, and our Savior Jesus Christ, who satisfying God's justice, and appeasing his wrath by his death and obedience, freed us from the guilt and punishment of our sins, reconciled us unto God, and made our peace with him; upon which, followeth peace of conscience, and freedom from the accusations and terrors of it. For when by the Law of God, or light of nature, it is set a-work to affright and disquiet us in regard of our sins, then showing our pardon sealed by the blood of Christ, it is

calmed and quieted, having nothing to lay to our charge, which Christ our surety hath not satisfied for us. Whereof it is that our Savior was prophetically named, The Prince of peace, and prefigured under the type of Melchizedek, because he is not only the King of righteousness, by whom we are justified, but also King of peace, as the Apostle speaketh, who making our peace with God, did thereby also procure for us peace of conscience. For the Judge hath no authority to condemn, nor the witness to accuse, nor the Jailor to imprison, nor the executioner to punish and torment, when the supreme Sovereign King of heaven and earth, being satisfied by the sufferings of his Son, hath sent us his free pardon, and we have pleaded it in the Court of conscience: Yea, rather the Judge doth then acquit and absolve us, and the witness saith nothing against us, but as a messenger of good things, doth testify unto us this joyful tidings. And hence it is, that our Savior was no sooner born unto us, but the holy Angels were sent as God's Heralds to proclaim this peace; Glory be unto God in the highest, and in earth peace, good will towards men. The which peace, our Savior wrought as a Mediator between God and us, by satisfying his justice, and offering himself as an all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all his elect. So the Apostle saith, It pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell; And (having made peace through the blood of his Cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself. And else-where he affirmeth, that we were without Christ, being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but that now in Christ Jesus, we, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between God and us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in ordinances, to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace: And that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace unto us, both them which were a far off, and to them that were nigh. And thus working our peace with God, he brought also peace to our consciences, when as by his blood he had cleansed them from the

guilt and punishment of sin; for if the blood of Bulls and Goats, sanctified to the outward purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through his eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God? Finally, the conscience is renewed and sanctified by God the holy Ghost, whilst he applieth Christ and all his benefits, the virtue of his death and precious blood, and maketh them effectual for the purging of our consciences from all sinful corruption, and spiritual defilements, that we may be enabled to perform pure and acceptable service unto God.

Sect. 3 - Of the instrumental causes of a good conscience.

For the effecting whereof, he useth as his instruments, the preaching of the Gospel, and administration of the Sacraments, and a lively faith, which by them both, made effectual by the inward operation of the Spirit, is begotten and also confirmed and increased in us. First, the preaching of the Gospel is the instrument which the Spirit useth, whereby a good conscience is wrought in us; for when the Law preached, and the curse threatened, like a strange wind and tempest, hath rent the mountains, and broken in pieces the rocks of our proud and hard hearts, and as the earthquake and fire, which Elias saw and felt, hath terrified the conscience with the guilt of sin, and caused us to hide our faces from God's presence, then the still voice of the Gospel, causing these storms to cease, doth quiet and calm the conscience, so as we can without terror, yea with much joy and comfort, hear the voice of God speaking peace, and offering unto us reconciliation, grace, and salvation in Jesus Christ, assuring us upon the condition of a lively faith, bringing forth the fruits thereof in unfeigned repentance, that all God's gracious promises, respecting this life and the life to come, do belong unto us. In which regard it is called glad tidings, which cause, even the very feet of those that bring them, to seem beautiful unto us; and the Gospel of peace, which Christ himself first preached. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give

unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. And when he had reconciled us unto God by his Cross, and slain enmity thereby; he came also and preached this peace unto us: And afterwards sent his Disciples as his Heralds to proclaim it, to all who by faith received it, yea as his Ambassadors to beseech us, in his stead, to be reconciled unto God. By which means when the peace of a good conscience is begun in us, it is thereby more and more confirmed and increased; as also by the use of the Sacraments, which being as seals annexed to the covenant of grace, do confirm our faith in God promises, and so work peace and joy in our consciences, out of this assurance that Christ and all his benefits are ours, and that we in him are reconciled unto God.

Sect. 4 - That a good conscience springeth from a lively faith.

For neither the Gospel, nor the Sacraments, no nor yet Christ himself, will bring unto us this peace of conscience, unless we receive and apply them by the hand of faith: as the best salve will not heal, unless it be applied to the wound, nor meat nourish us, unless it be received into the stomach; nor the purest water purge us from our filth, unless we be washed in it. But when this precious balsam is applied to our wounded consciences, and when by the hand of faith they are washed in the Lauer of his precious blood, then they are healed of the sores of sin, and being rifled from the guilt, punishment, and power of it, do speak peace unto us, and are the messengers of such joyful tidings as cannot be damped with any worldly tribulation. According to that of the Apostle, Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God; And not only so; but we glory in tribulation also, &c. Whereof it is, that in the Scriptures, faith and a good conscience, are as the cause and effect joined together, so that one of them cannot miscarry in the storm of temptations, but we shall make shipwreck of them both, and, together with our faith, lose

both our peace with God, and our peace of conscience. Whereas our assurance of faith will embolden us to draw near to the Throne of God's grace, with a true heart, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our souls washed with pure water. But yet we must take heed, that we do not attribute that to the instrument, which is peculiar to the principal cause, nor imagine that faith, by any virtue that is in itself, doth purify our consciences, or work peace in them. For this it can no more do, then the hand itself can cure a sore by touching it, or nourish the body, and keep it warm, without food or clothes, though it be the instrument to apply and put them on: but it is only our good Jonah, which, being cast into the raging Sea of our troubled consciences, maketh them clean and still; it is the wood of his Cross alone, that is, the virtue of his death and passion, which being cast into these waters embittered with the guilt of sin, that can make them to yield unto us the sweet and pleasant waters of joy and consolation: Although he will do no more good to pacify the storms, and sweeten the bitter torments of a raging conscience, if he be not applied by a lively faith, then Jonah in the ship, or the branches still growing upon the tree, and not at all cast into the tempestuous Sea, and bitter waters.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the actions and effects of a good Conscience; of the peace which it truly speaketh; and how it differeth from the false peace of secure worldlings.

Sect. 1 - That a good conscience speaketh goodness and peace only.

And so much of the causes of a good conscience, both principal and instrumental. The next point to be considered, is the actions and

effects of it, which are to speak peace, and to testify unto us truly, and according to the Scriptures, good and comfortable things; as a Judge acquitting and absolving us; as an advocate pleading for us; as a witness excusing and giving evidence on our side; and as a sure and faithful friend, admonishing us that we may not fall; or rebuking us being fallen, that we may rise again by unfeigned repentance. Where we are to consider, what the conscience witnesseth; and secondly the rule, according to which it giveth testimony. The things which the good conscience speaketh and witnesseth, are goodness and peace only; neither is it the action of a good conscience properly, to accuse and terrify us for sin; but to speak peace unto us, and to justify us as righteous; not in our own natural righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ applied by faith, which is most pure and perfect; and in our sanctification and inherent righteousness wrought in us by the renewing of the holy Ghost, which is but begun, spotted, and imperfect in this life, but yet is growing towards purity and perfection, and in the mean while hath the imperfections covered with Christ's perfect righteousness, and the spots and stains of it washed away in his blood. So that the good conscience is the peaceable conscience only, which witnesseth good things unto us, as most nearly resembling the conscience of Adam in the first Creation, whilst he remained in the state of innocence, which only justified him and his actions, and thereby comforted and strengthened him in God's service; and never accused or terrified him before his fall, because he was pure and free from all taint of sin, unto which purity of Creation, lost by transgression, the holy Ghost reneweth the conscience by degrees, unto the highest whereof it attaineth, when casting to accuse and terrify us, it justifieth and excuseth us before God's Tribunal; being then most good and perfect, when as it is most quiet and peaceable; so as we can say with Paul, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day, namely, from the time of my first effectual calling and conversion.

Sect. 2 - That a good conscience speaketh peace according to the truth of God's Word.

But here the carnal worldling and loose Libertine will take occasion to presume, that above all others, they have the best consciences, because they seldom or never accuse them, or if they do, yet they can easily put them to silence; they were never in their lives troubled with any horrors and fears; but have had their consciences ever quiet and peaceable, witnessing good things unto them, as that their sins are pardoned, they highly in God's favor, and shall most certainly attain unto salvation. But for preventing of this, we have added in the description of a good conscience, that it doth not only witness peaceable and good things, but also that it doth give true testimony of them. So that if we would have good consciences, they must not be erroneous in their evidence, but peace and truth must be matched together. And because they who most err, are ready with the best to brag of truth, as well as of peace, therefore I also added the Rule and Touchstone, whereby all divine truth is to be tried, namely, when it agreeth with the truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. For conscience (as I have said) is a witness with God, testifying that which he also testifieth; and therefore when it doth excuse them whom God excuseth, and secretly whispereth peace to them, unto whom in his Word he hath proclaimed it, then is its testimony true, and truly comfortable. But when it offereth peace to them against whom he hath proclaimed war, and excuseth them as good subjects, whom his Word condemneth of high treason and wicked rebellion, then is the testimony of conscience false and erroneous, and can be no good ground of any sound consolation. And in this case, conscience is a traitor both to God and us, renouncing his service and that office which he hath imposed upon it, and joining with the enemies of our salvation, to dishonor him in our destruction. For it maintaineth a false peace, by giving us false intelligence, telling us that we are in safety, when as we lie open to all danger; that we are strong and well fortified against all assaults, when as we are naked and have upon no part of the spiritual armor, and like a false Sinon, it testifieth that our spiritual enemies are quite departed, whereas

they lie in secret ambushment, ready to assault and surprise us, when by believing this false intelligence, we are secure, and neglecting the spiritual watch, give ourselves over to worldly delights.

Sect. 3 - The difference betwixt the peace of a good and bad conscience, as first, that the peace of the wicked proceedeth from ignorance of their estate.

Every conscience therefore is not good which is peaceable, but that which speaketh peace in truth; not according to our ignorant conceits, blinded with pride and self-love, or presumptuous opinions which have no sound ground, but when it is squared by the perfect and infallible rule of the holy Scriptures, whereby we may discern, whether that inward peace which we feel in us, proceeds from a good or a bad conscience. For there are many things by corrupting and defiling the conscience, and making it worse, and more dead and senseless, then it is in its own nature, which make it (at least for time) quiet and peaceable. As first, ignorance of God and his will, which hood-winking the conscience, giveth the devil fit opportunity to carry it quickly whither he will, and like a thick fog, and darkness of the night, depriving us of light and sight, doth cause us to err into the by-ways of sin, whilst we think that we are in that perfect path of righteousness that leadeth to God's Kingdom. As we see in Paul's example, who in the time of his ignorance, thought concupiscence to be no sin, which after he was enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, he discerned to be the root and fountain of all wickedness. And whilst his judgment was thus blinded, his conscience spoke peace unto him, testifying that he was alive and in good case, when as being truly informed, he plainly saw that he was dead, and in the high way that leadeth to hell. Such have not their peace disturbed by conscience, because, being ignorant of the way, it cannot admonish them when they go out of it, and being itself misinformed, it must needs give unto them false evidence. And though their hearts be full

of sluttish corners, and even deep dungeons full of all filthiness, yet the eye of conscience doth not discern any annoyance, because it is in the dark, and is not enlightened with the knowledge of God's truth. But especially this cometh to pass, when as ignorance is not only simple and natural, but embraced and affected, men purposely neglecting, yea, contemning and shunning the means of knowledge, because for their greater quietness, they would not have conscience to take notice of their ways. As they who bless themselves in their good meanings, as sufficient to salvation, and wholly neglecting God's true service, do content themselves with their own blind devotion and superstition. Such shun those places where the light of the Gospel shineth, and like Bats and Owls, delight to live in dark corners, where they seldom or never hear a Sermon, because they delight in the works of darkness. They hate the light of God's truth, because their works are evil, as our Savior speaketh; and as the thief and adulterer wait for the twilight, and make choice of the night, as fittest for their purposes, hating the morning as the shadow of death, because it discovereth their faults to others, and bringeth them in danger to be apprehended, condemned, and executed. So these affect the darkness of ignorance, and abhor the light of truth, because they would not have conscience to take notice of their wickedness, lest, like God's Sergeant, it should arrest and hale them before his Tribunal, and there, as an impartial witness, give evidence against them, and lest, being condemned, it should play the executioner, tormenting and vexing them, day and night with hellish horrors, and deep despair.

Sect. 4 - The peace of a good conscience proceedeth from spiritual life: of an evil, from senselessness and deadness.

Secondly, peace of conscience doth often proceed, not from spiritual life and motion, knowing and doing God's will, but from the clean contrary, as from spiritual deadness, idleness and sloth in performing those duties which God requireth. For as when the body

is dead, it hath no sense of sickness, wounds, or any hurt which can be done unto it: so when the soul is dead in sin, the conscience hath no feeling of any weight that lieth upon it, nor of any wounds or sores of sin, wherewith it is mangled and deformed. And though corruption and guilt, like a gangrene, endangereth it, even unto the very death, yet it never complaineth, because it hath no sense and feeling of this mischief and misery. Besides, whilst men snort in this lethargy of sin, the devil never wakeneth nor disquieteth them, because he knoweth that this temporary rest will end in restless torments; and that the disturbing them of this ease may happen to awake them; and so having a sense of their disease, may work a desire and resolution to use all means whereby they may be cured. Neither will it stand with his policy, to let them, who are in his thralldom, and ready with all cheerfulness to do his will, come unto a sight and sense of their misery, which might make them desirous to come out of it; and therefore he never terrifieth their consciences with his temptations, but rather more blindeth their eyes, that they may not see their woeful state, and stoppeth their mouths, that they may not complain of it. And so our flesh and carnal corruptions are quiet, and never go about to disturb our peace, whilst we suffer them to live and reign in us: but when we go about to depose them from their regency, and like slaves, to bring them in subjection, then they rebel, and taking arms against the part regenerate, make us feel the uproars and garboils of a civil and intestine war. Thus corrupt humors in the body, though they endanger our lives, yet oftentimes are scarce discerned before they be moved; but when we stir them with some wholesome potion, which serveth to purge us of them, then they rage and make us more sick in our own sense then we were before. Thus the sea itself is calm and quiet, when there is no wind to move it, but in the time of a storm it rageth and roareth, as if it would at once swallow up the earth. And thus gunpowder is quiet and harmless when it is let alone: but if a spark of fire fall into it, it bloweth up all that is near unto it. And so sin and corruption, if it be let alone, will be so quiet, that it will never disturb our peace: but if we seek to purge it out by wholesome medicines, or if it be touched with the fire of God's Spirit, or but even blown upon with the breath

of admonition and rebuke, out of the mouths of God's faithful Ministers, then the Sea is no more raging in a stream, nor gunpowder more clamorous and unruly when the fire is put unto it. Moreover, spiritual sloth and idleness doth oftentimes keep the conscience which is most corrupted, in peace and quiet, because it maketh us neglect all spiritual exercises which should awaken it, and bring it to some sense and feeling. As hearing the Word, reading, meditating of our wants and weakness, the foulness and deformity of sin, the fearfulness of God's Judgments, the curse and threatening's of the Law, the daily examination of our estates, by the strict rule of God's Word, which are the means, both to cast out the strong man out of his quiet possession, and to disturb the peace of an ill conscience, which ariseth not from any sound security, but rather from want of spiritual exercise: herein like unto a lame horse, which complaineth not of his lameness whilst he lieth at ease, but when by travel he becometh sensible of his pain, he cannot endure it, but halteth down right.

Sect. 5 - The third difference between a good and evil conscience.

A third cause of peace to an ill conscience, is carnal security, which doth not take away the guilt and punishment of sin, but only serveth as the devils cradle, to rock us asleep, that we may have no sense and feeling of it. Whereof it fareth with us, as with men sick of dangerous diseases, whose sleep bringeth not health, but a cessation of pain, through the binding up of the senses, who, after they are awakened, do feel themselves more sick then before. And as it bringeth us asleep in sin, so the devil and our corrupt flesh do by it lull conscience a sleep also, lest being disquieted, it should disquiet us, and waken us with clamor and crying: And intending to sack the city of our souls, he maketh the Watch man drunk with this poisonous and intoxicating cup, that he may not sound the alarm, nor give us any warning to prepare for resistance. Now this security being continued and increased, groweth at last to hardness of heart, in the

highest and worst degree, which neglecteth and contemneth all means whereby it might be softened, and to a reprobate sense, carrying men on in the course of sinning with greediness and delight. And when they are come to this pass, their consciences also increase in their carnal peace, their deep sleep causing a lethargy, and their lethargy death. Such consciences, from a sleepy numbness, fall into a dead palsy, having no sense of sin or smart; unto which they grow, by often quenching the good motions of the Spirit, speaking unto them in the ministry of the Word, and by customable committing of known sins, without repentance or remorse. For as festering sores, not cleansed by salves and corrosives, quickly gangrene, and running from part to part, destroy the whole body; so if we do not cleanse our sores of sin, by renewing our faith and repentance, they will corrupt the whole man, even conscience itself, and make it become dead and senseless. Such are the consciences of those, of whom the Apostle speaketh, who departing from the faith, and speaking lies in hypocrisy, have their consciences seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath ordained to be received with thanksgiving. And such had the Gentiles, who were given over of God to their vile affections, and a reprobate mind, to commit sin without check and remorse, yea with greediness and delight.

Sect. 6 - The last cause of the peace of an evil conscience, is worldly employments.

Finally, the conscience is made quiet, and at peace, when men are wholly taken with worldly vanities, both in their hearts and affections dotting upon them, and in their actions and employments in seeking after them. For Satan, seeing conscience placed in man by God, as his Deputy and Viceroy to govern him, as his Judge to absolve or condemn him, and as a witness, to give evidence of all his particular actions, and having no power to depose it, or to put it out of its place and office, doth labor by all means to pervert and corrupt it, that it

either may be silent, or give unjust judgment and false evidence. And to this purpose, he offereth worldly honors, riches, and pleasures, that by these bribes he may stop the mouth of conscience, so as it may either say nothing, or speak as he would have it: And with Satan joineth the world and our own flesh; for no sooner doth conscience begin to awaken out of the sleep of security, and to stir and move, speaking something that concerns its office (as it were) between sleeping and waking, but presently they endeavor all they can to bring it asleep again, by rocking it in the cradle of worldly prosperity, and singing unto it the bewitching songs of carnal pleasures. And if conscience will needs start up and be meddling, either accusing or condemning them for sin, or terrifying and tormenting them with the guilt and punishments due unto it; then do they corrupt this Judge and witness with carnal pleasures; and when they cannot be rid of their Jailor, but they must needs go abroad under his custody, they will make him drunk with these alluring cups of worldly delights, that they may have more liberty to do what they list, without check and controlment. And thus when conscience groweth melancholy through the neglect of duty, they cheer it again, that it may still go on with them in carnal courses, by feasting and reveling, music and merry company, sporting and gaming, jesting and wanton dalliance, stage-plays, unchaste sonnets, and pleasant histories. And if, notwithstanding all these, conscience stirreth and beginneth to speak, then doth the world give such a Plaudite to these pastimes, and the flesh entertain them with so loud an outcry of clamorous lusts and passions, that the voice of conscience being quite drowned, it becometh silent, because it speaketh to no purpose. And thus also conscience is sometimes at ease and peace, through worldly cares and employments, in compassing these earthly things: for having their hearts wholly set upon these vain objects, and all their actions and endeavors taken up in these exercises and employments, conscience is silent, because they have no leisure to attend what it saith, choosing rather to say nothing, then to speak much to little purpose.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the good things which a good Conscience witnesseth to the faithful.

Sect. 1 - The first thing which it witnesseth, is pardon of our sins and reconciliation with God.

And so much generally of the matter which a good conscience testifieth, namely, peace and good things, and of the manner how it giveth witness, to wit, truly, and according to the rule of God's Word, wherein the peace which it bringeth diversely, differeth from the peace of an ill conscience. Now we are to speak more particularly of the good things whereof it giveth evidence, and of the fruit and benefit which ariseth from it. First, it witnesseth unto us truly, and according to the rule of God's Word, that all our sins are pardoned, and we reconciled unto God; not by any satisfaction which ourselves have made, or any worthiness in us, for which God should accept us above others; but only out of our assurance of faith, which persuadeth us, that God, of his free grace and mercy, for the alone merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, hath forgiven us all our sins, and accepteth of us in the face of his best Beloved, in whom only he is well pleased: upon which ground, a good conscience giveth comfortable evidence, not only when we please ourselves in the sight and sense of God's graces in us, and in our cheerful obedience and best services which we perform to God: but also when we see and feel our corruptions, and imperfections, our slips, falls, and manifold failings in our best actions: Because it giveth evidence, according to the assurance of faith, which is grounded on God's mercies and Christ's merits, and not upon our works and worthiness, and therefore cannot be overthrown by our wants and weaknesses, our corruptions and unworthiness. In which respect, the Apostle saith, that baptism doth save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. Which answer is nothing but this, that when God's justice and the Law layeth sin to our charge, and requireth obedience, the conscience giveth in evidence, that Christ, by his death and resurrection, hath made full satisfaction, and in our stead, hath done all which was required of us.

Sect. 2 - That a good conscience witnesseth unto us our sanctification.

And as the conscience thus beareth witness of our justification, and reconciliation, so also of our sanctification, namely, that being freed from sin, we are become servants of righteousness, and not only delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin, but also from the corruption, power, and dominion of it, so that though it dwell in us, as a traitorous slave, yet it doth not reign and rule in us, as in times past. And though we be not wholly freed from all relics of sin and corruption, nor can perform unto God that perfect obedience which the Law requireth; yet our consciences give in evidence with us, that we are in part sanctified, and shall in God's good time have this work thoroughly perfected, and that in the meanwhile, we hate the evil we do, and love the good we do not, delighting in the Law of God in the inner man, even when we are led captive unto sin; that we desire and resolve to please God in all things, and endeavor in the use of all good means, to have our desires satisfied; and consequently, that we perform that Evangelical obedience which God requireth, and are through Christ accepted of him. In which regard we may say with Paul, from the time of our effectual calling, that we have lived with all good conscience until this day. Again, a good conscience is our warrant for all our actions, testifying unto us, that what we have done, and are about to do, is commanded of God, whereby we are comforted in those duties which we have performed, and encouraged to proceed in well-doing, because we do not our own will, but the will of God. And though our actions be imperfect in themselves, yet being done in sincerity and with upright hearts, we shall not be

discouraged in the sight and sense of our imperfections, yea, rather we shall find cause of rejoicing and glorying in them, because being done with a good conscience, it will justify and give witness unto us, that we are also justified and approved of God, and have both our persons and works accepted of him through Jesus Christ; according to that of the Apostle John, If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And this made the Apostle Paul most gladly to glory in his infirmities, which otherwise in themselves would have been a cause of grief and mourning; and to rejoice in the conscience of his well-doing, which in respect of the imperfections even of his best actions, would have filled his face with blushing, and his heart with shame. Our rejoicing (saith he) is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.

Sect. 3 - That a good conscience witnesseth unto us that we are in all estates blessed.

Moreover a good conscience testifieth unto us, that we are through Christ in an happy and blessed estate, both in respect of the time present and to come. In respect of the present, a good conscience will make us bear and brook all estates, not only with patience, but also with comfort and joy in the holy Ghost. If we be in prosperity, and abound with God's blessings, it warranteth unto us the lawful use of them, and witnesseth unto us that we are heirs and right owners, and not thieves and usurpers; that they are God's talents, which being employed to advantage, for the glory of our great Lord, and good of our fellow servants, they shall be doubled and redoubled, when we are called to give account of them; that they are pledges of God's favor in this life, and earnest-pennies of everlasting joy and happiness in the life to come. If we be in adversity and affliction, a good conscience, like the good Angel, holding us by the hand in this fiery furnace, will secure us that we shall not receive any harm. For it

will testify unto us, that these curses in their own nature, are through God's mercy turned into blessings; that they are testimonies of God's love, seeing as many as he loveth, he chastiseth, and signs of our adoption, for the Lord correcteth every son that he receiveth: and they are bastards and no sons whom he correcteth not. That they will not separate God's love from us, but our love from the world. That they are not poisons to kill us, but medicines to cure us of our spiritual diseases; fans, and files, and fires, to winnow us from our chaff, scour us from our rust, and purify us from the dross of our corruptions. Finally, that whatsoever they seem to flesh and blood, yet they shall work together for the best, to them that love God; and that though they be bitter and unpleasant, for the present, yet they shall bring forth the quiet fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby. In respect of the time to come, a good conscience doth give unto us truly, and according to the Scriptures, this comfortable and joyful evidence, that we shall continue ever to be holy and happy, persevering to the end in God's grace unto salvation; not by virtue of our own strength, but through the power and promises of God. For he hath assured us, that he will put his fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from him. That though we have many fierce Wolves to assault us, and be but silly weak Sheep, unable to make resistance, yet our Shepherd Christ, being infinitely stronger than they, none shall be able to pull us out of his hand. That whom God loveth, he loveth with an everlasting love, and to the end; that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and finally, that though we be many ways tried, yet the Lord will never suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will give a good end and issue to all our temptations.

Sect. 4 - That a good conscience maketh us cheerful in God's service.

Lastly, a good conscience maketh us cheerful and diligent in God's service, and willing to do all things which are pleasing in his sight. So the Prophet speaking of the faithful, saith, that they should hear a

voice behind them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left: That is, besides their outward teaching in the Ministry of the Word, they should have an inward teacher to direct and admonish them, even the Spirit of God, speaking unto them in the heart and conscience. And this is that which David meaneth, where he saith, that his reins did teach him in the night season, that is, the voice of conscience, which did show him the ways of God, and moved him with cheerfulness to walk in them. The which is the main end at which the conscience aimeth, in witnessing and sealing unto us all the former comforts. For therefore the conscience giveth unto us that comfortable testimony, that we are delivered out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, to the end that we should not still serve them, but worship our Lord and Redeemer, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives; that he hath bought us at so dear a price, that we should glorify him in our soul and body, because they are not our own, but his, who hath redeemed them; that we are freed from sin, that it may no longer reign in our mortal body, but being delivered out of this cruel tyranny, we should become the servants of righteousness; that our consciences are purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God; that we are reconciled unto God, by the death and sufferings of Christ, that we may above all things esteem our peace with him, which was so dearly purchased, and not be enticed with the hire of the whole world, to do anything displeasing unto God, or which might break or disturb our peace with him, seeing this were to under-value this inestimable price, as being of less worth then worldly vanities, and to tread the precious blood of Christ under our filthy feet, as an unholy thing, and even to despise the Spirit of grace with which we are sanctified. Therefore it witnesseth unto us, that we are sanctified, that we may be made careful to bring forth the fruits of sanctification to his glory, that hath called us out of darkness, into this marvelous light, and out of the bondage of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. That though our sanctification be imperfect, and stained with many corruptions, yet through Christ it is accepted of God, to this end, that we might be made more cheerful and diligent, in serving so gracious a Lord. For what greater

encouragement can there be unto us, in the performance of all good duties, then to be assured, that our labor of love shall not be lost, and that whatsoever we do, shall be taken in good part and richly rewarded, though never so imperfect, if we desire and endeavor to do the best we can? Finally, a good conscience giveth unto us this comfortable testimony, that we are most happy in all estates; that no estate, though never so much crossed and afflicted, may discourage us from going on in the ways of godliness, seeing no misery can make us miserable, but even our afflictions themselves shall advance our happiness, and that we shall never lose either grace or glory, but constantly hold out in the Christian race of godliness and righteousness, until we be crowned with the Garland of blessedness; that we may not be discouraged with the sense of our weakness and weariness, nor with the assaults of our spiritual enemies who encounter us in the way, seeing fighting against them, not in our own strength, but in the power of God's might, we are sure of support to hold out in the fight, and have his never-failing promise of obtaining victory.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of the signs and properties of a good Conscience.

Sect. 1 - The first sign are the causes of it.

The next point to be considered, is the signs whereby we may discern whether we have a good conscience, or no; that if we have, we may with Paul rejoice in it, if not, we may labor to obtain this precious jewel. Besides therefore these signs, which by the diligent Reader may be easily gathered out of the former discourse, there are diverse others which may be added. And first, if we have a good conscience,

we may discern it by the causes of it; for it is not the work of nature, which by the fall was corrupted in this, as in all other faculties; but the free gift of God; not purchased by our own merits, not purged from natural defilements with our own satisfactions, but purified from dead works by the precious blood of Christ, applied unto us by his holy Spirit and a lively faith. And therefore if we feel no change in our consciences, but that they still remain the same which they always were; if they be not washed with the blood of Christ, which purgeth them, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from dead works, that we may serve the living God; or if their purity and peace proceed from anything then from this, that being bathed in this fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, they are assured that their sins are pardoned, and shall never be imputed nor laid to their charge; if they be not purified by faith, which both assureth us of salvation, and also worketh by love; but are grounded alone upon groundless presumption; it is clear and manifest, that we deceive ourselves with a shadow, and have not yet attained to a good conscience.

Sect. 2 - The second sign is taken from the manner of working this good conscience.

The second sign, is the manner of working this good conscience. For it is not wrought by worldly persuasions, taken from our credit, pleasure, or profit, but by the ministry of the Word, begetting faith in us, whereby the heart and conscience is purified. And this it doth first, by terrifying it with the sight and sense of our sins, and the punishments due unto them, whereby we are humbled, and brought to despair of our own strength, for our recovery out of our misery; and then by pacifying and comforting it, by offering unto us in Christ the free pardon of our sins, reconciliation with God, and the eternal salvation of our souls. So that here the saying is truly verified, that peace is the daughter of war; for if our consciences have had no

conflict with God's justice, and the curse of the Law, and have not been truly humbled in the sense of his wrath, and the enmity which hath been between him and us, our peace is carnal and corrupt, springing not from assurance of faith, but from security and presumption, which have caused this ease, not by recovery of health, but through the numbness and stupidity of the disease.

Sect. 3 - That a good conscience is known by the effects of it.

Thirdly, a good conscience is known by the effects; for it excuseth and acquitteth us before God of all sin, and speaketh peace unto our hearts, assuring us that we are reconciled, and in God's favor: and grounding this testimony upon the infallible truth of holy Scriptures; It maketh us bold in all dangers, and like armor of proof, it contemneth the gun-shot of any worldly perils. It makes us courageous in the performance of all good duties, and not greatly to care who liketh or misliketh them, because we carry our warrant in our bosoms, which will justify our actions before God, what censure soever men pass of them. It maketh us like good servants, to come often into our Masters presence, because it witnesseth unto us, that we are in his favor, and that he accepteth of us and our service. It maketh us often to examine the book of our accounts, even in the presence of our Lord, and to desire him to survey our reckonings, because it testifieth unto us that we have dealt faithfully with him. So David, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart. After which Audit, it will justify us in respect of our integrity, as it did him. Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: Not in respect of the perfection of our performance, which is full of wants and weaknesses, but of our desire and resolution, as he expoundeth himself in the next words: For I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. If therefore our consciences produce these effects in us, it is an evident sign that they are pure and peaceable. But if contrariwise they accuse and terrify us, or excuse and acquit us

without the warrant of God's Word; If we are bold and valiant in our peace and prosperity, fearing no evil, but cowardly timorous when we are encountered with any danger; If we are so courageous in evil, that we are not ashamed, though men hear us talk wantonly and vainly, or see us in our actions imitate the greatest number, though unlawful and without warrant: but are ready to blush if a good speech hath slipped from us in bad company, or if we be overtaken at unawares in performing some religious duty, by such as are ready to flout us for it; If we care not how little we come into God's presence, and seldom or never examine the book of our accounts between us and him, or else slightly and overtly for form and fashion sake, and like unfaithful factors, cannot endure to have our Master audit our reckonings; then are our consciences defiled, and can give no true testimony of peace unto us.

Sect. 4 - That a good conscience is known by the properties of it, as first, that it is pure and peaceable.

Fourthly, a good conscience is known by the properties of it. First, as it is peaceable, so also it is pure, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the corruption. For the blood of Christ, as it doth like a sovereign salve pacify the rage of conscience, caused by the sores of sin, so doth it draw out the corrupt matter that causeth it, cleansing these wounds, as fast as it healeth them; and as it saveth us from this body of death, as the Apostle calleth it, so doth it purge it from dead works, that we may serve the living God. And therefore if our consciences be thus purged, then are they truly pacified. But if they witness unto us that we live still in sin, and so purpose to do for the time to come, and yet testify that we are in God's favor, and have our part in Christ and his benefits, they are evil and lying consciences, and give in false evidence, expressly contrary to the testimony of God, who being Truth itself, hath said, that there is no such peace to the wicked.

Sect. 5 - That a good conscience keepeth itself clear before God and men.

Secondly, it is the property of a good conscience, with all care and circumspection to keep itself clear both before God and men; before God, from faultiness and sin; before men, from offensiveness and all appearance of evil. According to the example of the Apostle, Who herein exercised himself, to have always his conscience void of offense, towards God and towards men. So that a good conscience thinketh it not sufficient, to have God's approbation with contempt of man's, when as they will lawfully stand together: for it is an offense in our neighbors, when they give false testimony of us, and an offense to them, when we make them to stumble by our evil example, drawing them on to the practice of that evil, the appearance whereof they see in us; from both which, Christian charity should restrain us. Yea it is hurtful also unto ourselves in losing our good name, which is to be preferred before riches; and though we keep this precious ointment for our inward comfort, yet we lose the benefit of that beauty, which it outwardly causeth, and the sweet odor of it, at least so far forth as we have it reflected upon us by others commendation. Much less doth it rest contented with man's approbation, when it is disallowed of God: for when they can say no evil of us, nor we by ourselves, yet are we not thereby justified, seeing it is the Lord that judgeth us, who is greater than our hearts; and therefore as it desireth man's approbation, so only thus far forth as it will stand with God's allowance, according to the example of the Apostle, who commended himself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. And if we thus do, then have we a sure sign of a good conscience: but if when we give just offense, we justify ourselves by pleading a good conscience, and so say and think, that we do not care what men say or conceive of our actions; or if (like hypocrites) we approve ourselves and our consciences to men, by a fair show in our outward behavior, and neglecting the Judgment of God, nourish in

our hearts secret corruptions, we discover a bad conscience, and both sin against God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

Sect. 6 - That a good conscience knoweth itself to be so.

Thirdly, it is the property of a good conscience, not to be doubtful and wavering, whether it be so or no, but being so, it knoweth assuredly that it is so, and seeth itself by its own light: According to that of the Apostle, We trust, or are assured that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. And this confidence of itself, maketh it confident and courageous against all dangers, and bearing witness to us that God is with us, it maketh us not to care greatly who oppose against us. So the Wiseman saith, that the righteous man is bold as a Lyon, because his conscience justifying him, doth also bear witness that he is justified and approved of God, and being in his favor, is under his protection, who is both able and willing to preserve him against all evil; according to that of the Apostle; Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart (that is, our conscience) condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; but if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandment, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. Neither doth the true fear of God, which is always in the faithful, hinder, but much confirm and strengthen this confidence, seeing it is not servile but filial; and when we fear most in the sight and sense of our frailty and corruption, then are we most assured that we shall never depart from God, nor he from us, and so shall most firmly stand, through his power assisting and upholding us.

Sect. 7 - That a good conscience maketh us merry and cheerful.

Fourthly, it is the property of a good conscience, to make those that have it merry, cheerful, and full of joy. It is a pleasant sauce, which maketh all our meats delightful, and whatsoever our cheer be, good conscience, if it be our companion, will make it a feast, and fill our heart with such joy, that a salad of cold herbs shall be better unto us, then a stalled Ox, or the greatest dainties, that wealth and wit can provide for wanton worldlings. It will make the hardest lodging, a bed of down; and the poorest cottage more pleasant, then the most stately Palace, to them who have not this inmate to harbor with them. It is (like sugar) sweet in itself, and sweeteneth all things that are mixed with it, and such a precious ointment that it perfumeth the whole house. The joy of conscience is complete in itself, and proceeding from an inward cause (as it were) a living fountain, that never faileth; it always lasteth, without any supply from the landwaters of earthly prosperity; wherein it far exceedeth the joy of worldlings, which arising from carnal comforts, faileth when they fail. The ambitious man cannot rejoice but in his honors, and if (with Haman) he wanteth cap and knee, all his other comforts will not keep him from deep melancholy, and discontent. The covetous man cannot have any joy, if he cannot have that riches, not which he needs, but which he desires; and he that is voluptuous, is as moody and melancholy in the want of music, merry company, and such like worldly delights, as he is merry when he hath them. So that their joy, like Summer brooks, are not to be seen or found, no longer then they are supplied by the showers of worldly prosperity. But he that hath a good conscience, rejoiceth in it when it is alone, without the company of any worldly comfort, and in the greatest solitude, it presenteth unto us a Theater of delights: And not only in the absence of all worldly good, but also in the presence of the greatest worldly evils. For he that hath peace with God, and peace of conscience, rejoiceth in tribulation, as the Apostle speaketh. So when the Apostles were beaten for Christ's cause, their backs were no more loaded with stripes, then their hearts lift up with joy, because they were thought worthy to suffer for him. So when Paul and Silas were imprisoned, and their feet in the stocks, their joy was at liberty, and the room that contained them, was not able to confine it. It

accompanieth the faithful in all their afflictions, and maketh their burden light, which is intolerable to those that want it. In their greatest poverty, it is instead of riches. In all their sickness it is a comfortable cordial. In the noisome stench of worldly slanders and reproaches, it is a sweet ointment, and precious perfume, which cheereth and reviveth their spirits. So when Paul was apprehended and arraigned as an heinous malefactor, this comfort refreshed him, that he had lived with all good conscience before God. So when he was pressed out of measure, even unto death, with troubles and persecutions, he rejoiced in this, the testimony of his conscience. Yea, even at the day of death, when all worldly comforts, like false friends, forsake us, or staying with us, do become (like Job's kinsmen) miserable comforters, serving for no use, but to aggravate our griefs; the joy of conscience triumpheth over death itself, because it is unto us, but a straight door, thorough which we shall enter into a fair Palace of everlasting blessedness: Yea it shall cheer our hearts at the day of Judgment, and when they who have spent their days in carnal delights, shall droop, and desire the hills to fall upon, and cover them, the joy of conscience will cause us to lift up our heads, because the day of our full redemption draweth near. If then we can find in ourselves this true spiritual joy, that will bear us up in all estates, and keep us above water in the greatest storms of worldly afflictions, it is a manifest sign of a good conscience; whereas contrariwise, if we have no joy saving that which is fed with the fuel of worldly prosperity, and is presently extinguished, when the water of tribulation is cast upon it; if it leave us when we most need it, and will stay on no terms any longer with us, then whilst it may have the company of health, wealth, pleasures, and preferments, friends and fame: If we rejoyce more in earthly, then in spiritual and heavenly things, in the name and credit of virtue and grace, more than in the things themselves, and in the fame, more than in the conscience of well-doing, and less grieve when we have made shipwreck of conscience, then when we are at a loss, in the pursuit of glory and esteem amongst men; it is a sign that the conscience is carnal and corrupt, savoring more of the world and earthly vanities, then of spiritual grace and the things of God.

Sect. 8 - That a good conscience may be known by the integrity and constancy of it.

Finally, a good conscience may be known by the integrity and constancy of it. For it laboreth to approve itself before God and men, in all things, and at all times. It respects the whole Law of God, and showeth itself in every commandment, as well as in any, due order and proportion being observed in the weight and excellency of every duty. It joineth piety and holiness with honesty and righteousness, and faith with good works; and so giveth place and precedency to the chief duties, as that it doth not thrust out of doors the least and meanest with careless neglect. As we see in the example of David, who had respect to all God's Commandments, and of Paul, who kept a good conscience in all things. So also a good conscience is known by our constancy in holy and righteous duties, and may justly take to itself that Motto or word of our late renowned Queen, of happy memory, *Semper eadem*. It is the same in all places, and in all companies, at home as well as in the Church, alone as in company, among the godly and sincere, as the godless and profane. It changeth upon no occasion, but keepeth a just and equal tenor in the performance of the duties of holiness and righteousness, whether honor or dishonor, good report or evil report, gain or loss, prosperity or adversity attend upon them. Which integrity and constancy, if we find in us, it will give unto us this comfortable evidence, that we have a good conscience. But if contrariwise we share stakes between God and the world, and in some things (like Herod) hear and obey his Word willingly, and willingly in other things stop our ears, and neglecting his revealed will, give ourselves over to be ruled by our own carnal lusts; If like civil worldlings, we only make conscience of the duties of Justice and honesty, and neglect the duties of Religion and piety; or if with hypocrites, we are forward in the outward duties of piety, and make no conscience of honesty and just dealing with all men, nor of the works of mercy towards those that are in want and misery, and are so wholly for faith, that we are nothing for good

works; If we are religious and honest by fits, when it will best serve our worldly ends, and be Saints in the Church, and devils at home; or fit our conversation to all companies, seeming zealous and devout among them that fear God, and cold and careless of all Christian duties among the godless and wicked, we may hence conclude, that our consciences are corrupt and carnal.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the means whereby we may get a good Conscience; and preserve it being gotten.

Sect. 1 - The first means of getting a good conscience, is highly to esteem it.

Now when by these signs we have examined ourselves, we shall find, either that we have a good conscience, or that we want it. If we have it not, then are we carefully to use all good means, whereby we may attain unto it; but if upon trial we find, that we have it, then are we to rejoice in it, using all good means, whereby we may preserve and keep safe so precious a Jewel. The means by which we may get a good conscience, if we want it, are diverse. The first is, in our judgments highly to esteem it, as one of God's special graces and richest gifts, and in our hearts and affections, to love and desire it above all earthly things. And so will the Lord be more willing to bestow it upon us, when we esteem and desire it, according to the worth and value of it, and we also shall be more earnest in using all good means to get it, and more thankful unto God for it, when we have obtained it. Now that we may esteem and desire this gift of God, let us consider, First, that it is most excellent, and one of the chiefest parts of our happiness, giving us a taste and entrance into the joys of

heaven, even whilst we are upon earth. For (as the Apostle saith) The Kingdom of God is not meats and drinks, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. But to what end should I speak of the excellency of it which is unspeakable, or labor to set forth the beauty and brightness of this heavenly light, which no mortal eye can behold in its perfect glory, seeing as the Apostle telleth us, it passeth all understanding? And therefore I will content myself to shadow it darkly, and to give some glimpse of it (as of the Sun in the water) by touching briefly the profit and necessity of it. And for the utility of this grace, that may be said of it, which the Apostle speaketh of godliness, that it is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Like a witness it giveth evidence on our side before God, and excuseth us of all those faults which Satan accuseth us of, or the Law layeth to our charge; like an Advocate it pleadeth our cause, and proveth that we are just and innocent, through the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ. As a just Judge, upon this evidence and plea it absolveth us, and the judgment thereof shall never be traversed or reversed in this world, nor in the world to come. But look what sentence good conscience passeth on earth, the supreme Judge will ratify at the great Day of assizes, in which respect, if it condemn us not here, then may we have confidence towards God, that he will not condemn us hereafter. As a comfortable and true friend, it always beareth us company, encouraging us when we do well, and reproving us when we do amiss, admonishing and warning us to look to our footing, when we walk in slippery places, and are in danger of falling, and to rise, if we do fall for want of care in taking warning, by renewing our repentance. In our prosperity it is our guide to lead us on, and direct us in the right use of it; in our affliction it is our comforter, which speaking peace within, doth make us with patience and joy to bear all outward crosses and calamities. In time of peace, or rather cessation of that conflict with the spiritual enemies of our salvation, it is a faithful Watch-man, which leaves us to enjoy our rest and quiet when there is no danger, but yet admonisheth us to sleep in our Christian armor, seeing they are not gone, but have only withdrawn their forces for their greater advantage; and in time of war when the

enemy approacheth, and is ready to encounter us, it not only soundeth the alarm, that we may start up and stand in readiness, but also is armor of proof, and even a brazen wall to keep us from danger when they assault us. Finally, it performeth all good duties, to all sorts of men, at all times, and all places, accompanying the Judge to the bench, the Lawyer to the bar, the Divine both in his Study and Pulpit, the Tradesman in his shop, and the Buyer and Seller in the market, teaching and admonishing them how they shall carry themselves in all cases, and both approving them when they perform their duty, and rebuking them, when for fear or favor, glory or gain, they do neglect it. And from hence also the necessity of a good conscience appeareth, seeing it bringeth with it so much good, of all which they are destitute that live without it. Yea they are subject to the contrary evils, having in them a witness that daily accuseth them, and a Judge that condemneth them, no guide to lead them, no friend to admonish them, to encourage them in good, or discourage them in evil. Neither can they do anything pleasing unto God: for the end of the Commandment is love, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; of which end they fail, that are destitute of it, and can do nothing but sin against God, and bring upon themselves fearful condemnation: for if our corrupt consciences condemn us, God the righteous and impartial Judge, who is greater than our consciences, will much more condemn us, as the Apostle John speaketh.

Sect. 2 - Of the second means to obtain a good conscience.

Secondly, we must labor to know the will of God revealed in the Scriptures, and to apply what we know, unto ourselves, for our own use. For the conscience judgeth and witnesseth with God, for us, or against us, and therefore we must know what he approveth and condemneth, if we would have our judgment and evidence to agree with his; otherwise our consciences being unjust and erroneous, will judge unjustly of our actions, and give in false evidence, when we put

ourselves upon them for trial. More especially, we must labor after the knowledge, both of the Law and the Gospel; for the Law, as it is the rule of our actions, according to which they ought to be wholly conformed, so also it is the rule of our consciences, whereby they discern whether they be right or crooked, good or evil. It is the municipal law for the peculiar government of God's subjects, and the book of Statutes, set out by our Sovereign, according to which, conscience is bound to judge and give evidence, which it cannot do, unless it know, and be able to examine our actions according unto this law. In which regard, the consciences of ignorant men do in most things mislead them into manifold errors, because they are not able to judge of their actions according to God's Law, which they know not, but give sentence of them according to their own wills, human traditions, and their own inventions, superstitious conceits and good meanings. And the like may be said of those, who having some knowledge of God's Law, do through negligence or profaneness never examine their actions by it, yea, rather being carried through the violence of their carnal lusts and passions, into all disobedience and sin, and resolving in themselves to go on in their course, do cast the Law out of their sight and remembrance, lest conscience having it to judge by should accuse and condemn their evil actions, and so abate their pleasure which they take in them. But especially if we would have good consciences, we must apply unto ourselves the sentence of the Law, which condemneth all of sin, and subjecteth them under the curse, who do not continue in all that is written in the book of the Law to do it. For until the Law do convince us of sin, and that we cannot be justified before God in our own righteousness, we shall rest in it, and never seek to be partakers of the righteousness of Christ, by which alone we can be justified before God, and consequently by it only obtain peace of conscience. In which regard it is not sufficient to know, and apply the Law unto us; for this will work in the conscience terrors and fears, and no peace: but only use it as a schoolmaster to teach us our own vileness and sinful corruption, and that we are in ourselves most miserable, and in the fearful state of death and condemnation, that so it may bring us unto Christ, in whom alone we can be justified and obtain sound and

secure peace. And therefore if we would have good consciences, we must also know the Gospel, in which God of his free grace doth offer unto us peace and reconciliation in Jesus Christ; we must acquaint ourselves with the covenant of grace, which is the main foundation of all our peace, when as thereby we are assured, not only that God's mercies are infinite, and Christ's merits all-sufficient, but that they belong unto us, performing the condition of the covenant, that God for Christ's sake will forgive us our sins, be reconciled unto us, and write his Law in our hearts, that we may not depart from him.

Sect. 3 - The third means of a good conscience is a lively faith.

Thirdly, we must not, for the obtaining of a good conscience, only know the Gospel and Covenant of grace, with the sweet promises therein contained, but also apply them by a lively faith, and in a special manner interesse ourselves in them, by performing the condition of the covenant, which is our restipulation that we make with God. For we must be justified by faith, before we can have peace with him, or peace of conscience. Our consciences must be purged by the blood of Christ, from dead works, and from the guilt and punishment of all our sins, before they will speak peace unto us. The Charter of our peace must be drawn upon the Cross, and sealed with the effusion of Christ's blood, and must be received and pleaded by faith, before our consciences will cease accusing and condemning, or stand with us upon any terms of peace. Now this faith must be approved to be unfeigned and sound by the fruits which it bringeth forth in unfeigned repentance, by the changing of our hearts, and renewing of our minds, our hatred of evil, and love of good, our sorrow for our sins past, and resolution to leave and forsake them for the time to come, and to serve the Lord in the contrary duties of holiness and righteousness; without which fruits, faith is no living Tree, but a dead stock, which will give us no assurance of peace with God in the remission of our sins, and consequently will bring with it no peace of conscience. And hereof it is, that the promises of the

Gospel are as often made to repentant sinners, as to those that believe in Christ, because though faith only be the condition of the Covenant, yet it is such a faith alone, as is fruitful in repentance. Neither can this faith be so easily seen and discerned in itself, but only by the fruits that spring from it, which necessarily inferring this good Tree from which they spring, the promises are made to them, because these being more sensible, they may be more easily applied.

Sect. 4 - That the exercises of repentance are notable means to get a good conscience, and also the love of God and our neighbors.

Fourthly, the exercises of repentance are notable means to work peace of conscience; as our often humbling of ourselves before God in the sight and sense of our vileness and unworthiness, whereby our stony hearts are broken, and our spirits made contrite; our daily confession of our sins unto God, and earnest craving of pardon for them, seeing our faith will assure us, and answerably our consciences will witness with us, according to the rule of God's Word, that humbling ourselves, we shall be exalted; that being empty of all grace and goodness, and hungering after it, we shall be filled and satisfied; that the God of peace will dwell with us, and bring his peace unto us, being of broken hearts and contrite spirits: and finally, that confessing and forsaking our sins, we shall find mercy, seeing it standeth upon the truth of God's promise, according to that of the Apostle, If we acknowledge and confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Of which we have experience in the example of David, who being afflicted in the sight and sense of his sin, with terrors of conscience, used this means to quiet it and get peace, I acknowledge (saith he) my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Lastly, the unfeigned love of God and of our neighbors is a notable means for the obtaining of a good conscience; for if we love God, our consciences will witness

unto us that he loveth us, seeing his love shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, worketh this love in us, and is that divine fire and flame from which this heat cometh: for we love him, because he loved us first, as the Apostle testifieth. And this love of God towards us, and our love towards him, will make us careful to keep our consciences unspotted of any known sin, and zealous in doing all things which may be pleasing in his sight. From which sense of our mutual love, will spring peace unspeakable, we resting securely upon him who so loveth us, and whom we so love. According to that of the Apostle; Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

Sect. 5 - Of the means whereby a good conscience may be preserved.

And these are the means of getting a good conscience. The means of preserving it being gotten, are diverse. First, the often renewing of our covenant of peace with God, by renewing the condition of it, on our part, faith and repentance. For as we daily wound our consciences through our frailty in falling into sin, whereby the peace of them is disturbed, and defile them, by casting upon them the filth of our corruptions: so our care must be, to heal daily these wounds, by applying unto them afresh by the hand of faith, the sovereign salve and balsam of Christ's blood, which is of sufficient and sole virtue, and nothing else in the world, to heal these wounds; and also to wash them as often in the tears of unfeigned repentance, which will give us assurance that they are purged and cleansed from all filth of sin. Secondly, being cleansed, our continual care must be to keep them clean from all sin, especially in our desires, resolutions, and endeavors, and howsoever we cannot hinder it from dwelling in us, yet we must take heed that it do not so reign in us, that we should obey it willingly in the lusts thereof; for sin willingly nourished, cannot possibly stand with this peace, seeing they do wound and waste the conscience; which sores, if they fester and putrefy with corruption, will breed in them such a gnawing worm, as will give

unto us no peace or rest; but night and day will torture and torment us. Thirdly, let us daily mortify all our sinful lusts, as wrath, envy, malice, unclean concupiscence, pride, and the rest, which will betray conscience unto sin, and with their loud cries and tumultuous clamors, hinder it of all sound peace and quiet. But especially, we must crucify all worldly lusts of ambition, covetousness, and voluptuousness, and wean our hearts from the love of earthly vanities: which otherwise if it be entertained, will set the peace of conscience unto sale, for the base price of pleasure, profit, and preferment, as the miserable experience of these times do too plainly teach us. Fourthly, we must often examine our consciences by the rule of God's Word, whether they give unto us true evidence and judgment, the which must be done in the presence of our supreme Judge, who perfectly seeth all secrets, and giveth righteous judgment, not only of all our actions, but even of conscience also, which as his Deputy judgeth of them: Even as the Judges of the Kingdom, according to law, call to account all subjects, and pass sentence of their actions, but yet are accountable to their Sovereign, and have all their judgments and determinations subject to his censure. And this is that answer of a good conscience towards God, whereof S. Peter speaketh, which the Apostle Paul by continual exercise endeavored so to make, as he might be accepted of him. Which that we may the better do at the great Day of reckoning, we must often put conscience to judge and examine itself, according to the rule of the Scriptures, that the Book of God's Law, and the book of conscience may agree together; and also desire the Lord in private, often to try and examine us and it, that all things being cleared between us and him, we may not come to public shame, when we are called to give an account in the Star-chamber of heaven. Fifthly, we are to keep our consciences clean and undefiled from dead works, and not to smother any sin in them without judgment and execution, though for life and liberty, it offer to bribe us with all the honors, riches, and pleasures in the world. For if conscience be not pure and impartial, in condemning all sin, it can never be peaceable, seeing it will be bound over to answer before the supreme Judge, for connivence and partial judgment; and for not condemning and

punishing sin as his Vicegerent, according to law, shall itself be found an accessory, and guilty of that sin which it tolerated in us, and so shall be condemned and tortured with that gnawing worm which never dieth. Lastly, we must continually meditate of the day of Judgment, when as a clear and good conscience will be better unto us then ten thousand worlds. The which will make us careful to preserve our consciences in their purity and peace, seeing if they do not approve us at that day, we can never be justified before the tribunal of God's Judgment. And as Judges and Notaries, knowing that their wise, just, and judicious King will exactly view and examine their Books and Records, are made thereby careful to keep them fair, and without the aspersion of any faultiness, and, if they have failed in the just executing of their office, will do what they can to be free from all imputation; so we being to show our books of conscience before the King of heaven and earth, are to be much more careful, that they may be unblemished, and without all spots of sin; and because we often blot and blemish them in this life, and have our faults and sins often interlined; we must labor to get out all these blots and stains, by washing them often with the hand of faith in the blood of Christ, and in that aqua fortis, and powerful water, which flowed out of his side; that so our sins not being found in these books of account, may not be imputed unto us, nor bring upon us that just condemnation which they have deserved. And so much concerning a good conscience, and those fundamental virtues, which are the main grounds of a godly life.

THE SECOND BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

Containing the main parts and principal duties of it, which we ought generally to perform at all times, and upon all good occasions.

CHAPTER I.

Of the main duties wherein a godly life consisteth.

Sect. 1 - That a godly life consisteth in doing all those duties which God hath commanded.

We have entreated the more largely of the main grounds of a godly life, because when the foundation is laid large and deep, the building which is erected upon it, is more firm and durable. And now we are come to show, first, wherein it consisteth: and secondly, what are the properties of it, and of all the duties required in it. A godly life consisteth in the conformity of our whole carriage unto God's revealed will, both in fleeing and forsaking all that is evil, and in embracing and practicing that which is good; in leaving undone that which he hath forbidden, and in doing that which he hath commanded: And is generally required in many places of holy Scriptures. Depart from evil, and do good; cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Put ye off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind, and put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. So Jerome to this purpose saith, That there are two kinds of God's Commandments, in which, all Justice is comprehended. The one forbiddeth, the other commandeth; for as evils are prohibited, so good things are enjoined. There cessation and rest worketh, here study and endeavor. There the mind is restrained, here incited. Here it is a fault to do, there not to have done. And therefore to the leading of a godly life, it sufficeth not (as many think) to be harmless and innocent, unless we also be diligent and constant, in doing of all holy and just actions, but we must as he addeth, upon the foundation of innocence, erect the building of righteousness. Yea, in truth a godly life more principally consisteth in doing, then not doing; in action, rather than in forbearance. And he no less displeaseth God, and sinneth against his own soul, who neglecteth the good which he

requireth, then he who committeth the evil which he forbiddeth. The Idolater offendeth no more heinously in worshipping a false god, then the Atheist that acknowledgeth no God; nor the superstitious person, who worshippeth him in a false manner, then the profane worldling, who worshippeth him not at all. He that hid his talent, was cast into utter darkness, because he did not use it to his masters advantage, as well as they that abuse and misspend it. Dives was cast into hell for not feeding Lazarus, as well as others that rob and oppress the poor: the foolish virgins were shut out, who had not in their lamps the oil of grace, and the light of a godly life. And they at Christ's left hand, shall at the day of Judgment have their portion with the devil and his angels, who did not feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, as well as they who spoil them of their food and raiment; seeing there is but this difference between them, that the one withholdeth their right, which God hath allotted them, the other taketh it away when they already have it. The one, like the nurse, withholdeth the breast from the hungry child entrusted to her care and keeping; the other pulleth the teat out of his mouth, when he hath taken hold of it. Or if they differ at all (as in some cases there is some difference) there shall be only this difference in their punishments; that these innocent and harmless men, who have power to do good and do it not, shall be damned in hell, but not in so deep a degree of condemnation as the other.

Sect. 2 - That a godly life consisteth in evangelical obedience, both in forsaking that evil which God forbiddeth, and in doing that good which he commandeth.

Unto a godly life therefore it is required, that we hate and forsake all evil, and that we embrace and practice that which is good; that is, that we abhor and renounce sin in all kinds, without exception, and those most of all, which whilst we lived in the state of infidelity, we most loved, and to which, as yet our corrupt nature most inclineth, seeing they are our greatest and most dangerous enemies, and like

traitorous Rebels, raising intestine war within us, do as much as in them lieth, expose us to the malice of our open enemies, the devil and the world. In which total relinquishing of sin, we must be constant in our resolutions and endeavors, and not do it by fits and flashes, as we shall see hereafter. And with the like constancy, we are to settle ourselves, in embracing and practicing all good duties, whether they be hard or easy, pleasant or displeasing, profitable to our worldly estate, or to our loss and hindrance. Now, because the Word and revealed will of God is the rule and squire, according to which, we are to judge of good and evil, that being good which it commandeth, and evil which it forbiddeth; therefore a godly life consists in our conformity and obedience to God's will revealed in his Word, or to all God's Commandments contained both in the Law and Gospel. For because we cannot perform obedience to the Law legally, that is, in that perfection which the Law requireth, therefore a godly life is not, as we understand it in this Treatise, an absolute conformity unto the Law (though it be most absolute when it is most conformable) but when we conform ourselves and all our actions, according to the rule of the Law, after an Evangelical manner, that is, desire, resolve, and endeavor to perform unto it as perfect obedience as we can, which because through our frailty and corruption it is defective, and nothing imperfect can be acceptable unto God, therefore unto such a godly life as may be pleasing unto him, there is required, that to our obedience of the Law, we add our obedience to the Gospel, which requireth a lively faith in Christ, whereby applying unto ourselves both him and all his benefits, the imperfections of our obedience are covered with his perfect righteousness, and our sins and corruptions washed away in his blood. And also that we show forth the fruits of this faith in our unfeigned repentance, whereby we bewail our sins past, and resolve and endeavor to leave and forsake them for the time to come, lament the imperfection of our obedience, and labor and strive after more perfection; without which obedience to the Gospel, our imperfect obedience to the Law, will not be accepted of God, nor entitle us to this godly life, which is pleasing in his sight.

Sect. 3 - That we must in a godly life perform obedience to the Law, after an Evangelical manner.

Our obedience therefore to the Law is required, seeing it is the rule of holiness and righteousness, according to which, all our thoughts, words, and actions are to be conformed; and our obedience to the Gospel, to supply and amend what is imperfect and defective through our frailty and corruption, and to make our works straight in God's sight, when through ignorance or impotency we have swerved from our rule. The Law must be observed of all that will lead a godly life, because as a Schoolmaster it teacheth us, what is good, and what is evil, what we must do, and what we must leave undone; The Gospel also with no less care, because it showeth us how it is to be done, and also ministereth courage and strength, whereby we are enabled to perform our duties. We must make the Law the Canon, according to which, we must carry ourselves in all our thoughts, words, and works, because so far forth only, as they are conformable unto it, they are holy and righteous; but withal, the Commandments of the Gospel requiring faith and repentance, must be obeyed, that what is imperfect in us, may be made perfect through Christ, and that our new obedience, which cannot be accepted according to the Covenant of works, as coming from servants, may be acceptable, according to the Covenant of grace, as coming from sons, whose desires and endeavors are pleasing to our heavenly Father, who accepteth the will for the deed. The Law prescribeth the way wherein all are to walk, that will lead a godly life; The Gospel, as a faithful companion, encourageth us to go in this way, and leading us by the hand, preserveth us from falling; and when through frailty we are fallen, it lifteth us up again.

Sect. 4 - That in a godly life we must join together the duties of piety, righteousness, and sobriety.

Now the duties of a godly life, which the Law requireth, respect either God or men: both which are to be considered, first generally, as they are to be performed of every Christian in the whole course of their lives; and secondly, as they are to be exercised in them every day. The duties which respect God, are contained in the first Table, and are all comprehended under the name of piety. The duties which concern men, are comprehended in the second Table, and are either the duties of righteousness and mercy, which respect our neighbors, or the duties of temperance and sobriety belonging to our own persons. All which must go together, and may in no wise be severed the one from the other. For piety is the root of righteousness and sobriety, and these the fruits and signs of piety, and neither of both are accepted of God, but when they go together, seeing piety without righteousness, is like a foundation without a building; and righteousness without piety, is like a building without a foundation; that, as a fire without light; this, like the fools fire, a light without heat; that alone, at the best, makes but hypocrites; this without that, no better than proud Justiciaries and civil worldlings. And hereof it is, that the holy Ghost in the Scriptures joineth them altogether, requiring no less the one then the other. So he saith, that those who are the redeemed of the Lord, shall worship him in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives; that we must pray for Kings, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life under their government, in all godliness and honesty: That our spiritual renewing, according to God's image, ought to be both in righteousness and true holiness: That a Bishop ought to be a lover of hospitality, and a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, and temperate; that the grace of God which bringeth salvation appearing, hath taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. And that they who will make their calling and election sure, must not embrace loose and single virtues, nor perform scattered duties, but link and chain them one with another. For they are such twins as live and die together, and the soul, life, and breath of Christianity, which may be distinguished in doctrine and discourse, but not derided in our practice and conversation.

CHAPTER II.

Of piety, which is the sum of the first Table

Sect. 1 - Of piety, comprising in it all duties of God's service.

The first and main duties required unto a godly life, are all comprehended under the name of piety, required in the first Table. Which is nothing else, but that true Religion, whereby we worship the only true God, according to his will revealed unto us. So Augustine, What is piety, but to serve God with a pure mind? Which is otherwise called worship. And again, this is piety to love God freely and absolutely, and out of him to expect no reward, but what is expected from him. For he is the chief Goodness: and what thing of worth can he ask of God, to whom God seemeth of little worth? So that piety consisteth in God's true service, and in the performance of those holy duties of his worship which he requireth in the first Table: of which, piety is the sum, according to that of our Savior, repeated out of the Law, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. The which is sometime signified by the fear of God, a part of divine worship being put for the whole, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name. And sometime by the love of God, which is put for all worship, because all holy service and true obedience doth flow from it. So Moses in his repetition of the Law, makes this the sum of all: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And our Savior Christ telleth the Lawyer, that this is the great Commandment, which comprehendeth in it the whole first Table; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Where he showeth both the object of true worship, which is the Lord our God only, and the special and

principal act of it, which is love, from which, as a fountain, all other parts, like streams, do spring and flow; and also the subject of this duty which is the whole man. For by the heart, is understood all the affections, desires, and inclinations; by the soul, the will, purpose and resolution; by the mind, the reason, understanding, discourse, and memory; and by the might or strength (which Saint Luke also addeth) all the faculties of the soul, and parts of the body, with all their functions, actions, and operations, both internal and external. So that the whole man must be consecrated unto the service and worship of God, by all those who embrace piety, and desire so to perform the duties of a godly life, as they may be acceptable and pleasing in the sight of God. The which, as it is required by him, so there is none but he, who can enable us in any measure to perform it, seeing it is not in our own power, but his free gift, and the work of his holy Spirit, which is bestowed upon whom and when he will; for it is God only, who by his divine power, giveth us all things which pertain to life and godliness, as the Apostle Peter speaketh; and therefore when he requireth it of us, we must return unto him again, and entreat him by earnest and fervent prayer, that he will enable us to perform that which he requireth; according to that of Augustine, Give what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt.

Sect. 2 - Reasons moving us to embrace piety, first, because it is most excellent.

And thus we generally see what piety is. Let us in the next place consider briefly of some arguments which may move us to embrace and practice it, in the whole course of our lives. The first is, that piety and the duties of it are most excellent, and to be preferred before righteousness, both in regard of our judgments, which ought to esteem them above the other, in respect of the object, God himself, unto whom immediately they are to be performed, who infinitely exceeding men, the duties which we owe unto him, are incomparably to be preferred before those which are due to them. In regard also of

our hearts and affections, which ought to embrace with greater love and desire those things which our judgments do most highly value; and in respect of our endeavor and practice, wherein we ought to give priority and precedency, in regard of time and place, unto the duties of piety, above all earthly things, according to that of our Savior, First seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, &c. Again, Christ calleth the first Table, enjoining piety, The great Commandment: unto which the second is like, but not equal. For piety is the fountain of righteousness, and the alone sure foundation, upon which it standeth; which if it wanteth, or is built upon any other ground, as it were, upon a quagmire or the sands, it will soon fall and come to ruin, seeing the building can stand no longer then it hath a foundation to rest upon; as we daily see in the Moral and mere civil righteousness of worldlings, which resting upon their credit, or profit, or fear of human Laws, doth last no longer then they lust. It is the heart and head of Justice, which giveth life, heat, and motion unto it, without which, it is but a dead trunk, yea the very soul, which doth inform it, without which, it is but a loathsome carcass in God's sight. And therefore in the practice of a godly life, we are more highly to esteem, and answerably with more care, earnestness and delight, to put in practice the duties of piety, which concern God immediately, then the duties of righteousness which respect our neighbors. As for example, we must love, and fear and obey God more than men; and when both will not stand together, we must neglect the one in comparison of the other, as we see in the example of the Apostles, who when men forbade that which God commanded, obeyed him rather than them. But yet seeing all duties both to God and men are commanded of God, and in that regard we serve or disobey him, mediately and indirectly, when we do or neglect the duties which concern them: therefore in performing the duties of the first Table in our judgment, affection and practice, we are to observe a due proportion between them, comparing like with like, the greatest with the greatest, middle with middle, and the least with the least; neither are the ceremonies, and circumstances, and means of pious duties, to be preferred before the main and substantial duties of righteousness; as we see in God's own choice, who preferred mercy

before sacrifice, and the duties of righteousness, mercy and love, before an external fast, or the outward rest of the Sabbath, which is but a means of the service of God, and of our spiritual resting from sin.

Sect. 3 - The second reason is taken from the profit of Piety.

The second reason is taken from the profit of piety, which may much induce us to the embracing of it. For if men's hearts are set chiefly upon gain, and are ready to inquire after it upon all occasions, according to that of the Psalmist, There be many that say, Who will show us any good? And if their affections and desires are inflamed and enlarged, according to the greatness of the profit which they pursue; then when our judgments are convinced, and persuaded that there is most gain in godliness, there is great reason why our hearts should be set upon it as our chiefest treasure. But the Apostle telleth us, that godliness is gain, yea, great gain with contentation; where he maketh not the gain of godliness to depend upon the condition of our contentment, as though there were no profit in it, unless we be contented with it; but that it is the effect, and an inseparable companion of godliness, to make us contented with all estates, and therefore not gain only, if it be joined with content, but because it always bringeth with it contentation. Even as the Sun is said to be comfortable, not if it give light, but because it giveth light, it doth bring us comfort with his beams and brightness. Now this profit of piety, is incomparably greater than the gain of the whole world; for this is profitable but for some purposes, but the other for all things; that only for the present, but this also for eternity, according to that of the Apostle; Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. In this life it assureth us of God's grace and favor, that we are his children and heirs of his promises, who are continually under his protection, and thereby safe from all danger, that though we have but little, yet there is cause of great contentment, seeing our small pittance is better than

the riches of many wicked, it being a pledge of God's love, and an earnest penny of our heavenly happiness. That we are blessed in all estates, prosperity and adversity, poverty and riches, health and sickness, life and death, because God that loveth us, will by his wisdom and power, cause all things to work together for our good. In the life to come also godliness will be most gainful; for when all worldly profits are utterly ceased, and the glory and beauty of them withered and vanished out of sight, then shall we find most profit in our piety, and reap a joyful harvest of all our holy endeavors. Then shall we with confidence approach into God's presence, when as we expect that Crown of glory, which he hath freely promised to those who have served him in holiness and righteousness all the days of this life; and having on this wedding garment, we shall be admitted into the Bridal chamber of our Head and Husband Jesus Christ, and there eternally solace ourselves in the fruition of his love, and of that heavenly happiness which he hath prepared for us. Whereas contrariwise, all worldly things without piety, are unprofitable to all in many things, and in all things to many, giving no contentment in their greatest abundance, but like sweet drinks increase thirst, and as fuel put into the fire, inflame the heat of carnal concupiscence. Or if they give some seeming content in the time of health, yet how little pleasure do we take in them upon our sick beds? Though they have some taste unto our carnal appetite in the time of life and strength, yet what an after tang leave they at parting? And how little comfort and contentment bring they against the terrors of death, and the dreadful apprehensions of approaching Judgment?

Sect. 4 - The third reason, which is taken from the necessity of piety.

The third reason is taken from the necessity of piety, seeing without it we can have no assurance of any spiritual benefit, neither in this life, nor in the life to come. For it is the end which God hath proposed unto them all, unto which he most certainly attaineth, if we ever attain unto them; seeing he who is infinite in wisdom and

power, can never fail of his end which he propoundeth to his actions. Now the Lord hath chosen us, that we should be holy; he hath redeemed us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, that we should worship him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. We are reconciled by Christ in the body of his flesh, through death, that he may present us holy and unblameable in God's sight. He hath adopted us for his children, that we may be holy, as he is holy. He hath justified and pardoned all our sins, that being freed from sin, we may become the servants of righteousness. And therefore without this holiness we can have no assurance that we are elected, redeemed, reconciled, adopted or justified, and consequently that we shall be saved: for though it be not the cause of our happiness, yet it is the way that leadeth unto it; in which if we walk not, we shall never come into that place of blessedness: for without holiness none shall see the Lord, as the Apostle teacheth us.

Sect. 5 - The fourth reason persuading us to piety, which is the consideration of God's manifold mercies, and of Christ's coming to Judgment.

Unto these reasons we may add the consideration of God's manifold mercies in Jesus Christ, which ought to be notable inducements to move us to the embracing and practicing of piety. For what greater encouragement can we have to make us zealous and cheerful in the duties of God's service, then to consider how gracious and good, God hath been unto us in our creation, redemption and continual preservation; in giving unto us his Son, and pardoning our sins, in freeing us out of the cruel bondage of all our spiritual enemies, and in multiplying his blessings upon us, both in spiritual and corporal things? And this argument the Apostle useth to this purpose; I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And as the fruition of God's present favors ought to make us forward in his service, so also the consideration of

his gracious promises concerning better and more excellent things in time to come, even the full fruition of his glorious presence, and eternal blessedness in his everlasting Kingdom. And this reason also the Apostle useth to this end: Having therefore these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting our holiness in the fear of God. Finally, the consideration of Christ's coming to Judgment should persuade us unto holiness, when as the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved and pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth with all the works thereof shall be burnt up. For then only they shall be happy who have been holy, and reign with God in glory, who have faithfully served him in holiness and righteousness in the Kingdom of grace. And thus the Apostle Peter reasoneth, Seeing then (saith he) that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? But I shall have hereafter occasion to speak more fully of this point, when I come to show the manifold reasons and motives which may induce and persuade us unto a godly life; and therefore for the present I will content myself thus briefly to have touched them, referring the Reader for his more full satisfaction to the following discourse.

CHAPTER III.

Of our adhering and cleaving unto God, with the full purpose and resolution of our hearts.

Sect. 1 - Of the sum of the first Commandment.

We have spoken of piety, which is the sum of the first Table. And now it followeth, that we speak briefly of the particular precepts; the first whereof is contained in these words: Thou shalt have no other

gods before me, or before my face. The main scope and sum whereof is this, that we know, acknowledge and worship Jehovah, the Father, Son and holy Ghost, in Trinity of persons, and unity of Essence, and no other gods besides him. For to have God, is, in our minds and understandings to know and acknowledge him, to be our God, all-sufficient, incomprehensible, omnipotent, immutable, eternal, just, merciful, and infinite in all perfection; in our hearts and affections to adhere and cleave unto him with faith, affiance, hope, love, zeal, whom we know to be the chief Goodness and supreme cause of all our happiness; in our wills, with all earnest desire and constant resolution to serve and obey him in all his Commandments, with all the power and faculties of our bodies and souls, whom we know and acknowledge to be the chief end of all things, and so infinitely good and gracious unto us; and with our bodies, actions and endeavors, to worship and serve him alone, with all our might and strength. So that the true saving knowledge of God is the ground of all other virtues and obedience, as we have showed; and therefore if we would embrace any virtues, or perform any Christian duties of a godly life, we must in the first place labor to have our minds enlightened with the knowledge of God and his truth; without which, our devotion will be no better than superstition; and all our endeavors in the performance of religious duties, mere will-worship and idolatry, as we see in the example of the Idolaters, who instead of worshipping the only true God, worship stocks, stones and Images, Saints, and Angels, and instead of doing God's will in their devotions, do their own wills, and therefore tire themselves, and spend all their strength in vain.

Sect. 2 - Of adhering to God, what it is, and the necessity of it.

But of this knowledge of God, which is the main ground of a godly life, we have before spoken; and now it remaineth that we speak of the having of God in our hearts and affections, wills and resolutions. Of which we will entreat first generally, and then more specially. The

general duty which compriseth all the particulars, is, that knowing and acknowledging the Lord to be in himself the chief Goodness, and infinite in all perfection, and our most gracious and loving Father in Jesus Christ, we do adhere and cleave unto him with all our souls and wills, hearts and affections, resolving to consecrate ourselves wholly to his worship, and with the uttermost of our endeavor to please him in all things, by conforming our lives in all holy obedience unto his revealed will, leaving and forsaking whatsoever he condemneth as evil, and embracing and practicing all that he commandeth as good. And this the Lord requireth in the first place of all those who serve him. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave. And again, Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his Commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him and cleave unto him. So Barnabas exhorteth the new Converts of Antioch, that with full purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. And the Apostle persuadeth not to the bare practice of good duties, but that we cleave unto that which is good. Which holy resolution was in David, who purposed in his heart that his mouth should not transgress; and fully resolved, that if the Lord would teach him the way of his statutes, he would keep them with his whole heart and unto the end. The which resolution is necessary unto all those who intend to lead a godly life, wherein there are so many lets, difficulties and discouragements, that if we be not fully resolved to pass by, or overcome them, we shall either not begin, or soon give over to proceed in the Christian course. And therefore our holy desires to please God in all things, must be armed and confirmed with strong resolutions, that we will do our uttermost endeavor to attain unto our desires; or else they will be but like those idle and vain desires of the sluggards, of which Solomon speaketh, who desire and have nothing, because they are but bare wishers, never purposing to take any pains for the satisfying of their desires. Neither can such be said to serve God with their whole hearts, but with a part only; For as Philosophy teacheth us, there are two faculties in the heart of man; the one called concupiscible, which desireth and embraceth that good which reason discovereth, the other the irascible faculty, which being displeased with those lets and

oppositions that hinder the fruition of the good desired, armeth us with resolution to set upon and overcome them. And with both these we must serve God, cleaving unto him and his will, with the desires of our heart, as the chief good, and resolving to enjoy him at any price, and to do that which is pleasing unto him, notwithstanding all difficulties and dangers which oppose us in the way.

Sect. 3 - The properties of sound resolution: As first, that it must be universal, &c.

But seeing many men deceive themselves with shadows and shows of good purposes and resolutions of cleaving unto God, and pleasing him by their service; it will not be amiss to set down some properties and signs whereby we may know that, unto which the Scriptures so earnestly persuade us. And first, this resolution ought to be general and universal, extending itself not only to some few of many duties, but unto all without exception. We must with David have respect unto all God's Commandments; and walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and having a good conscience in all things, as the Apostle speaketh. Secondly, it must be diligent and painful in the use of all good means whereby we may attain unto our end; like unto the resolution of worldlings in compassing earthly things, who spare for no pains for the achieving their purposes, but labor night and day, by Sea and land, for the compassing of their riches, pleasures and preferments. So as we may say with David, My soul followeth hard after thee; and never rest in our pursuit, till with the Spouse in the Canticles, we enjoy him whom our soul loveth. Thirdly, it must be so magnanimous and courageous, that nothing may be able to daunt or dismay it: and the greater the difficulties and dangers be which cross us in our Christian courses, the more must we double and redouble our resolutions to withstand and overcome them, though it be with the loss of riches, friends, yea, even life itself. And such a resolution was in good Joshua, who though all the people did leave the Lord, vowed himself and his

family unto his service. And in Ruth, whose resolution of adhering to Naomi and her God, could not be hindered by any dissuasion. And finally, in the Apostle Paul, who when he was persuaded by his friends, that he should not expose himself to the peril of persecution, by going up to Jerusalem, breaketh through all difficulties in the strength of his courageous resolution; What mean you to weep and break my heart? For I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Yea, when the holy Ghost himself witnessed, that in every City, bonds and afflictions did abide him, his resolution made him constant in his course: But none of these things (saith he) move me neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, &c. Fourthly, it is the property of this resolution of adhering unto God, to join with this fortitude and magnanimity, true humility; not grounding our courage upon our own strength, as Peter did, who trusting to the ardency and unchangeableness of his love towards Christ, resolved, that though all men should forsake him, yet he would not. For if we lean upon this weak Reede, it will most fail and deceive us, when we most rely upon it; but being humbled in the sight and sense of our own weakness and frailty, we must wholly rest upon the power and promises of God, and like the child in the mothers arms, we must cling unto him with all our strength, but not so much trust to the firmness of our hold, as to his clasping of us, knowing that if he withdraw his strength and leave us, we shall soon cease cleaving unto him, and fall into those temptations, which the devil, the world, or our own flesh shall suggest unto us. We must say with the Apostle Paul, I am able to do all things, but we must add that which followeth, through the power of Christ which strengtheneth me. We must resolve with him, that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, in the meantime acknowledging our impotency unto any good, and that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing. And so shall our resolution of cleaving unto God be much more firm, seeing God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; and filleth the hungry with good things, but sendeth the rich empty away. Lastly, our resolution must be firm and constant, never leaving to cling unto the Lord with a lively faith, till by love we have

full fruition of him in his Kingdom. It must not be unsettled, fickle, and by fits, one while resolving to serve God, and another while drawn from our resolution by worldly temptations: but we must clasp fast hold of him, as Jacob did in his wrestling, and fully resolve never to leave him, till we have our desire, that is, till we have full fruition of him in heaven, without fear of losing him. Most of which points I have handled before, and therefore do here thus briefly touch them.

Sect. 4 - The necessity of our adhering unto God, proved by diverse reasons.

And this holy resolution of cleaving unto God, and pleasing him in all things, is most necessary unto a godly life; first, because it is the foundation and ground of all other duties, which whilst it remaineth firm, there is good hope, though the rest of the building be shrewdly shaken with the blasts and storms of trials and temptations, and much failing and frailty be showed in many outward actions; seeing so long as the foundation remaineth, the decayed parts of the house may be repaired with more ease; but if our resolution be unsettled and weak, the whole frame that resteth upon it, will fall with its own weight; and the duties themselves of a godly life, will seem irksome and tedious. It is the very soul which giveth life and motion to all our actions, and in what case it is, in such are they; if strong, then are they strong, if weak, then they weak also. If it be faint, then they languish; If full of virtue and vigor, then are they also vigorous and courageous. Secondly, because it is a main and principal part of true repentance, which chiefly consisteth in the full purpose of the heart, the inclination and resolution of the will, and the constant endeavor in our whole lives, to forsake all evil, and embrace all good, and in all things both inwardly and outwardly to please God, by performing unto him that acceptable service, which in his Word he requireth of us. Thirdly, because this purpose of heart, and resolution of our wills, to serve and please God, doth make both our persons and actions

acceptable unto him; for he chiefly requireth the service of our hearts, as being the fountain of all our actions, and respecteth not so much our deeds as our will; not the perfection of our actions, as the sincerity of our affections; according to that of the Apostle; If there be a willing mind, a man is accepted, according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not. As we see in the example of the prodigal son, who resolving to go to his father, and to acknowledge his sin, before he had done it, and whilst he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him. To this purpose one saith, If thou purposest in thine heart to leave evil, and do good, to hold that which thou hast received, and to grow daily better, although (by reason of human frailty) thou doest something not to be justified: Yet if thou purposest not to persist in it, but repentest and amendest what is amiss, as far as thou art able, God, without doubt, will repute thee holy. Lastly, this resolution is necessary, because we shall meet with many difficulties and discouragements in our course of a godly life, as the temptations of the devil, the persecutions, scorns, and reproaches of the world, the corruptions of our nature, and the unpleasantness unto flesh and blood of holy duties; that if we be not armed with a strong resolution, well grounded and settled with mature and serious consideration, upon unanswerable reasons which induce unto it, we shall not be able to continue constantly in our course, but give over with shame, that which we have rashly and weakly begun. And therefore our Savior exhorteth us to lay a good foundation before we begin this building, and to prepare a good stock, whereby we may be enabled to finish our work; and to make sufficient preparations to withstand the force of our spiritual enemies, before we presume to enter into the field and give them battle. The which is chiefly done, when we arm ourselves with Christian courage and undaunted resolution, that we will set aside all excuses, and come unto God when he calleth and inviteth us, that we will break thorough all difficulties, and be discouraged with no dangers; that, come prosperity or adversity, honor or disgrace, riches or poverty, life or death, we will consecrate ourselves to God's service, and do all things which are pleasing in his sight.

Sect. 5 - Of the means whereby we may confirm our resolution of adhering unto God.

Now the means of confirming this resolution of adhering unto God with all our hearts, and pleasing him in all things, are diverse. First, we must often meditate on God's infinite goodness in himself, whereby he deserveth the whole heart and affection, with all the service of his creatures, and their whole endeavor to glorify him who is worthy of all love. Secondly, we must call often to our remembrance his inestimable love, and exceeding great bounty towards us, which plainly appear in our election, creation, preservation; but especially in that great work of our redemption, wherein he hath given his Son to death, that he might save and restore us to life and happiness; as also the special and singular favors which he hath extended unto us in the whole course of our lives: And this, if anything will make us resolute to serve and please him, whom we have tried and tasted to be so infinitely good and gracious unto us. Thirdly, we must meditate seriously on his power and all-sufficiency, whereby he is able, and on the truth of his gracious promises, whereby he hath assured us, that he is willing to assist us in all difficulties, and to defend us against all dangers which shall affront and oppose us in our Christian course, and in the performance of the duties of a godly life; for what can more strengthen our resolutions in performing faithful service unto God, then to be assured by his assistance, of victory over all enemies, strength in overcoming all difficulties, safety in all dangers, and prosperous success and an happy issue of all our endeavors? And thus Moses exhorteth Joshua to resolution and courage, because God had promised to be with him. He it is (saith he) that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed. Fourthly, let us remember, that it is impossible to lose the fruit and benefit of our labor, whatsoever pains we take in God's service; for besides the present pay of temporal benefits, we shall have the rich rewards of eternal and heavenly

happiness, of which, the other are but small earnest pennies and pawns. So that if we in God's service lose our earthly riches, we shall have for them heavenly treasures; if our fame and reputation amongst men, we shall be recompensed with eternal glory, in the presence of God, his Saints, and Angels; yea if we lose our life itself, in losing, we shall find it, even an everlasting and most happy life, for one that was momentary and miserable. Fifthly, if we would have this Christian resolution firm and constant, it must be well grounded when we first begin, and we must expect, when we enter into the course of a godly life, not the favor of men, ease and prosperity, but many enemies to encounter us, and many difficulties and dangers in our Christian way; which if we do not forecast before they happen, and arm our resolution against them, they will utterly daunt and discourage us at their first approaching. And therefore before we make purchase of this gain of godliness, let us cast beforehand what it will cost us, and resolve to leave it at no rate. Sixthly, let us meditate often of the excellency, utility, and necessity of a godly life, in which respects it is to be preferred before all worldly things whatsoever, seeing thereby, and by no other means without it, we are assured of God's love and our own salvation, of his grace in this world, and glory and happiness in the world to come. Seventhly, let us think of the preciousness of our souls, which are of much more value than ten thousand worlds, and that there is no other means to provide for their eternal happiness, and their fruition of God's presence, which perfecteth our blessedness in heaven, then by framing our hearts to adhere unto him, with firm resolution to serve and please him whilst we live upon the earth. And let us often meditate on that speech of our Savior, What will it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his soul? For here our souls are saved or lost; here the acceptable time and day of salvation lasteth; which if we let pass, it is never again to be regained, but our precious souls, for the price of momentary vanities, shall be eternally sold to hellish torments. Lastly, because our resolution of adhering unto God, and pleasing him in all things, is apt to faint and languish, therefore our care must be, often to survey it, that when we find any failings or unsettledness in it, we may repair and strengthen it; yea, in truth this

is a work fit for every morning, to take a view of our spiritual state, and to renew our resolution, that we will the day following use all means whereby it may be improved and bettered, enrich ourselves in our spiritual stock, and to our uttermost endeavor, do all things which may please God, as we shall more fully show hereafter. Yea, if we find our resolutions weak and unsettled, we must confirm them, by making with God a solemn Covenant, that our hearts in all things shall adhere unto him, and start aside upon no occasion; according to the example of Asa, and the rest of God's people, who entered into a Covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul; yea if need be, we must confirm this Covenant, not only by solemn protestation, but by an inviolable oath, as they did at that time; and the Prophet David long before them; I have sworn (saith he) and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

CHAPTER IV.

Of trust, affiance, and hope in God.

Sect. 1 - Of affiance in God, and wherein it consisteth; and of the reasons which may move us unto it.

The special duties, whereby we adhere and cleave unto God with all our hearts, are either principal, or those which arise out of them and depend upon them; the chief and principal are affiance, the love and fear of God. By affiance we adhere and cleave unto him, when as knowing, acknowledging, believing, and remembering the omniscience, omnipotence, all sufficiency, truth, and goodness of God towards us, we do put our trust and affiance in him, for the obtaining of all good, and preservation from all evil, both in the

presence and absence of all inferior means. Unto which affiance the Scriptures exhort us. So David, Trust in the Lord, and do good. And Solomon, Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Which if we perform, we have diverse gracious promises made unto us: as first, that we shall be greatly rewarded; Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; and be encompassed with all God's mercies and favors; according to that of the Psalmist, He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Secondly, that we shall be sustained and preserved by his providence. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. And again, They that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. Thirdly, that we shall have the good things of the earth for the present, and eternal blessedness in the life to come; for he that trusteth in the Lord, shall possess the land, and shall inherit his holy mountain. So Jeremiah, Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. And the Psalmist, O trust and see, that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him. And thus we must trust in the Lord for the obtaining of all good, and the avoiding of all evil: unto the former, David exhorteth, Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And of the other, we have him for our example: The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear, though war should arise against me, in this will I be confident. And again, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, &c. And thus must we trust in the Lord, in the presence and absence of inferior means. When we have means, we must put our affiance in him, first, though they be weak and insufficient, knowing that he is able to give virtue and vigor unto them, seeing we live not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of God's mouth. He is able in the famine to feed us with ravenous birds, which in their own nature are more fit to take away our meat, then to bring any unto us; and to make our

small pittance, a few pulse, an handful of meal, and a cruize of oil, as sufficient for our nourishment as the greatest dainties of the worldly wicked. In time of plague he can keep us safe under the shadow of his wings, and though thousands do fall at our sides, and ten thousand at our right hand, it shall not come nigh us. In time of war, he is able to save with few, as well as with many, as Jonathan speaketh; and to give victory, not only to those who have a strong army, but to those also that have no power, as Asa confesseth. Or if our means be many and mighty, yet we must not trust in them, but using them as sent of God to serve his providence in our sustentation and preservation, we must put our whole confidence in him, and rest alone in his blessing upon them, without which they shall never do us any good. For we travail in vain, unless God bless the house; In vain we plow and sow, unless he give the increase. In vain are our Granaries and Store-houses replenished with all plenty, if he break the staff of bread. In vain is the horse prepared against the day of battle, if salvation come not from the Lord. And in vain do God's spiritual Husbandmen plant and water, except the Lord do give increase. Neither must we less trust in the Lord in the utter absence of all inferior means, knowing that he is true of his promise, and will never fail us if we put our affiance in him, and in himself alone, all-sufficient to preserve and defend us in their absence, as well as in the presence of them. And thus did David trust in God, though he walked alone in the vale of the shadow of death; the three children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the Lions den, Peter guarded with Soldiers, and Paul and Silas when they were in the stocks. And thus Abraham having God's promise, respected not his age, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, but trusted in him for the obtaining of a son, and as the Apostle speaketh, against hope believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations.

Sect. 2 - Of the means of affiance.

Now the means whereby we may attain unto this firm affiance, are these: The first is the often consideration of God's saving attributes, as of his omniscience, whereby he taketh notice of all our wants and dangers; of his omnipotency, and all-sufficiency, whereby he is able to relieve and preserve us; of his providence, which in especial manner watcheth over us who are his sons and children, to dispose of all things to our good; of his mercy, bounty, goodness, and truth of his promises, whereby we may be assured of his good will and readiness to help us. The second means is, to observe God's mercy and goodness in time past, showed both towards others and towards ourselves, in freeing us from evil, and procuring our good. We must consider what God hath done formerly to others, assuring ourselves that he is ready to do the like for us, if with them we fear and serve him, seeing he is no respecter of persons, but is alike to all. So David confirmed his affiance in God, by remembering his goodness towards their ancestors; Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them; they cried upon thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. So when he could with no comfort rest upon God in his present sense and feeling, he remembered God's wonders of old, in delivering his people Israel, and drowning their enemies in the red Sea. And thus he saith, others would confirm their affiance by his example. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. But much more will the experience of God's mercy and goodness towards ourselves, in providing for us in the time of want, and delivering and preserving us from former dangers, confirm our trust and confidence in him, seeing he is immutable in his love, and changeth not, though we be changed. And thus David strengthened his affiance in God, that he would give him victory over Goliath, because he had former experience of God's goodness towards him, and power assisting him against the Lyon and the Bear. And the Apostle concludeth, that as the Lord had formerly delivered him out of former afflictions, so he would be a-like gracious still, and deliver him out of like afflictions in the time to come. Lastly, if we would confidently trust in God, we must be such as fear and serve him, and making conscience of our ways, do walk before him in holiness and righteousness; for with

such only he hath made his Covenant of grace and protection, and such only may challenge a part in his promises of provision and preservation. So Solomon, The wicked flee when none pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a Lyon. And again, In the fear of the Lord is assured strength, and his children shall have hope. And the Psalmist appropriateth this confidence unto the faithful only; Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord, he is their help and shield. And not only those who are professedly wicked, but the close hypocrite also is excluded from it. For the hypocrites hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a Spiders web. His confidence shall be rooted out of his Tabernacle; and it shall bring him to the King of terrors.

Sect. 3 - Of hope in God, what it is, and wherein it consisteth.

From this affiance in God, ariseth hope; for when knowing and believing God and his saving attributes, we trust in him for the accomplishment of all his gracious promises, then do we by hope expect the accomplishment of them, even when they are deferred with patience and comfort, knowing that God is immutable in his love, and most true of his Word: with which hope we are sustained in all afflictions, that we do not faint under their burden, seeing we hope for deliverance in God's due time, are armed against all assaults of our spiritual enemies with this helmet of salvation, in expectation of assured victory, and stayed with this anchor in our Christian course, notwithstanding all the tempestuous storms and boisterous blasts of trials and temptations. The which anchor is not fastened on the fleeting and failing sands of our own worth, works, and merits, but upon the firm ground of God's immutable love, mercy, goodness, power and truth, which will never fail those that rest upon them; according to that of the Psalmist, They that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. And thus Abraham hoped against hope, being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. And the Apostle exhorteth us to hold fast the profession of our faith without

wavering, because he is faithful that hath promised. The object of this hope, are future good things which God hath promised; as fruition of good, and freedom and deliverance from evil, which are not yet seen (for then there were no place for hope) but certainly expected in God's good time. But the main and principal object of our hope, is heavenly happiness, which we shall enjoy in soul and body, at Christ's coming to Judgment, whereof it is called the hope of salvation, and the hope of eternal life. The chief properties of this hope are, First, that it be patient. Secondly, that it be certain and assured: of the first the Apostle speaketh; If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it: and in this regard calleth it the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Of which patience, he telleth us that we have need, because God oftentimes delayeth to accomplish his promises, as though he had forgotten both us and them. Secondly, it must be certain and assured, whereof it is compared to an anchor, which if it faileth in a tempest, it putteth the ship in great danger of foundering and perishing. And therefore the Apostle desireth, that the Hebrews might have full assurance of hope unto the end; which if we have, it will make us never to be ashamed, seeing God, upon whom we wait, will never fail to accomplish his promises. And this is that hope unto which the Scriptures exhort us. So the Psalmist, Waite on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. And again, Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.

Sect. 4 - Of the means of hope.

Which that we may labor after, let us consider, that it is most profitable and necessary unto all that will lead a godly and Christian life. For it is not only a part thereof, as being one of the three principal virtues which the Apostle commendeth unto us, but a notable means, whereby we are moved and enabled to labor after all other virtues, and to put in practice all other duties, because we are assured of the fruit of our labor, and hopefully expect the obtaining

of it; without which hope we would be utterly discouraged, sit still and do nothing. Again, this hope maketh us not to be ashamed, in midst of all reproaches and disgraces which we suffer for Christ's sake, and causeth us with him to run with patience the race which is set before us, in expectation of that joy which is set before us. It maketh us not only patient, but joyful in afflictions, yea even to glory in our rejoicing, in hope of the glory of God, in all our tribulations. It confirmeth our faith from which it springeth, and maketh us cheerful in all Christian duties. It quickeneth and rejoiceth our drooping hearts, and not only maketh the way of godliness delightful unto us, but us also pleasing and accepted of God. It is a helmet of salvation, to defend us against our spiritual enemies, yea itself saveth us, as the Apostle speaketh, because it moveth God to save us: for as the Psalmist saith, He is the Savior of them that hope in him. Finally, it maketh us blessed in the assured expectation of our blessedness. For happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God. Whereas contrariwise, without this hope, we are as the Apostle telleth us, of all men most miserable, having neither the comforts of this life, which worldlings enjoy, nor expectation of better in the life to come. Let us therefore labor after this hope, and use carefully all good means whereby we may attain unto it. And seeing it is the gift of God, and grace of his holy Spirit, let us in the first place beg it at his hands, by frequent and fervent prayer, assuring ourselves, that he who is the God of our hope, will not deny to give it unto us. Secondly, let us meditate often upon God's saving attributes, of power, mercy, goodness, truth, &c. and so our imperfections and unworthiness will not make us despair, nor weaken our hopes in expectation of his promises. Thirdly, let us often hear, read, and meditate in the holy Scriptures, which were purposely written, that we through patience and comfort of them might have hope. Fourthly, let us, in all the service which we offer unto God, avoid hypocrisy, and serve and worship him in sincerity and uprightness of heart. For the hypocrites hope shall perish, and be cut off like a Spiders web, as Bildad speaketh. Lastly, if we would have hope in God, let us lead a godly life, and serve him all our days in holiness and righteousness; for the flesh of God's holy ones shall

rest in hope: whereas when a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of the unjust men perisheth, as the Wiseman speaketh.

CHAPTER V.

Of the love of God, and diverse virtues which spring from it.

Sect. 1 - Of the love of God, what it is, and wherein it consisteth, and of the measure and means of it.

The next main and principal duty is the love of God, when as knowing, believing, and remembering his infiniteness in all goodness, excellency, beauty, and all perfection, and his inestimable love, grace, and bounty towards us, we do love him again with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, above all things, and all other things in him, and for his sake. So that the causes of our love towards God, are his goodness, excellency, beauty and perfection in himself; and his goodness, grace, and benignity towards us. For goodness is the only object of love, neither do we love anything which is not either truly good, or at least appeareth good unto us. And therefore seeing God is the summum bonum, and chief goodness, when his nature appeareth to be so, we should love him chiefly, and place our chief happiness in his fruition. But yet because in this state of corruption we are full of self-love, therefore we cannot love God perfectly and absolutely for himself as we ought, till we be assured of his love towards us, and have it shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost: for we love him, because he loved us first, as the Apostle speaketh. Now the measure of our love, wherewith we are to love God, ought to be without measure, both because he is immeasurable in goodness in his own nature, and also because his love towards us hath exceeded

all measure; the which appeareth not only in our creation, whereby he hath given us unto ourselves, and made us his most excellent creatures, but also in our Redemption, wherein he hath given himself unto us, even his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, of the same nature with himself, to die for our sins, and rise again for our justification; and that, when we were not friends, but of no strength, strangers, sinners, enemies unto him and his grace, the slaves of Satan, and children of wrath as well as others. And therefore if he thus loved us, when we merited no love, yea when we deserved wrath and hatred, how much more, if it were possible, should we love him who is most lovely, and infinitely deserveth our love? But because our nature being finite, we cannot love him infinitely, we ought therefore to love him as much as is possible for us, with all our hearts, souls, and strength: Or if we cannot thus do, in respect of our corruption, yet at least we must love him in sincerity and uprightness of heart, as much as we can, and be heartily sorry that we can love him no better. We must love him above all things in the world, as house, lands, parents, children, wives, yea our own lives, and be ready with all cheerfulness to lay them down for him, as he hath first laid down his life for us. For if we ought to love all things in him and for him, then ought we to love him much more, preferring his glory even before our own salvation, when as they come in comparison, the one with the other. And this is that love of God, which is to be embraced of us, as being in itself a most excellent virtue, and in diverse respects to be preferred before faith and hope; and to us most profitable, feeling it assureth us of God's love, and remission of our sins, transformeth us, after a manner, into the divine nature (for where is love, there is likeness, and it is the nature of it to change the lover, as much as may be, into the party beloved) and finally weaneth our hearts from the love of the world and earthly vanities, and lifteth up our affections and thoughts unto God and heavenly things; maketh all that we do or suffer for God's sake, easy and tolerable, yea sweet and comfortable: for it seeketh not her own, beareth all things, endureth all things; it enableth us to offer unto God cheerful obedience, and to perform all duties of holiness and righteousness required unto a godly life, with joy and delight, which without it are

irksome and unpleasant, yea intolerable and impossible unto flesh and blood. Now the means whereby our hearts may be inflamed with this divine fire of God's love, are, first, that we often meditate upon God's infinite goodness, excellency, beauty, and perfection, which make him worthy of all love, and how he hath exercised these saving attributes towards us, in our creation and preservation, in our redemption, giving his only Son to die for us, and for his sake forgiving us all our sins, and in bestowing upon us all the good things which we enjoy in this life, or hope for in the life to come.

Sect. 2 - Of the zeal of God's glory, what it is, and wherein it consisteth.

Now the virtues and graces which arise and issue from love, are diverse, as zeal of God's glory, joy, and rejoicing in God, thankfulness and obedience. Zeal is the fruit and effect of our fervent love towards God, and as it were a flame arising from this divine fire, whereby we are made most careful and earnest in seeking God's glory, both in advancing and furthering all means whereby it is furthered, and in opposing, hindering, and removing all the impediments whereby it may be hindered. And this is to be showed in all other virtues, as being the intension of them, and in all duties which we perform unto God. So the Apostle telleth us generally, that it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing. Our love towards God, and hatred of sin, must be zealous and hot, and not cold or luke-warm; our repentance must be joined with zeal; Be zealous and amend. We must zealously worship and serve God, according to that of the Apostle; fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. We must not only do good works, but be zealous of them. We must pray with zeal exceedingly, and pour out our hearts like water before the Lord; with zeal we must preach the Word, and be inwardly affected with that we speak, that so also we may affect others; and we must with zeal hear the Word, and even hunger and thirst after this spiritual food of our souls, that we may grow up thereby. But yet our care must be, that

our zeal be guided with knowledge, and not show itself in all things, but (as the Apostle speaketh) only in a good matter; and also that in advancing of the means of God's glory, and removing the impediments, we keep ourselves within the limits of our callings. Now the means to attain unto this zeal, is to consider often and seriously how great things the Lord hath done for us, which will make us think that we can never be too earnest in seeking his glory, nor too intent and fervent in all holy duties of his service. That it is an inseparable property of all grace, to be zealous in them, and therefore there can be no grace at all, where zeal is wanting. That is an undoubted sign of those who are the redeemed of the Lord, to be zealous of good works: and therefore where there is no zeal, there can be no sign of redemption by Christ; finally, that luke-warmness is most loathsome unto God, and that those who are so, he will spew out of his mouth.

Sect. 3 - Of rejoicing in God, what it is, and the means whereby we may attain unto it.

The second virtue arising from love, is joy and rejoicing in God, when being assured of his love towards us, and loving him again, tasting for the present, how good the Lord is, and persuading ourselves of the full fruition of him in the life to come, we are exceedingly delighted, and even glory in the assurance and sense of God's favor. For it is the nature of love to make us rejoice in the thing beloved: and as the more excellent anything is in our conceit, the more our love exceedeth, so according to the measure of our love, such also is our joy when we enjoy it. And therefore needs must our joy and rejoicing in God exceed all other joy, because our love ought to be proportioned to his goodness and excellency, and our joy to our love. In which respect, this divine joy swalloweth up all worldly grief, and causeth us to glory, not only in worldly prosperity, but also in persecution and tribulation. And this is that joy unto which the Scriptures exhort us: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say,

Rejoice. Rejoice evermore. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thine heart. Which if we attain unto, then have we even in this life, the first beginnings of our heavenly happiness. For as the Apostle teacheth us, the Kingdom of God consisteth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. Now the means to obtain this joy, is to labor after assurance that we are united unto Christ; for we cannot have it in ourselves, but in, and through him: according to that of the Apostle, We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom now we have received the atonement. Secondly, if we would have this joy, we must labor after the assurance of our justification, and remission of our sins; for peace with God followeth our justification by faith, and joy this peace. Thirdly, let us labor after this assurance, that we are the sons of God by adoption and grace, and to have it sealed unto us in our hearts and consciences, by his holy Spirit, that so our assurance of our heavenly inheritance, may uphold our joy and rejoicing in the midst of temporary crosses and afflictions. Finally, let us labor to feel God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, which we shall best discern, by finding them inflamed with fervent love towards God, approved to be sincere, by our care to flee all sin which is odious unto him, and embracing all virtue and goodness which is acceptable in his sight. And if we enjoy God in this mutual love, we shall in all estates glory and rejoice in it, and in the midst of all worldly extremities, comfort ourselves, with David, in the Lord our God.

Sect. 4 - Of thankfulness unto God, what is required unto it; and the means of it.

The third virtue arising from the love of God, is unfeigned thankfulness: for when in consideration of God's goodness, mercy, and bounty towards us, our hearts are inflamed with his love, and replenished with joy unspeakable and glorious, then do we think, with David, what we may return unto him for all his benefits; and finding no possible means of making the least requital, in regard of our impotency, and God's all-sufficiency, we do at last resolve to

remain forever thankful debtors, and to express our thankfulness, both by our words in praising and magnifying, and in all our actions by glorifying him our Benefactor, who hath been so infinitely gracious unto us, seeing we have nothing else to return unto him. So that our love of God, proceeding from his love towards us, is the root of our thankfulness, and our rejoicing in his love and goodness, an inseparable companion of it. For this thankfulness is a virtue, whereby knowing, acknowledging, and rejoicing in the sense and feeling of God's love, goodness, and bounty towards us, we are inwardly thankful unto him for all his benefits, and outwardly express it, by praising and glorifying his holy Name, both by our lips and lives, whereby it appeareth what is required to this virtue of thankfulness. First, that we apprehend God's love, and inwardly rejoice in it, having our hearts thoroughly affected with the sense of his goodness and bounty towards us. Secondly, that we do not ascribe the blessings and benefits which we enjoy, unto anything else, but only unto God, as our supreme and chief Benefactor, who is the principal Author of all our good. Thirdly, that we do not smother our thankfulness in our hearts, but cause it to break forth, first, in our words, by praising and magnifying God's holy name; for as the Psalmist speaketh, It becometh the righteous to be thankful; and secondly, in our works, by doing those things which are pleasing unto God, in whom our soul delighteth; that so the light of our godly lives shining before men, we may cause them also to glorify our Father which is in heaven. The which ought to be performed of us in all things and at all times, both in prosperity and adversity, plenty and penury, health and sickness; according to that of the Apostle, But be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. An example whereof we have in Job, who blessed the Lord when he was deprived of all his substance; and in the Church grievously afflicted, who in the midst of all her calamities, did acknowledge God's mercies, in that they were not utterly consumed. Now the means whereby we may be stirred up to this duty, and enabled to perform it, are first to consider, that this

thankfulness and thanksgiving is good, pleasant and comely; according to that of the Psalmist; Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. Secondly, consider that it is the will of God that we should be thankful unto him for all his benefits, which if we perform, he requireth nothing else at our hands, nor any other requital for all his mercy and goodness towards us. And this reason the Apostle useth, In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Thirdly, that it is most pleasing unto God, and that the sacrifice of the calves of the lips is much more acceptable then of Bulls and Goats. Fourthly, let us continually meditate upon God's manifold and inestimable mercies bestowed upon us in time past, his eternal love, our election, creation, the great work of our redemption by the death of his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, our vocation and effectual calling to the participation of this great benefit, from which innumerable others are excluded; our justification, sanctification, continual preservation, together with our assured hope of glorification, with all special blessings which from day today he bestoweth upon us. With all which, our hearts will be filled with thankfulness, and our mouths with praises and thanksgiving, if we thoroughly meditate on them: especially if withal we consider our unworthiness of the least of God's favors, and according to Jacob's example, compare God's inestimable mercies with our demerits. Lastly, let us meditate and consider what a foul vice ingratitude is, and how vile and odious in the sight of God and men, that the Lord will never let it go unpunished, nor suffer any to enjoy his benefits, who through their ingratitude will not acknowledge them, nor render the praises which are due unto him.

Sect. 5 - Of obedience unto God, what it is, and wherein it consisteth; and of the properties of true obedience.

The fourth and last virtue arising from the love of God, is obedience; which is a fruit of our love, and thankfulness, whereby in all things

we submit ourselves, our wills and actions, wholly unto God's good will and pleasure, both in doing all that he requireth, and in patient suffering whatsoever he imposeth. So that this obedience is of two kinds. First, our active obedience to God's Law, whereby we conform our whole man unto the revealed will of God. The which is an inseparable fruit of our love towards God, and an infallible note whereby we may discern that which is sound and sincere, from that which is false and counterfeit; for if we love God, we will keep his Commandments; And this is the love of God, if we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous. The properties of this obedience are these: First, that it be absolute unto whatsoever God requireth, and admit of no discourse of reason when we know his will; but whether profit or disprofit, honor or disgrace, the favor or displeasure of men do follow upon it, we are to do the things that he enjoineth. Secondly, it must be total, both in respect of the object and subject. In respect of the object, we must obey God in all his Commandments at all times, neither adding nor detracting, nor declining therefrom on the right hand or on the left. Neither is it sufficient that we obey God in some things, and neglect others, or in many and most things, and not in some few: for he that thus sinneth in one thing, is guilty of all; but we must propound unto ourselves the whole Law of God for the rule of our lives, observing one table as well as another, and worship him both in holiness and righteousness, and that not only for some small time, but all the days of our lives. In respect of the subject, our obedience must be with the whole man, and like our love from which it springeth, it must be performed with all our hearts, souls and strength. But especially the Lord requireth the inward obedience of the heart, wherein he chiefly delighteth; we must worship him in spirit and truth, in sincerity and uprightness of heart, as before his face, and in his sight and presence; neither is it sufficient that we do that which is right, unless we do it uprightly. It must be voluntary with cheerfulness and delight, as the Saints and Angels do the will of God in heaven. For love maketh every burden light, and the Commandments of God not to be grievous. Yet this internal obedience is not sufficient, unless the external be joined with it. For God will be worshipped with the whole man, with our

bodies, as well as with our souls; with our outward actions, as well as with our inward affections.

Sect. 6 - Of the means of obedience, whereby we may be enabled to perform it.

Now the means which may move and enable us to yield this obedience, are these; first, we must consider that the Lord hath created us to this end, that we should serve him, and to the same purpose, when we were by sin utterly lost, hath redeemed us with the inestimable price of his Sons most precious blood, that we should worship him in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives, that being freed from sin, we should become the servants of righteousness; and from the slavery of Satan, that we should spend our days in God's service. Secondly, let us meditate on the riches of reward, and that liberal wages which the Lord hath freely promised to give unto those who faithfully serve him; in which respect we may justly say of our active obedience, as the Apostle of our passive, that all our service in this present world, is not worthy the glory which shall be revealed; for it is slight, short and imperfect, but shall cause unto us a far more excellent and eternal weight of Glory. Thirdly, let us consider, that though our best service be mingled with many imperfections, and stained with our corruptions, yet God in Christ will accept of it, and not only pardon our wants, but reward our wills and works. For he will spare us, as a man spareth his son that serveth him, accepting of our will for the deed, and of our sincere affections, as of perfect actions. Fourthly, let us consider, that hereby we shall be assured of all God's promises: for Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promises of this life, and of that which is to come. Neither doth God require our obedience for his own sake; (for he is most absolute in perfection, and our righteousness doth not profit or extend unto him) but for our own good and benefit, that he may crown our obedience with eternal blessedness. For he that keepeth the Law, happy is he; and he that heareth Christ's Word, and keepeth

it, is by him pronounced blessed. Lastly, let us often propound unto ourselves the examples of God's Saints and Servants, that have gone before us, and set before us their obedience as a pattern for our imitation: For more cheerfully may we travail in this way of holiness and righteousness, if we see a plain path beaten by those that have gone before us. But especially let us set before us the never-erring example of our Savior Christ, who took more delight in doing his Fathers will, then in his meat and drink, and in all things was obedient unto him to the death, even the bitter death of the Cross, as the Apostle speaketh.

Sect. 7 - Of passive obedience, and patience in afflictions.

The second kind of obedience is passive, and is called patience, which is a fruit of our love and thankfulness towards God, whereby we submit ourselves meekly and constantly to bear all those crosses and afflictions, which it shall please God to lay upon us. The causes of which patience are diverse; the first and principal is the Spirit of God, of which it is a fruit. Secondly, a lively faith, which not only apprehendeth the promise of eternal happiness, with which our temporary afflictions are not to be compared, but God's special promises of strength to endure all trials, and of help and deliverance in God's due time. Thirdly, trust and affiance in God, who hath promised to be with us in all our afflictions, and never leave us to our own weakness, or to the malice and fury of our enemies, upon which we conclude, that though he kill us, yet we will trust in him. But the love of God is the next and immediate cause of our patience, which maketh us meekly to suffer whatsoever he imposeth, who so loveth us, and whom we so love. For love endureth all things, and the greatest difficulties are not hard unto it. It is stronger than death, the waters of afflictions cannot quench it, and the floods of calamities cannot drown it. The object of this patience is afflictions, which the Lord imposeth for the trial or correction of his children; for all, whom he loveth, he chastiseth: and whosoever will be Christ's

Disciple, must deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow him, that is, that cross and measure of afflictions which God himself imposeth upon him: Neither are we to take upon us burdens of our own making, but such only as the Lord alloteth unto us; which are those alone that we cannot by lawful means avoid, or without falling into sin. The manner how we are to bear these afflictions, is first voluntarily, with a meek, quiet and contented mind, as being sent of God for our good, yea cheerfully and joyfully, as they are signs and seals of our adoption, and special means to further and assure our everlasting salvation. Secondly, we must bear them constantly, so long as it shall please God to continue them upon us, that is, till he giveth us honest and lawful means to be freed and delivered from them; not thinking it enough that we have born some few, or many afflictions, but holding out unto the end: for he is not crowned who hath fought well for a time, but he that never giveth over, till he have obtained the victory, according to that of our Savior; Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the Crown of life. But of these points, as also of the means whereby we may be enabled with patience, comfort and joy to endure afflictions, I have written largely elsewhere, and therefore will content myself thus briefly to have touched them in this place.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the fear of God, and humility which ariseth from it, joined with his love. And of God's external worship with the body.

Sect. 1 - Of the fear of God, what it is, and the causes of it.

The fourth and last main virtue required in this Commandment, is the fear of God; whereby I understand, not that servile and slavish

fear which is in wicked men, and the very devils themselves, in the apprehension of his justice, wrath, and power, in punishing sin; but that filial and son-like fear, whereby knowing, believing, and remembering not only God's Justice, truth, majesty, power and dominion our all creatures, but also his infinite love, goodness, and mercy towards us in Jesus Christ, we fear his displeasure, who is so glorious and gracious, as the greatest evil. In which description is expressed the grounds and causes of the true fear of God, namely, the knowledge, belief, and remembrance of God's attributes; As first, that he is a just God, and will not let sin go unpunished; with which consideration our Savior inciteth us to God's fear, because he justly casteth into hell those that sin against him. Secondly, that he is true of his Word, in his promises to those that serve and please him, and his threatening's against those that displease and sin against him. Thirdly, his majesty and glory, in that he is the supreme Lord, and most glorious King of heaven and earth, which is alone sufficient to strike an awful fear of God in the hearts of all creatures. Fourthly, that he is a most powerful and mighty God, and so able to execute all his judgments, and not only to kill the body, but also to cast both body and soul into the everlasting fire of hell, as our Savior speaketh. Lastly, his dominion over all creatures, whereby they are obnoxious and liable to his justice and punishments, is effectual to strike fear into the hearts of all men; according to that of Malachi, If I be a master, where is my fear? And that of Jeremiah, Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? For unto thee doth it appertain. For howsoever the faithful being in Christ, can receive no hurt from these attributes; for his justice is satisfied for their sins, and there is no condemnation unto them, his threatening's do not belong unto them, but contrariwise his sweet and gracious promises; his majesty, power, and dominion, are arguments of joy and comfort, seeing they are wholly for their protection and preservation: yet do the children of God fear, in respect of these attributes, when they consider them in their own nature, and see the effects of them in wicked men, even as the son feareth his father, when he seeth him punish his slave, though he be sure that he shall never taste of the same stripes, and reverenceth him in respect of his power, justice, gravity, and

authority over him, though he expecteth nothing from them but all good. So the Apostle Peter useth this argument: And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. And the Apostle Paul useth God's severity to the rejected Jews, as a reason to make us to fear God; and exhorteth us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Besides, being partly flesh as well as Spirit, and therefore full of infirmities and corruptions, it is profitable for the unregenerate part, which is a slave, and not a son, to be contained in duty, and restrained from sin, by the fear of God's Justice, power, and punishments. For our love being imperfect, our fear cannot attain in this life to filial perfection, but so far forth as we are unregenerate, is servile and slavish. And to this end are God's judgments denounced, and punishments inflicted, in the hearing and sight of the godly, that they may fear to offend so just and mighty a God, and so escape these fearful punishments. But the chief grounds and causes of God's fear in the hearts of his children, are saving knowledge, and a lively faith, whereby being assured of God's love in Christ, we love him again, and are above all things afraid to do anything which is displeasing in his sight; either in the omission of any duty, or commission of any sin, which our gracious and loving Father either commandeth or forbiddeth.

Sect. 2 - That this fear of God is commended unto us in the Scriptures, and of the great profit of it.

And this is that fear of God, which in the Scriptures is so much commended unto us, and causeth those, who in their hearts embrace it, to be happy and blessed, according to that of Solomon, Blessed is the man that feareth always: which blessedness that we may attain unto, let us labor after this fear, and to this end let us consider the excellency and profit of it, that our hearts being inflamed with the love of it, we may carefully use all good means whereby we may obtain it. The excellency of it herein appeareth, in that it compriseth

in it all other duties, and is usually put for the whole service of God, wherein the whole man is to be employed, according to that of Solomon, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of man. Secondly, it is called in this respect, the head and beginning of wisdom, that is, of all godliness and true Religion. Thirdly, it giveth grace and virtue unto all other duties, and maketh them acceptable in God's sight: For our whole conversation must be a constant walking in God's fear. In it we must worship and serve God. Serve the Lord with fear. And in thy fear will I worship towards thine holy Temple. By it our sanctification is perfected, and our salvation wrought out and finished. The profit of this fear of God is also inestimable; for it restraineth us from all vice and sin, according to that of Solomon, A wise man feareth and departeth from evil; and of David, Stand in awe, and sin not. As we see in the example of Joseph, who had his ears and heart stopped against the unchaste allurements of his mistress by the fear of God. And of the Egyptian Midwives, who by the fear of God, were kept from obeying the wicked edict of the King. Whereas contrariwise, the want of this fear is the cause of all disobedience and sin, as Abraham implieth in his speech to Pharaoh; and the Apostle plainly expresseth: for having set down a Catalogue of many sins, he concludeth with this as the cause of all the rest; There is no fear of God before their eyes. Secondly, it is a fountain of life, making us to depart from the snares of death. Thirdly, it incites and enables us to the performance of all good duties; and therefore the Lord having delivered his Law, wisheth that the hearts of his people might be always fraughted with his fear, that thereby they might be moved to obey it: and the Preacher in this respect, compriseth in it alone all other virtues and duties, because it moveth us to the embracing of them all. Fourthly, it delivereth from all other fears; and causeth them to give place when it is present, as the Sun all other inferior lights. For if we fear God, we will not fear the threatening's of men; if we fear him that can cast body and soul into hell, we need not fear them that can only, and that by his permission, kill the body, as our Savior implieth. Fifthly, it maketh us partakers of all good things promised in this life, for he that feareth the Lord,

wanteth nothing which is good; but God is present with such, to take notice of all their wants; and his ears are open to hear their prayers and grant their desires. Finally, it bringeth with its everlasting blessedness; For blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways. And happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief. Which promises belong not alone to those that fear God, but also to their posterity after them; for their seed shall be mighty upon earth, and their generation blessed, as the Psalmist speaketh.

Sect. 3 - Of the means of obtaining this fear of God.

Now the means of attaining unto this fear of God are diverse. First, to consider and meditate of God's nature and attributes, as of his omniscieny, whereby he seeth all things, even the secret corners of our hearts; of his omnipotency, whereby he is able to reward us if we fear him, or punish us if we neglect him; of his Justice, whereby he impartially judgeth all men without respect of persons; of his truth, which never faileth in his promises or threatening's: But especially of his mercy and goodness towards us in Christ, which will inflame our hearts with his love, and out of this love cause us to fear his displeasure as the greatest evil; according to that of the Psalmist, There is mercy or forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. The second means, is the consideration of God's Judgments executed on the wicked, which are so many instructions unto us, to fear God and avoid his displeasure, that we be not partakers with them in their punishments. So the Psalmist saith, that the righteous seeing the destruction of the wicked, should fear God, and deride their folly; and the Apostle telleth us, that the former examples of God's Judgments were written for our learning, that they might admonish us to take warning by their harms, lest we fall into the same evils. The third means, is the diligent reading and hearing of the Scriptures, which are called, The fear of God, because they work his fear in us. And thus the Lord enjoineth the King to have the Law with

him, and to read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God. For in them are contained many Commandments, enjoining many exhortations moving, and many reasons persuading to this fear. Fear the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of him; for he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. O fear the Lord, all ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The fourth means, is to deny ourselves and our own wisdom, and when God commandeth anything, not to ask counsel of carnal reason, unto which the more we incline, the more the fear of God abateth in us, as we see in the example of Eve, who following sense and reason, obeyed the devils advice, and cast off the fear of God. And this the Wiseman implieth: Be not wise in thine own eyes, but fear God, and depart from evil. The fifth means, is, to meditate often on our own infirmities and weakness, and of the malice and might of our spiritual enemies; which will make us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and whilst we stand, to take heed of falling. The sixth is, to remember our end daily and continually; as first, the day of our death, which will work our hearts to God's fear, as the Psalmist implieth: and secondly, the day of Judgment and end of the world, which is called, The terror of the Lord, because it is a notable means to work his fear in our hearts. The last and chief means, whereby all the rest are made effectual, is fervent prayer. For it is no natural faculty or habit, but the gift of God, which he promiseth to put in the hearts of the faithful, that they may not depart from him: and is to be obtained by faithful and effectual prayer: As we see in the example of the Psalmist, who prayeth the Lord to knit their hearts unto him, that they might fear his Name.

Sect. 4 - Of humility, what it is, and the causes of it.

The last virtue required, is humility, whereby knowing and acknowledging God's power, justice, majesty, goodness, mercy, and

infinite perfection, and our own vileness, and unworthiness, imperfections, and sinful corruptions, we do renounce all glory and praise, as not belonging unto us, and ascribe it wholly unto God, unto whom alone it rightly appertaineth So that it is the nature of humility, to vilify and abase ourselves in our own sight, even to the ground, as the word importeth, to cast off all opinion of our works and worthiness, and in the sight and sense of our sins and corruptions, to acknowledge ourselves worthy of God's most heavy punishments in this life and the life to come; and contrariwise, to ascribe all glory and praise unto God alone, even of all the good we have in us, or is done by us, from whom alone we have it; according to that of the Psalmist, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory: And of Daniel, O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, because we have sinned against thee. The causes of this humility, are first, the knowledge and acknowledgement of God's infiniteness in all excellency, goodness, and perfection; in which he is so incomprehensibly glorious, that when we come in his presence, it maketh us to vilify and abase ourselves, what opinion soever before we had of our own worth and excellency, even as the light of a Glowworm is quite dazzled, when the glorious beams of the Sun do shine upon it. Thus in the sight and sense of God's glory and majesty, Ezekiel was cast to the ground; Manoah concluded that he should die; Esaias crieth out, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, &c. for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. And Job having seen the Lord, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. Especially if we consider that this God, mighty and glorious in himself, is so infinitely gracious unto us, in conferring upon us so innumerable benefits, and above all, that inestimable gift of his only Son, to work that great work of our Redemption. The consideration whereof, will make us to humble ourselves with Jacob, and to confess that we are less than the least of God's mercies, and to say with David, Who am I and my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, &c. Secondly, the knowledge and acknowledgement of our own vileness and unworthiness; both in regard of our bodies, which are but dust and

ashes, as Abraham acknowledgeth; and in respect of our souls, which howsoever they were created according to God's Image, in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness, yet through the fall of our first parents, and the corruption derived from them unto us, they are wholly defiled in all the powers and faculties of them, with original corruption, and loaded with the guilt of innumerable numbers of actual transgressions, whereby we are made subject to the wrath of God, the curse of the Law, the plagues and punishments of this life, and eternal death and condemnation in the life to come. In which regard we have just cause to humble ourselves with the prodigal son, and to say with him; Father, I have sinned against heaven and earth, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. And if there be any good thing in us, or done by us, to acknowledge with the Apostle, that we have it of God's free grace, seeing of ourselves, we are not able so much as to think a good thought, but it is God alone that worketh in us both the will and the deed.

Sect. 5 - Of the excellency and utility of humility.

And this is that humility, which as it is in itself most excellent, so unto us most profitable, and therefore of us to be much esteemed, and earnestly desired. It is most excellent, as being the most beautiful ornament, which maketh us appear glorious in the sight of God, in which respect, the Apostle exhorteth us to deck ourselves with it. Yea it adorneth all other virtues, making them (as the foil, the Jewel) being in themselves rich and beautiful, much more precious and glorious in the sight of God and men. It is most profitable also: for when we humble ourselves, and become even with the earth, we are thereby preserved from falling, and when we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord. Yea if we humble ourselves, the Lord will exalt us: and if with the poor Publican we acknowledge our sins, we shall depart justified, and find God faithful of his promise in forgiving us our sins. So the Apostle James, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. And the Apostle Peter,

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. And thus the Lord exalteth the humble, by enriching them with all his gifts, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal. With temporal benefits, for by humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, honor, and life. With spiritual graces; for he resisteth the proud, but giveth his grace to the humble. He filleth the hungry with good things, but sendeth the proud empty away. For he teacheth them his ways, and revealeth unto them the secrets of his Kingdom, making them thereby wise unto their salvation. He giveth them the grace of justification, and the forgiveness of all their sins. He maketh them thankful in prosperity, acknowledging themselves with Jacob and David, less than the least of God's mercies, and that all the good which they have, they have received it from God; and not only patient, but also thankful in greatest afflictions; acknowledging that it is the mercies of the Lord that they are not utterly consumed. He blesseth them with his presence, taking delight to dwell with them, that are of a humble heart and contrite spirit; and so with his power and providence safeguardeth them from all evil. Finally, in the life to come, he crowneth humility with eternal glory and felicity, according to that of our Savior; Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. So that, humility is not only itself a most excellent grace, but the chief means also of obtaining all other graces, seeing God giveth them only to the humble. For they only shall have the riches of God's best and most precious gifts, who will be thankful unto God for them; those only are thankful, who highly esteem them; and they alone make this estimate, who have felt the want of them, and earnestly desired them; and they and no other have thus done, who are thoroughly humbled in the sight and sense of their own poverty, emptiness, and nakedness.

Sect. 6 - Of the means whereby we may attain unto humility.

And thus, when our hearts are enlarged with that love of this excellent and profitable grace, let us in the next place carefully use all

good means, whereby we may be decked and adorned with it. And first we must often and seriously meditate upon God's excellency and infiniteness in wisdom, glory, power, justice, and goodness, and then the opinion of our own worth will vanish, like the light of a candle, when the Sun shineth in its full brightness, and our seeming perfection which much pleased us, when we beheld it alone, or compared it with others who come short of us, will appear to be nothing but imperfection, and we vile and of no worth in our own eyes. Secondly, let us compare our state as it is, with that it was in our creation, and there will be great cause of humiliation, in the best gifts and graces in us, seeing they are but the ruins of an old building, and like base worn-out rags of sumptuous apparel. Thirdly, let us compare our virtues and duties, with that which the Law requireth, and so we shall have good cause to be cast down in the sight of our imperfection, when we see what perfection, even upon the penalty of the curse it exacteth of us. Fourthly, let us meditate on the matter whereof we are made, and into which we shall again be resolved; and then may we in all humility say with Job to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister; yea with David, that we are worms and no men: And acknowledge with Abraham, that we are but dust and ashes, unworthy to appear in God's presence, or to make any suite unto him. Fifthly, let us set our many and grievous sins before us, our original corruption, which is the root of all wickedness, and our actual transgressions, both of omission and commission; and withal, the wrath of God, and curse of the Law due unto them; and this will make us with the Publican to cast down our eyes, and smite our breasts, and with broken and contrite hearts to cry out, God, be merciful unto me a sinner. Sixthly, with our graces and virtues, let us compare our vices and corruptions, and so our few grains of gold will be covered with such a mass of dross, our small quantity of good corn mixed with so much chaff, that our good parts will not so much lift us up, as our ill will pull down and humble us, if we weigh them in the balance of an impartial judgment. Seventhly, let us remember that we have nothing but what we have received, and that by the grace of God we are that we are; and therefore let us not boast, as though we had not

received them, but retaining the joy and comfort of God's graces unto ourselves, let us return all the praise and glory unto him whose gifts they are; and not carry ourselves as proud owners, but as humble and thankful debtors. Eighthly, let us consider, that what good things soever are in us, they are the Lord's talents, of which we must give an account at the day of Judgment, and that we are Stewards, and not absolute owners of the gifts which we have received; and so our greater gifts will work in us greater humility, seeing they are but receipts, and consequently debts, for which we shall be accountant unto God, how we have employed them. Ninthly, let us remember, that though we have never so many virtues and graces, yet if pride be mixed with them, it will spoil them all; seeing it is the poison of all virtues, a small portion whereof will infect a great quantity of wholesome meat and drink. Whereas humility is such an ornament, as will add much to their native beauty, and make them truly glorious in the sight of God and men. Tenthly, let us set before us the examples of God's servants, who as they have excelled in all other graces, so also in humility, as of Abraham, Job, David, Paul; but especially of our Savior Christ himself, the most perfect pattern of humility, who being the Sovereign Monarch of heaven and earth, disdained not to wash his Apostles feet; and being equal with his Father in all glory and Majesty, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and being made like unto men, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Lastly, if we would attain to true humility, we must not content ourselves with the sparing and seldom use of these means, but exercise ourselves daily in them, because pride will not easily leave his hold, and though it be once or twice, or many times repelled, yet will it recover new strength, and make against us fresh assaults, yea it will spring sometimes from the root of virtues, and even like the Phoenix, when it is consumed with the fire of God's Spirit, it will re-enlive itself, and out of its own ashes recover birth and being.

Sect. 7 - Of external worship with our bodies.

And thus much concerning those virtues whereby we have God inwardly in our hearts. Besides which, there is also required, that we have him outwardly in our bodies and external actions; and that is, when as with the outward man we serve and worship him. The which also we owe unto God, seeing he hath created and redeemed both our souls and bodies, that we should in both perform service unto him. And though alone it be of small value, for as the Apostle saith, Bodily exercise profiteth nothing, yet doth the Lord require it with the other, and that with the sweet incense of the heart and mind, we offer our bodies also a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him: which Daniel thought to be a matter of such moment, that he chose rather to be cast into the Lions den, then to neglect it for the space of a few days. Our Savior also requireth, not only that we have in us the heat of spiritual graces, but that also that we cause their light to shine out before men, that they seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. For as natural fire doth retain its virtue and strength, when as it hath some outward vent, and when that is stopped, is choked and presently dies; so do our inward graces and virtues live and flourish, when they have the outward vent of corporal obedience, and external works of piety and righteousness, but soon languish and are extinguished, if they never put forth themselves in these outward exercises. Now this external honor, is either in outward signs or actions. Of the former sort, is religious adoration in external signs and gestures, as prostrating the body, uncovering the head, bending the knee, lifting up the hands, which being considered as religious gestures, are proper and peculiar to God alone. Of the other sort is the outward service of God, in calling upon him, vowing unto him, swearing by his Name, celebrating feasts to his honor, and all outward obedience to the Law, which, in respect of the person to whom they are to be performed, namely, God alone and no other, are all required in the first Commandment.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the duties which are required in the second Commandment, as Prayer, hearing the Word, and administration of the Sacraments.

Sect. 1 - Of the things generally required in the second Commandment.

We have showed that the first Commandment requireth, that we serve and worship Jehovah, the only true God. In the three other Commandments of the first Table, is showed how he is to be worshipped, and the time when. The manner of his worship is, how he is to be served in his solemn and set service, required in the second Commandment, or how he is to be glorified at all times in the whole course of our lives in the third. The time when he is principally to be worshipped, is upon his Sabbaths, required in the fourth Commandment. In the second Commandment, God requireth that we worship him the true God, after a right and lawful manner, and by such means as are agreeable to his nature, and which in his Word he hath prescribed unto us, unto which we ought not to add, from which we ought not to detract anything, as hath before been showed. For this is our reasonable service, to worship so great a God, not after our own phantasies, but according to his own will, and with such a service in which he delighteth. Now he delighteth in such a worship as is agreeable to his nature; which being spiritual and true, yea Truth itself, it followeth, that we must worship him by spiritual and true means, and after a spiritual and true manner, that is, we must conform all the service which we offer unto God, according to the prescript rule of his Word. And thus we are to worship God, both inwardly with our souls, and outwardly with our bodies; Privately by ourselves, in our families, and publicly in the congregation, in which we are to perform all our service, with unanimity and joint affection, as if we all worshipped God with one heart and mind; and with uniformity in all outward rites and actions, as if we had all but one

body. Contrariwise, the Lord in this Commandment, forbiddeth both the contempt and neglect of his worship, which is the sin of Atheists and profane persons; and also worshipping him by false means, and after a false manner; as first, all will-worship and superstition, which is devised by men's brain, and out of a good meaning and intention offered unto him instead of his true service: of which sort is the making of any Image to represent God thereby, or any other for religious use; the worshipping of these Images, or of anything else besides the true God; by offering unto them any part of that religious service which is proper and peculiar to him alone: As religious adoration, Invocation, dedicating Churches, and consecrating of festivals to their honor and such like. Secondly, all irreverence in God's service: As when the external worship is performed without the inward, with deceitful lips, and not with the heart, and in spirit and truth, which is the service of Hypocrites. Lastly, when as the public service is performed without any unanimity of the heart, or uniformity of external rites and ceremonies, or with such as are uncomely, apish, light, and opposite to the use of edifying.

Sect. 2 - Of prayer and invocation.

And these are the things which generally are commanded or forbidden in this Commandment. The special duties which are here principally required, are three, Invocation, preaching and hearing the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments. In respect of the first, there is first required that we pray, and the neglect hereof condemned. Secondly, that we pray according to God's will, performing those things therein which in his Word he requireth. And these are either essential unto prayer or accidental. The things essential, respect either the person unto whom we must pray, which is God only and no other; or the person in whose name alone we must pray, namely, Jesus Christ, and not in the mediation or intercession of any creature. Thirdly, by whose help, to wit, the holy Ghost, who helpeth our infirmities, and teacheth us to pray as we

ought. Fourthly, After what manner, that is, before prayer with due preparation, and in prayer in respect of our souls, that we pray in the spirit, and not with the lips alone, nor with wandering thoughts. In our minds, that we pray with understanding, and not in an unknown tongue, nor in ignorance, not conceiving what we utter with our mouths. In our hearts, that we pray with reverence in respect of God, and humility in respect of ourselves. In our bodies there is required, that we use such voice and gestures, as are most fit to stir up our affections and devotions to the religious performing of this duty. Lastly, there is required, that we pray for those things which are good and lawful, having all our suites warranted by the Word of God. The things accidental required in prayer, are the circumstances of persons, place or time. In respect of persons, prayer is either public in the Congregation, or private. In respect of the place, prayer is not limited, but we have liberty in all places to lift up pure hands unto God. In respect of the time, we must pray without ceasing, as often as any fit opportunity and occasion is offered. The kinds of prayer, are either petition or thanksgiving. In all our petitions there is required, 1. A sense of our wants. 2. Fervent desires to have them supplied. 3. A special faith, that our requests shall be granted, grounded upon God's promises. After our petitions made, we must quietly rest upon God, persuading ourselves that we shall obtain them in due time. Secondly, we must carefully use all good means, which may serve God's providence in conferring these blessings upon us. Thirdly, If we do not presently obtain, we must persevere in prayer without fainting or weariness. The other part of prayer is giving of thanks, whereby we praise God for all his benefits, either received or promised, unto which the same things are to be fitted, which were generally required in prayer, as that they be rendered to God alone, in the name of Christ, by the holy Ghost, with understanding in our minds, and reverence and humility, with thankfulness and cheerfulness in our hearts.

Sect. 3 - Of the duties of God's Ministers.

And so much of the duties respecting prayer. Those that respect the ministry of the Word, are of two sorts; the first respect God's Ministers that preach it. The second, the people that hear it. In respect of the Minister, it is required first, that his person be qualified and fitted for this high function, in which regard he ought to be once lawfully called to this office inwardly by God, and outwardly by the Church. Secondly, he is to have his calling approved and sealed unto him by his sufficiency of gifts, both in knowledge and utterance; and willingness of mind to employ them to God's glory, and good of his people. Secondly, for the matter which he preacheth, it is required, that he deliver nothing but that which is grounded upon the pure Word of God, and that he rightly expound the Scriptures by the Scriptures; and divide the Word of God aright, both in observing profitable doctrines out of the Text, and in applying them to his hearers, for instruction in the truth, confutation of errors, exhortations to duties, reproof of offenders, and consolation of the weak and afflicted. Thirdly, for the manner, there is required that he speak in the evidence of the Spirit, as if God by him did speak unto the people. Secondly, in simplicity without any impiety of human inventions, or affectation to show his own learning and gifts. 3. in integrity and uprightness as in God's sight and presence, chiefly aiming to please God and men. 4. In fidelity, having in his ministry no respect of persons; but delivering God's message impartially to the noble and base, rich and poor, friends and strangers all alike. Fifthly, with authority and power, according to the example of our Savior, not fearing the face of any gainsayer or opposer. Sixthly, with all gravity, as becometh the weightiness of his Ambassage. Seventhly, with all liberty and freedom of speech and spirit, taxing and reprovng sin wheresoever he finds it. And finally, with fervent zeal of God's glory, and the salvation of the people.

Sect. 4 - Of the duties of hearers, and such as respect their preparation.

The duties which respect the hearing of the Word, are of three sorts. The first, such as are to be performed before we hear, which are two principally. The one, that we fit and prepare ourselves, before we presume to approach into God's presence to perform this holy duty; the which is done, partly by removing those impediments which might hinder us, as infidelity, impenitence, carnal security, worldly distractions and earthly-mindedness, profaneness and small esteem of the Word, excessive eating or drinking, conceit of our own knowledge, as though little or nothing could be added unto it, prejudice and forestalled opinions of our teachers, hypocrisy, curiosity, itching ears, factious affections, whereby men have the truth of God in respect of persons, hearing or not hearing, according to that opinion which they have conceived of him that speaketh. And partly, this preparation consisteth in using all good helps and means, which may enable us to the careful and conscionable hearing of the Word. As to consider the weightiness of the action which we are about to perform, namely, a high and holy service unto God, which will further and seal up unto us our salvation or condemnation, and be either the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, soften us like wax, or harden us like clay, and make us one step nearer either to heaven or hell. For God's Word shall never return void, but accomplish what he pleaseth, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sends it. Secondly, to meditate on the ends for which we hear, which are, to glorify God in the means of our salvation, to be built up in all saving grace, knowledge, faith, obedience, love of God, zeal, patience, and the rest. Thirdly, we must examine ourselves to find out our sins, that we may gather strength for the mortifying of them; and our spiritual wants, that we may have them supplied in this spiritual market of our souls. Fourthly, we must renew our repentance, that we come not in our sins; and our faith, without which our hearing will not profit us. Finally, we must use faithful and fervent prayer, that God will so assist with his holy Spirit, the Minister in speaking, and us in hearing, and sanctify to our use his holy ordinances, that they may be effectual to build us up in our most holy faith, and more and more enrich us with all sanctifying and saving graces. And being thus prepared, our next duty is, that setting

aside all worldly impediments, we resort unto the holy assemblies, to be made partakers of God's holy Word, that we may profit thereby.

Sect. 5 - Of the duties required in hearing, and after we have heard.

The second sort of duties respect the action of hearing itself, unto which is required, that we set ourselves in the presence of God, and hear the Word preached, not as the word of mortal man, but as the Word of the ever living God; with all fear and reverence, with all diligence and attention, with alacrity and cheerfulness, humility and a good conscience, avoiding (as much as lieth in us) all distractions, wandering thoughts, private reading, dullness, drowsiness and carnal weariness. Finally, with hungering and thirsting after the food of our souls, and earnest desire to profit by it. To which end we must apply and fit ourselves to everything which is spoken to profit by it, whether it be doctrine, confutation, reproof or consolation, receive the Word into good and honest hearts, and there reserve it as a precious treasure for our use in the whole course of our lives and conversation. The third and last sort are those duties which are to be performed after we have heard; which are, First, to meditate on that which hath been delivered unto us, that we may imprint it in our memories, and work it into our hearts. Secondly, conference with others, that we may be mutual helpers for the understanding, remembering, embracing and practicing of that which we have heard. Thirdly, that we sanctify the Word unto our use by effectual prayer, desiring that God will give a blessing unto it, and make it effectual by his Spirit for the enlightening of our minds, the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, and the reforming and amending of our sinful lives. Lastly, we must on every fit occasion call to mind what we have heard, that we may bring it unto use, and conscionably practice what we have learned.

Sect. 6 - Of the administration of the Sacraments.

The third sort of duties required in this Commandment, respect the administration of the Sacraments, which are only two, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Unto both which it is generally required, that they be administered. First, by a lawful Minister and no other. Secondly, only to those which are in the Covenant, either the faithful or their seed. Thirdly, that they be administered according to Christ's institution, without the mixture of human inventions. More especially unto the receiving of the Lord's Supper, there is required, that we receive it worthily, to which purpose, diverse duties are required before, in, and after the Communion. Before, that we duly prepare ourselves for this holy action, which consisteth, first, in an examination of ourselves, how we are qualified with such saving graces as are necessary to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper, the which, are a hungering and thirsting after Christ and his benefits, as after that spiritual food, which alone is sufficient to nourish us to life everlasting. Secondly, knowledge of the main principles of Christian Religion, respecting either God or ourselves, without which we cannot discern the Lord's body, no more than a blind man can by his bodily sight discern the outward signs of bread and wine. Thirdly, faith in Jesus Christ, approved to be true and lively by the fruits of it, in the inward sanctification of our hearts, and in our outward works of piety, mercy, and righteousness. Fourthly, unfeigned repentance, consisting in a hearty sorrow for our sins past, springing out of faith, and the apprehension of the love of God towards us, and a settled purpose and resolution, not only to leave them for the time to come, but also to serve the Lord in the contrary duties of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety. Fourthly, love and charity towards our neighbors, approved by our willingness and readiness to give unto those that want, and to forgive those that offend. Secondly, after this examination there is required unfeigned humiliation in the sight and sense of our wants and weaknesses, especially in these saving graces before spoken of. Secondly, a hungering after the means whereby they may be supplied, especially the Sacrament which was purposely ordained to supply our wants, and strengthen our weakness in these

graces. Thirdly, humble confession of our sins in general, and especially of those which have come to our mind in our examination, wherein we renewed our faith and repentance. Fourthly, a steadfast resolution in our hearts, and faithful promise to God, that if he will in Christ accept of us, though not prepared according to the preparation of the Sanctuary, but full of imperfections, and weak in those graces which are necessary unto the worthy receiving of this holy Sacrament, we will in that part of our lives which remaineth, strive after more perfection, and conscionably labor in the use of all good means, whereby we may increase our knowledge, faith, repentance, and charity towards our neighbors. And lastly, earnest and hearty prayer unto God for the remission of our sins, for the assistance of his Spirit in our intended action, for a new supply of sanctifying graces, and for his blessing upon his holy Ordinances, the Word and Sacraments, that they may be effectual for the renewing and increasing of them in us, and for the strengthening of us unto the duties of a godly life. In the action of receiving, we are to be exercised both by meditation and action. We are to meditate on the outward signs, Bread and Wine, and the things signified by them, the precious Body and Blood of Christ; as also of the Analogy and relation between them. When we see the Bread and Wine set apart from a common, to a holy use, we are to be put in mind thereby, that so Christ was set apart and sealed to the office of Mediatorship, that he might be our Prophet, Priest, and King, and so work that great work of our Redemption. When we see one Bread and one Wine, consisting of many Grains and Grapes, we are to be put in mind thereby, that there is but one Mediator between God's us, even the man Jesus Christ, and that he hath but one body, the Catholic Church, consisting of many members. When we see the Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, we are to call to mind, that so the body of Christ was broken and crucified, and his blood shed for our sins, that it might be spiritual food for our souls, to nourish them to life everlasting. When we see the Minister give and deliver the Bread and Wine, we are to remember that so God offereth the Body and Blood of his Son, to be received spiritually by faith of every worthy receiver. The actions to be performed, are first, to receive the Bread

and Wine at the hands of the Ministers, and to eat and drink them with our bodily mouths. Secondly, to perform an inward action answerable thereunto, namely, by the hand and mouth of faith, to receive and feed upon Christ's Body and Blood for our spiritual nourishment. Thirdly, to remember the infinite love of God and his Christ to us, the one, in giving his dear Son; the other, his precious Body and Blood for our Redemption; and being truly thankful unto them in our hearts, for these inestimable benefits, to set forth their praises, both by our lips and lives, songs of Thanksgiving, and holy conversation. After the receiving of the Supper, we are to perform these duties. First, to be perpetually thankful unto God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, as for all his benefits, so especially for that great work of our Redemption, and for deriving and assuring unto us the fruit of it by his Word, Sacraments, and holy Spirit. Secondly, we must examine how we have profited by receiving of the Supper, for the satisfying of our spiritual hunger, and the replenishing of our empty souls with the gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit, which were the main ends for which we came to the Lord's Table. Lastly, we are to perform carefully our purposes and promises made unto God and ourselves, that we will conscionably and diligently use all good means, for the furthering of us in the duties of repentance and a godly life.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the duties required in the third and fourth Commandment.

Sect. 1 - Of the sanctifying of God's Name, which is taken diversely in the Scriptures, &c. and how it ought to be done.

The third Commandment requireth that we sanctify God's Name, and glorify him out of his public and solemn service, in the whole course of our lives and conversation. The Name of God signifieth diverse things in the Scriptures, as first, God himself and his attributes, which are his Essence. Secondly, his Glory. Thirdly, his Titles, as Jehovah, Elohim, Yah. Fourthly, his Word. Fifthly, his Religion. Sixthly, his Works. And to take it in vain, is to use it in our thoughts, words, and works, rashly, lightly, and without judgment, or in vain, and to no end, or falsely, wickedly, and contumeliously to his dishonor, which is here forbidden. Contrariwise in this Commandment, God requireth that we sanctify and glorify his holy Name: and as it is Holy, Reverend, and Glorious in itself, so to use it holily and reverently, in all our thoughts, words, and actions. And on the other side he forbiddeth us to use God's Name, that is, his attributes, Titles, Word, Religion, and Works vainly, that is, rashly, irreverently, and lightly, upon no just cause, or else profanely, falsely, and contemptuously to God's dishonor. The main duties required of us, are first, that we effectually know, believe, and remember God and his attributes, and also often think and meditate on them, holily and reverently, that we make profession of God and his attributes, and upon all occasions speak of them in like manner; and that we walk worthy such a holy knowledge and profession in our lives and conversations. Secondly, that we desire God's glory in our hearts, and endeavor to set it forth by all means; making it the matter of our speech, and glorifying him by our praises and thanksgiving, and the end also of all our words and actions. Thirdly, that we use God's Titles and Names judiciously, in matters of weight and importance, after a serious and reverent manner, and to a good end. Fourthly, that we use God's Word religiously and holily, reading, meditating, and conferring of it with a desire, study, and endeavor to know, remember, and practice it. That we make it our Schoolmaster, to teach and instruct us in all truth, our chief guide for the directing and reforming of our hearts and lives, and the squire and rule, according to which we frame all our words and actions. Fifthly, that we walk worthy our high calling, and by our holiness and righteousness adorn the Religion which we profess; carrying

ourselves in all things uprightly, in respect of God, and inoffensively in respect of men. Sixthly, that in our thoughts, words, and actions, we make a holy and religious use of all God's works, both of creation and government, and both meditate and speak of them so, as it may redound to God's glory, knowing him by his works, and glorifying him in them, by acknowledging them his workmanship, and his wisdom, power, and goodness shining in them. And also to our own good, imitating in them that which the Scriptures propound, as good for our imitation, and avoiding the contrary. And finally, that we receive them with thanksgiving, and sanctify them to our use by the Word and Prayer. So also here is required that we make an holy use of the creatures in respect of God's government and providence; as first, for the determining of doubts and controversies (which can no otherwise be cleared and decided) by casting of lots, in the use whereof we are to use prayer unto God, and sometimes, (when the occasion is weighty) fasting, desiring of him, that by his good providence he will direct them to the right end, for which we use them. And as before they are cast, we are to refer ourselves wholly to God's determination; so after, we are to rest contented and well pleased with his sentence. Secondly, we are to make a holy use of God's providence, first, in conferring rewards and blessings either upon ourselves or others. In respect of ourselves we make a right use of God's blessings and benefits: When as in our hearts we be unfeignedly thankful unto God for them; when in our words we praise and magnify his bounty and goodness towards us, and tell what great things he hath done for us, and when in our works and actions, we refer them wholly to God's glory, and both our own and others good, taking occasion of his mercy and goodness to fear him, and to turn unto him from our sins by unfeigned repentance. In respect of God's blessings bestowed upon others, we carry ourselves holily, when as we rejoice with them in God's bounty and goodness, and join with them in praises and thanksgiving. The like holy use we are to make of God's providence in respect of punishments and afflictions, whether they be inflicted upon ourselves, or upon others. As when God layeth his hand upon us by his judgments and chastisements, we are to be humbled in the sight and sense of our

sins, and bear them with patience and thankfulness, acknowledging God's mercy, in that we are not utterly consumed, and profit by them both for the mortifying of our sins, and for our spiritual quickening unto new obedience. So when we see God's Judgments upon others, we are to take warning by their example, and communicate with the faithful in their sorrows, bearing a part of their grief; and magnifying God's Justice, which hath found out the wicked to inflict upon them deserved punishments.

Sect. 2 - Of the sanctifying of God's name in lawful oaths.

More especially, there is required in this Commandment, that we glorify and sanctify God's name by our oaths and vows. First, by our oaths, unto which is required, first, that we honor God's name, in swearing by it upon a just and necessary occasion, acknowledging thereby God's infinite wisdom, from which nothing can lie hid; his Truth, which abhorreth all lies and falsehoods; his Justice, which when he is called to be a witness and Judge, will neither suffer truth and innocence to go unrewarded, nor untruth and guiltiness unpunished without respect of persons. Secondly, that we swear only by the name of God, either directly or indirectly, and by no creature in heaven or earth. Thirdly, that we swear after a lawful manner, unto which is required that we swear in truth, that is, to that which is true, and truly, according to the persuasion of our minds; In righteousness, binding ourselves thereby only unto things lawful; and in judgment, whereby we discern the necessity of it, in regard that we can no otherwise clear the truth, nor be believed in a matter of importance, which much respecteth God's glory, or our own or neighbors good. And so come to the performance of this high and holy action with all reverence as in God's presence, duly weighing and considering the conditions and circumstances of our oath, according to the Scriptures. Lastly, that we swear unto a right end, namely, to the glory of God, by revealing and ratifying a necessary and unknown truth, which could no otherwise be made manifest;

and to the good of our neighbors and ourselves, that they may be satisfied, all controversies and strifes ended, all doubts and suspicions removed, and our own truth and innocence declared and cleared.

Sect. 3 - Of the sanctifying God's name by making and performing our VOWS.

The second special thing here required, is lawful vows, whereby we cheerfully promise unto God something which may be acceptable unto him, either because we have already found him gracious and good unto us, which moveth us to do this duty out of love and thankfulness, or because we expect his mercy and goodness for some benefit to be received, or punishment to be avoided or removed; out of our faith and hope grounded upon God's promises. Unto which vows, that they may be lawful and acceptable unto God, there are two things required, namely, that we make them lawfully, and truly to perform them. Unto the making of a lawful vow is required, First, that it be performed as a religious act to God and none other. Secondly, that it be done after a religious and holy manner. 1. In truth, with a sincere and cheerful heart. 2. In righteousness, unto which is required, in respect of the person, that he have power in himself to vow that thing, or have the consent of his governors. Secondly, that the thing vowed, be lawful and acceptable unto God, as being good and commanded, or of an indifferent nature, but in respect of us, good and profitable, and therefore to be used, or hurtful and inconvenient and therefore to be avoided. Thirdly, that we vow in judgment, whereby we discern that our vow is in the former respects lawful, and very profitable either for the advancing of God's glory or our own good. The last thing required, is, that we make it to a right end, as namely, to the glory of God, the good of our neighbors, and our own benefit; for the exercising of our temperance and sobriety, or the renewing and furthering of our repentance, or for the strengthening of our faith, and our good purposes and

resolutions about the performance of good duties. In respect of performance of our vows, there is required, that it be done at the time appointed, and without delay, and also without any diminution or abatement in quantity or quality, of that which we have vowed. Especially our care must be of performing our common vow in baptism, in renouncing all our spiritual enemies, and in consecrating ourselves wholly unto God's service, in performing unto him the duties of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety all the days of our lives.

Sect. 4 - Of the sanctifying God's Sabbath, and what things are required unto it.

In the fourth Commandment, the Lord appointeth a special time, wherein all the former duties both public and private, are principally to be performed, which whosoever do neglect, they manifestly show that they are destitute of the power of all true Religion. The main duty required, is, that we remember to sanctify the Sabbath: In which two things are to be considered: 1. that we must sanctify the Sabbath: 2. that we must remember to do it, that is, be mindful and careful to sanctify it. To the sanctification of the Sabbath two things are required: First, the rest. Secondly, the sanctifying of it. The rest consisteth partly in an outward rest from bodily labors and worldly affairs, and in our inward resting from the servile works of sin. The works from which we must rest, are bodily labors, and all worldly employments, so far forth as they are distractions and hindrances to the spiritual Sanctification of the Sabbath; As buying and selling, all manner of works of our ordinary callings, travailing, feasting of friends with meats not easily cooked, and such like. For all kinds of bodily labors on the Lord's Day are unlawful, except they be referred to the sanctification of the Sabbath, as the means of it, of which sort are the labors of the Minister in the duties appertaining to his ministry; and of the people travailing to the places of God's worship. Or secondly, the works of mercy, which are duties of the Sabbath, as

giving of alms, visiting the sick and prisoners, healing diseases and sores, by applying fit medicines and salves. Or lastly, works of necessity, which are of importance, and cannot, without great inconvenience, be done afterwards, nor could have been done before. For as for that necessity, which ariseth from our negligence and careless oversight, it is sinful, and in the first word of this Commandment forbidden and condemned. And among these works of necessity, we are to reckon labor in providing convenient food for our bodies, tending of cattle, when it is done rather in mercy, which respecteth their necessity, then for our own gain: Labors of Mariners begun before the Sabbath in their Navigation at Sea: Fight in a lawful war against our enemies; labors of servants and subjects imposed upon them by their governors as necessary, and not apparently discerned by them to be otherwise. The inward and spiritual rest, is our resting from sin, as at all times, so especially on the Sabbath. For these works of darkness, are above all other most servile and slavish, seeing thereby we make ourselves the vassals of Satan.

Sect. 5 - Of the spiritual sanctification, and the outward rest.

And this is the rest required on the Sabbath; the sanctification of this rest is either by using the means, or doing the works of sanctification. And this is done both publicly and privately; publicly, by using the public means of sanctification in the service of God. And this is done, First, of the Ministers, by public praying in the congregation, preaching and reading the Word, and administration of the Sacraments. Secondly, the people, by frequenting the assemblies in the beginning, and continuing to the end of divine service; and being there, by carrying and behaving themselves religiously, diligently and uprightly, in calling upon God's name, hearing the Word, and in the right use of the Sacraments. The public works of sanctification, are alms deeds and collections for the poor. Privately the Sabbath is sanctified, by our preparation to God's public service, which chiefly consisteth in meditation and prayer; and after the public service, by

meditating on the Word heard, and applying it to our own use, and by holy conferences with others. Unto which duties, respecting the public worship, we are to add and use these other means of sanctifying the remainder of the Lord's day; Reading of the Scriptures or other religious and holy writings; meditation on God's Word and works, especially of creation, preservation and redemption; Invocation by prayer; thanksgiving and singing of Psalms: and finally, godly conferences upon some fit subject, which best sorteth to the present occasion, and tendeth to the use of edification: unto which means we must add the private works of sanctification, which are the works of mercy, and appertain chiefly either to the body, as the giving of alms, visiting the sick and prisoners, curing diseases, &c. or else to the soul, as, teaching the ignorant, reclaiming those who are seduced by error, admonishing those who fail of their duty by frailty and infirmity, rebuking the scandalous and willful offender, exhorting the backward and sluggish, comforting the distressed, counselling them for the good of their souls that need counsel, and reconciling those whom we know to be at variance. But we must not only sanctify the Sabbath, but also as a special help and means hereof, we must remember to do it, that is, use all providence and care, devotion and diligence about these duties of sanctification. Before the Sabbath we must so forecast our business, and dispose of all our worldly affairs, that we be not distracted in performing of holy duties, by having our minds, tongues or actions exercised and taken up by them. And on the Sabbath we must remember to sanctify it, by having our whole man taken up in the service of God, both publicly and privately, and by performing the duties required with all diligence and attention, sincerity and uprightness, cheerfulness and delight.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the sum of the second Table.

Sect. 1 - Of the duties of righteousness towards our neighbors.

We have spoken of the duties of piety contained in the first Table. And now we are to entreat of the duties of righteousness, and sobriety required in the second: under righteousness, comprehending all duties which we owe to our neighbors; and under sobriety, all those which belong to our own persons. By righteousness, we understand a virtue or habit which ordereth the whole man to the good of our neighbors; as the mind and understanding, to think; the memory, to remember; the will, to desire; the affections and passions, to covet and affect; the whole body, to act and perform all things which we know good and profitable both for their souls, bodies, name and state, for their temporal welfare and prosperity in this world, and their everlasting happiness in the world to come. The general rule of which righteousness is, that we do all that, and that only unto others, which we would have others do unto us; and consequently, seeing we desire that our neighbors should with all the powers of their mind and body advance, as much as in them lieth, our good in all things respecting our souls, bodies and states; Justice and righteousness requireth the same at our hands towards them; namely, that to the uttermost of our power we be ever ready to do all things which tend to their good, and to the preservation of their honor, person, life, purity, chastity, wealth and good name, not so much as entertaining a thought, or first motion in our minds or hearts, which in any of these or other respects may tend to their hurt and prejudice. Of which Justice or righteousness there are two parts; the one distributive, whereby we do give unto everyone their due, and that which of right appertaineth unto them; in which is to be observed a geometrical proportion, which hath respect in this distribution unto every man according to their place, person and such other relations and circumstances, and is in all things carried with due regard of equity and moderation. The other is commutative, which is usually exercised in commerce and mutual dealings and trading one with another, as in changing,

borrowing, lending, buying, selling, letting, setting, and such like affairs of this life; The general rule whereof is, that we keep from no man his right, but pay every man his debt and due. In which is to be observed an Arithmetical proportion, performing all these duties of Justice in a strict equality, without any respect of place or person.

Sect. 2 - Of the duty of sobriety towards ourselves.

The other main duty is sobriety, which comprehendeth under it all duties which respect our own persons; the which in a general sense, as it is to be here understood, signifieth soundness of mind, which ordereth all things to the good and safety of our persons and state. And thus the word, which is translated sobriety, is taken in the Scriptures for a sound mind; so it is said, that the demoniac was by our Savior Christ restored to his right mind. And the Apostle saith, that he was not mad, but spake forth the words of truth and soberness, that is, of a right and sound mind, which tended to the safety and salvation of himself and others; and exhorteth all men to be wise unto sobriety, or to think soberly, not straining their wits above the measure of their gifts, which is the next way to crack and lose them. And thus elsewhere he opposeth these two, the one against the other, to be sober, and to be besides ourselves. Sobriety therefore is a virtue or habit proceeding from a sound mind, spiritual wisdom and judgment, whereby we are enabled to rule and order ourselves, with all our powers and faculties of mind and body, and all things else about which they are exercised to our good, safety and salvation. First, it ruleth and ordereth the mind to the using of all good means, whereby it may be more and more enlightened with saving knowledge; the memory, as a faithful register to retain good things; the conscience, to perform its office rightly in excusing and accusing; the will, to choose the good, and refuse the evil, and in all things to be conformable to the holy will of God; the affections, to covet after spiritual and heavenly things with unlimited desires, and temporal good things with moderation, temperance and purity; and

the body in all holiness and honor, that it may be a fit temple for the holy Ghost, and a ready instrument unto the soul for all good actions. And thus it ruleth the whole man and every faculty and part of him, as they are exercised about their several and particular objects, causing the mind to approve or condemn; the memory to retain or cast out; the conscience to accuse or excuse, the will to choose or reject; the affections, to love and desire, or to hate and contemn; the body, to do, or leave undone all things good or evil, when they are propounded unto them. And in respect of these several sorts of objects, this virtue of sobriety hath place, and is commanded in every precept of the second Table. For as it ruleth and ordereth us about the preservation of our honor and authority, it is required in the first Commandment; as about the good, preservation and salvation of our lives, our souls and bodies, in the sixth; as about our chastity, purity, temperance, and sobriety in the use of meats, drinks, and apparel, in the seventh; as about our goods and possessions, either in getting or using them righteously and justly, in the eighth; as about the preserving of our good name, in the ninth; as about withstanding the first motions and suggestions unto sin, and the recovering of original righteousness, and holy concupiscence in our minds and hearts, in the tenth and last.

Sect. 3 - Of the duties of charity.

But seeing our Savior hath comprised both these duties of righteousness and sobriety under charity, and hath made love the whole sum of the Law, our love towards God, of the first Table, and our love towards ourselves and our neighbors, of the second Table: I will consider of them both under this one, first generally, and afterward more specially in every several Commandment. For charity and true love towards ourselves, moveth us out of a sound and right mind, to perform, in thought, word, and deed, all good duties which tend to our safety and salvation; and charity towards our neighbors, as it moveth us to love them as ourselves, so to perform all duties of

righteousness and mercy, which we do unto ourselves, or would have others do unto us. Now this charity is a gift or grace of God, infused into our hearts by his holy Spirit, which out of the sense of God's love towards us in Christ, working true and fervent love towards them again, doth move us to love ourselves, and all men as ourselves, and as Christ hath loved us for God's sake, and in obedience to his Commandment. It is a gift of God, and no natural habit; for naturally, as we are haters of God and men, so even of ourselves, neither is any hatred of an enemy so hurtful and pernicious unto our souls and bodies, as carnal self-love, which is a chief cause and means of depriving us here of all grace, and of glory and happiness in the life to come. And therefore the Apostle exhorting us to love one another, telleth us where we must have this gift; Let us (saith he) love one another, for love is of God. Neither is it a common gift of God, but a sanctifying and saving grace of his holy Spirit: for as the love of God towards us, as the cause, so our love towards God, as the effect of it, is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, as the Apostle testifieth.

Sect. 4 - Of the means and manner of working charity in us.

The means and manner of working this grace in us, is, first by persuading us that God in Christ loveth us, and will give unto us the remission of our sins, his grace here, and glory hereafter: with the lively heat of which love, our hearts are inflamed with fervent love towards God again, from which springeth an holy affection towards ourselves, who are thus beloved of God, members of Christ, and Temples of the holy Ghost, whereby we seek the fruition of our chief goodness, and consequently of our own salvation and eternal happiness, which whilst we were destitute of the love of God, and were poisoned with hatred of God and carnal self-love, we neglected and contemned. And from hence also ariseth the like affection towards our neighbors, whom we love for God's sake, not only as God's creatures, and bearing his image, but also in obedience unto

his Commandment. So that it is impossible to love either ourselves or our neighbors as we ought, and for our own and their good, unless we love God in Christ Jesus first and chiefly, from whose sincere love the other springeth and floweth. But when we sincerely love God, and so yield our obedience unto the first Table, our love towards ourselves and our neighbors, which is the sum of the second Table, will necessarily and inseparably follow. For as our love towards God is exercised immediately in religious virtues and holy duties of piety which we perform in his service, so mediately by performing (in obedience to his Commandments) the duties of a true and Christian love towards ourselves and our neighbors. For when our little goodness, bounded in narrow limits, will not reach unto God for the manifestation of our love towards him, we extend it as far as we are able, and do what good we can, out of a holy and sanctified affection to ourselves and our neighbors, to show our love towards God, in yielding obedience unto his Commandments. As we see in the example of David, who being ravished with the apprehension of God's love, and desiring to show his love towards him again, could no otherwise do it, then by taking the cup of salvation, and praising the name of the Lord, and by causing his goodness to extend to God's poor Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, which, in respect of its smallness, and God's all-sufficiency, could in no sort reach unto him. Where, by the way we may note, that if we love ourselves and our neighbors out of our love towards God, and in obedience unto his Commandments, performing these duties of the second Table, in and for him; then do we, when we do most good to our neighbors and ourselves, show most love towards God, and perform unto him such acceptable service as he requireth of us, and will richly reward in this life and the life to come. For he hath sworn, that all those whom he hath redeemed, shall serve him as well in righteousness as in holiness all the days of their lives. And his grace appearing, hath taught us to deny not only all ungodliness, but also all worldly lusts, and to live as well soberly and righteously, as godly and religiously, in this present world.

Sect. 5 - What charity is, and the properties of it.

But let us come to speak of this duty of charity, as in our Savior Christ's words it is propounded unto us out of the Law of God; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Wherein we are to consider two things: the duty commanded, and the manner of doing it; In the duty, we are to consider the act of loving, and the object of our love, which is our neighbors and ourselves, the first plainly expressed, the other necessarily implied in the manner, when as we are commanded to love them as we love ourselves. The duty of love containeth in it, First, an affection or motion of the heart, wherewith we are affected and inclined towards that we love. Secondly, an earnest and longing desire that we may enjoy it, by being (as it were) united unto it. Thirdly, joy and delight in the fruition of it, and a contentation, whereby we rest according to the measure of our love and fruition, satisfied with it. The properties of it are principally two; the first, that it be sincere and unfeigned. So the Apostle requireth that our love be without dissimulation, and unfeigned; and the Apostle John dissuadeth us from lip-love, which is only in profession, but fruitless and ineffectual in action: Little children (saith he) let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. The other, that it be fervent and effectual, according to that of the Apostle, Above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves. And this is that sincere and fervent love, which is so much and often commended and commanded in the Scriptures. So our Savior Christ; This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. And again, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. The Apostle likewise, Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, &c.

Sect. 6 - Of the object of charity, which is our neighbors.

The object of this love plainly expressed, is our neighbors, whereby we are not with the Pharisees to understand our friends only, nor, according to the vulgar use of the word, those that dwell near unto us alone, but all men, without exception, who are of the same nature with us, consisting of a reasonable soul and body, whether they be strangers or acquaintance, friends or enemies unto us. For all men are of the same flesh, and created according to the same Image of God, and also our brethren, as they have all alike descended from the same first parents. And this is implied in the Law, where that Commandment, which is given for the helping of our enemies Ox or Ass, being repeated in another place, is rendered thy brothers Ox or Ass. And the Prophet Isaiah maketh it a work of mercy to cover the naked, without any exception of stranger or enemy, because he is of our own flesh. But our Savior plainly presseth this duty both by precept; But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; propounding the example of God himself for our imitation, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. And also by his Parable of the man which fell among thieves, who being a Jew, was relieved by a Samaritan, though an enemy to that nation, and therefore approved as a neighbor unto him. All men therefore being our neighbors, they are all, in respect of their persons, to be loved of us, with such love, in respect of the quality, as is sincere, unfeigned, and fervent, even as we love ourselves; although in respect of the quantity, we may and ought in our love to observe diverse degrees. For seeing we love others, in, and for God, therefore we must love those above others which are of the household of faith, and our kindred in the Spirit, brethren of the same heavenly Father, and fellow members of the same body, in whom the Image of God most brightly shineth; so the whole Church and Common-wealth, more than a private man, and among private men, our parents, children, kindred, familiar friends, and benefactors, more than strangers or ordinary men.

Sect. 7 - The means of loving our neighbors, namely, as ourselves.

The manner of our love towards our neighbors is, that we love them as ourselves. In which, the love of our own persons is necessarily implied; for if the love of ourselves be the rule of our love towards our neighbors, then must our charity begin at home, and from it, as from the fountain, the streams of brotherly love must spring and flow. And howsoever we have in the Scriptures no direct precept, enjoining us to love ourselves, yet it is necessarily implied. First, when we are commanded to love God; for seeing love uniteth us unto him, who is the chief Good and fountain of all happiness, we chiefly love ourselves in loving him, in whose fruition consisteth all blessedness and felicity. Secondly, in all those Commandments which require of us that we seek our own good and preservation, both in respect of our souls, bodies, and states, temporal and eternal, both by avoiding all sin which would hurt us, as self-murder, uncleanness, prodigality, exposing of our fame and good name to slanders and imputations, and by embracing all virtues, and practicing all good duties which may further our everlasting salvation. Besides, where our Savior saith, that whosoever loveth his own life better than him, is not worthy of him, he implieth that we ought to love ourselves, but with such a love as is subordinate to the love of him, who hath loved us better than his own life. And the Apostle, in pressing a man's love towards his wife, which ought to exceed all other natural love, because of that near union between them whereby they become one flesh, useth this as a reason, that no man ever hated his own flesh; implying thereby, that seeing man and wife are both one, therefore we should love our wives as ourselves, and consequently ourselves first, according to which rule we are to love them.

Sect. 8 - That natural and carnal self-love is not the rule of loving our neighbors, but that which is holy and spiritual.

But seeing our natural love of ourselves is carnal and earthly, plunging us head-long into sin and death, and is no better than true hatred, in respect of those miserable effects and fruits which it produceth both to our souls and bodies; therefore this carnal love ought not to be our rule in loving our neighbors, (although in truth we can love them with no other, whilst this love ruleth and swayeth in us) but first this love must be mortified in us; and instead thereof our hearts must be replenished with a just and holy love, whereby we love ourselves in and for God, for the advancing of our temporal and spiritual good, and the eternal salvation of our souls and bodies, in the fruition of him whom we chiefly love, and with him, of everlasting joy and happiness. And when we thus truly love ourselves, according to this rule we must love our brethren. So that when we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, it is not required that we should so love them, as we love ourselves in the state of corruption, with a carnal and earthly love, which would draw them together with us into eternal death and destruction, and is therefore to be esteemed no better than hatred; but as we ought to love ourselves in the state of regeneration, with a right, lawful, and holy love, which is always subordinate to the love of God, and loving him first and chiefly, doth cause us to love them, in and for him, and not in such respects as are carnal and sinful. In which regard, as we are bound to love all men, even our enemies; yea the most wicked in the world, in respect of their persons, which are God's workmanship: so, not our dearest friends, in respect of their vices, or their vices together with them; seeing our love must be subordinate to the love of God, and for his sake: and as we love their persons which he also loveth, so must we hate their sins and corruptions, even as we ought also to hate our own, because he hateth and abhorreth them. And we must love ourselves and them according to God's will, and not contrary unto it; so far forth as it may stand with God's love, and not when there is any opposition between them. And thus David, who mourned for his enemies, because they kept not God's Law, and

prayed for them, in respect of their persons, yet hated them, in respect of their sins, which were hateful to God, as he often professeth.

Sect. 9 - The properties of lawful self-love.

Now the lawful and right love of ourselves hath diverse properties; for first it is unfeigned, and not counterfeit and dissembled; and seated and settled in the heart, and not in the tongue and lips only. Secondly, it is fervent and effectual, and not cold, remiss, and careless. Thirdly, constant and permanent; and not fickle and mutable, alienated and estranged by frailties and infirmities. And such ought our love to be towards our neighbors, sincere and unfeigned, fervent and effectual, seeking by all means their good, not only in word, but in deed and action, doing that unto them, which we would have them do unto us: and finally, we must love them with a constant love, and not alienate our affections from them, in regard of their frailties and imperfections. And thus we are to love our neighbors, either with a common and natural love sanctified by God's Spirit, or with a special and spiritual love. In respect of the former; as every man out of a natural love doth seek his own good, the preservation of his life, the welfare and health of his body, the chastity of himself and his wife, the prosperity of his estate, and his own credit and good name; so ought we with like love to seek by all means the good and preservation of our neighbors, in every of these, and all other respects. The special and spiritual love, whereby a man loveth himself, causeth him chiefly to seek the enriching of his soul with all sanctifying grace, and to further by all means his everlasting salvation; and with such love also we must love our neighbors; doing them all the good we can, both in respect of their bodies and states, but principally in seeking their spiritual good, and the eternal salvation of their bodies and souls.

Sect. 10 - That we must love our neighbors, as Christ hath loved us.

But because our love of ourselves, by reason of our natural corruption, is, whilst we continue in this life, weak and imperfect, and therefore no fit rule for our love towards our neighbors, to be squared by; therefore our Savior hath propounded unto us, a much more perfect pattern for our imitation, even that most admirable and divine love wherewith he hath loved us: This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. As therefore Christ hath loved us first, before we loved him, or any ways deserved his love, and hereby moved us to love him again; so ought we to prevent one another with our love, and thereby provoke them to return unto us the like duty. Secondly, as Christ loved all his elect, freely without any respect of merit, yea when we were strangers, sinners and enemies, not because of any goodness in us, but that by his Love he might bring us to good; so ought our love to be free, and not mercenary, so far forth as it may redound to our own profit; but we must love strangers, that thereby we may make them our familiar acquaintance; Our enemies, that we may make them our friends, and even those that are now evil and sinners, that we may bring them to grace and goodness. Thirdly, as Christ loved all the elect, without respect of persons, both old and young, rich and poor, base and noble, wise and simple; so ought we to love all sorts and conditions of men, in whom we find already, or may hope to find hereafter, the signs and marks of God's election. Fourthly, as Christ loved us perfectly, in respect of the manner, with a sincere and ardent love, and not in tongue and profession only, but in deed and truth; so as no waters of affliction, nor death itself could drown or damp; so ought we strive to love one another, and to be ready according to his example, when just occasion is offered, to seal and approve our love towards them, even with the shedding of our blood. Fifthly, as Christ loved us, who were in him elected of his Father, in a special and peculiar manner above all others, and out of this love hath given himself for us; according to that of the Apostle, Who hath loved me, and given himself for me: so ought we to love all with a general and common love, but God's elect with a peculiar and special love above

the rest, and be ready, as the Apostle speaketh, to do good unto all, but especially unto those who are of the household of faith. Lastly, as Christ loveth us with a constant love, and to the end, and will not reject us for our frailties and infirmities, because in his love he respecteth not his own profit, but our salvation: So ought our love to be constant towards our neighbors, and not to languish and faint upon slight occasions, respecting herein not our own profit, but their benefit, and above all, the everlasting salvation of their bodies and souls.

CHAPTER X.

Of the reasons which may move us to embrace charity.

Sect. 1 - Of the excellency of charity.

And thus have I showed what is that charity both towards ourselves and our neighbors, which is required in the second Table: In the next place I will set down some reasons which may move us to embrace it, all which will reduce unto these their heads, the excellency, utility, and necessity of it. The excellency of this charity herein appeareth, in that our Savior Christ maketh it the sum of all other duties and virtues required in the second Table; so that if we have charity, we have all moral virtues; if that be wanting, we are destitute of them all. Yea, the Apostles, not without the direction of his holy Spirit, do seem to go further, making this charity the epitome and sum of the whole Law; He that loveth another (saith Paul) hath fulfilled the Law. If ye fulfill the royal Law (saith James) according to the Scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. Where either by a Synecdoche of the whole for the part, we are, as some do, to understand the second Table only, or because true obedience to it,

doth necessarily infer our obedience to the first, in that it is an inseparable fruit and undoubted sign of it, it may not unfitly comprehend our total obedience to the whole Law. Secondly, in that the Apostle preferreth it before those chief and fundamental virtues, Faith and Hope, and that both, because if we consider them merely in themselves, it is of a more excellent nature, and also in respect of the extent, both of latitude and time; for whereas they respect ourselves only and our own salvation, this extendeth to the good and salvation of many others: and whereas they continue only for this life, charity attaineth to its greatest perfection in the life to come, and shall ever remain as a principal part of our everlasting joys. And thus also the Apostle Peter commendeth charity unto us above all other duties; Above all things (saith he) have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Finally, the Apostle showeth the excellency of charity, whereas he exhorteth us above all things to put on Charity, as being the bond of perfectness, or the most perfect bond, seeing we are thereby united unto Christ our Head, and as fellow-members one with another. For howsoever we are thus united first and principally by the Spirit of God and a lively faith, yet this bond of union is perfected and made more firm and strong, by this grace of charity, which transforming and changing us into the very nature of the things beloved, doth cause us to become one with them, and so inseparably united, that nothing in the world, no not death itself, is of sufficient force to pull us asunder.

Sect. 2 - Of the profit of charity, in respect of our neighbors.

Secondly, charity is to be embraced of us as the most profitable virtue, both to others and ourselves. To others, because it maketh us willing and ready to perform all Christian duties of holiness and righteousness, which we desire of others to be done unto us; for it suffereth with all patience and longsuffering all wrongs and injuries, and seeketh to gain them who are thus injurious, by all duties of love. It is so kind, that being provoked, it seeketh not revenge, but

laboreth to overcome evil with goodness. It envieth not the prosperity of those that are above us, but causeth us to rejoice with them in all their happiness. It is not puffed up with pride, nor vaunteth itself above those who are inferior unto us, either in virtues, or in those rewards, with which God in this life crowneth them. It doth not behave itself unseemly, but observeth a just decorum, and a modest and sober course in all conditions. It seeketh not her own, but jointly advanceth our neighbors good, in many things departing from her own right, when greater benefit may redound to others; it is not easily provoked to unjust anger, but beareth with many faults for their better reformation, in consideration of human frailty and infirmity. It thinketh no evil, nor intendeth hurt unto any, neither is it suspicious to take anything in the worst part, which may admit of a more favorable interpretation. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, nor sporteth itself in other men's falls and infirmities, but rather in the sense of human frailty; it lamenteth their sins, and desireth their repentance and reformation, that they may be saved. And contrariwise it rejoiceth, when as they approve their profession of truth in their practice of righteousness. It beareth all things with meekness and patience, and revengeth not injuries, but leaveth vengeance to God, unto whom it belongeth. It believeth all things credible, and easily admitteth all just apologies and excuses, which tend to the manifesting of innocence in others, or at least, less faultiness. It hopeth all things, and when there is no appearance of good in our righteousness, expecteth their reformation and amendment, and despaireth not of their future repentance. Finally, it endureth all things, and covereth a multitude of evils, and is not wearied in well-doing, but continueth constant in doing and suffering all things which may any ways tend to the good of our neighbors.

Sect. 3 - Of the profit of charity in respect of ourselves.

And as it is profitable to all others; so most of all unto ourselves. For it replenisheth our hearts with all sound joy and true comfort, as it is an infallible sign of all good in us, and belonging unto us, of all grace in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come. For hereby we are assured that God loveth us, and hath sent his holy Spirit to dwell in us: If we love one another (saith the Apostle) God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfect in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. It is an undoubted sign, which assureth us of our regeneration and new-birth. Let us love one another: for love is of God: and everyone that loveth, is born of God. Of our illumination by the Spirit, and of saving knowledge: for every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God, as it followeth in the same place. And again; He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. It assureth us of faith; for faith worketh by love, as the Apostle speaketh; and that by it we are truly justified before God: for if we be so charitable, as to forgive men their trespasses, then hath the Lord promised that he will forgive us our trespasses. So also it is an infallible note of our adoption; for in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother; and assureth us that we are the true Disciples of Jesus Christ, if in this we follow his example, and do his will. For this is his Commandment, that we love one another, as he hath loved us. And by this shall all men know that we are his Disciples, if we have love one to another. It is an undoubted sign of all other graces dwelling in us, and principally of our love of God; for everyone who loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. And if any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And of the truth of our Religion; for if we love not only in word and tongue, but in deed and truth, we may hereby know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before God. It expelleth all servile fear, and bringeth peace of conscience; for there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. Yea it is a notable means also of outward peace with men, whilst it beareth with

infirmities, passeth by offenses, and covereth a multitude of sins. Finally, it assureth us of everlasting happiness: for we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.

Sect. 4 - Of the necessity of charity.

Lastly, the necessity of charity may move us to embrace it. For without charity human society cannot subsist and stand, seeing it is the main bond whereby they are combined and knit together. Neither is it alone a chief motive to make men entertain mutual fellowship and intercourse one with another, but also a principal means to make them to continue with delight and comfort in this society. For charity covereth a multitude of sins, and causeth us to pass by many frailties and infirmities, and either not to see and take notice of them, or by extenuating and excusing them, to make them pardonable and easy to be digested. Whereas if charity be wanting, there will easily creep in jealousies, suspicions, sinister interpretations, injuries both offered and revenged, deadly hatred, and implacable contentions; for as the Wiseman saith, Hatred stirreth up strifes, from whence must needs follow divisions, and utter breaking up of all society. For if two cannot walk together, unless they be agreed, (as the Prophet speaketh) with what bond can innumerable multitudes be knit together, if charity be wanting, and instead thereof, heart-burnings and contentions be admitted? And as without charity there can be no communion between man and man, so neither between man and God, which principally consisteth in fruition, and fruition in love; seeing we cannot love God, unless we also love one another, as the Apostle telleth us. We cannot without it have any assurance that we belong to God, or that we are his children by adoption and grace; yea rather we may conclude that we are the children of the devil, seeing the Apostle John maketh the having or not having of charity, a prime mark of difference, whereby they may be discerned the one from the other. Again, all our other graces and gifts, though they make never so glorious a show, yet if charity be

wanting, are all of no value. If we could speak with the tongues of men and Angels, and have not charity, we should become as sounding brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. If we had the gift of Prophecy, and understood all mysteries and all knowledge; yea if we had all faith (namely, of working miracles) and could remove mountains, and had not charity, we were nothing. And though we could bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and could give our bodies to be burned, and had not charity, it would profit us nothing. Furthermore, where there is not charity, there faith also is wanting, or instead of it, a dead faith, which hath no operation, for faith worketh by love; and if we have a living faith, the Apostle James telleth us, that we may show it by our works: among which, the works of mercy and charity have a chief place: Whereas if these be wanting, our faith is (as he compareth it) like a body without breath, and no better than a stinking carcass in God's estimate. Finally, charity is most necessary, if ever we mean to attain to eternal salvation, or to escape hellish destruction; seeing the sentence of life or death shall at the day of Judgment be pronounced, according to the works of charity, either performed or neglected by us, as being the chief outward evidences, whereby our inward grace of faith, apprehending Christ unto salvation, may, to the justifying of God's righteous Judgments, be unto all demonstrated and declared.

CHAPTER XI.

Containing in it the duties which are required in the fifth
Commandment.

Sect. 1 - Of the general duties required in the fifth Commandment.

We have more largely entreated of charity, righteousness, and sobriety, as those general virtues and duties, which comprise in them the whole sum of the second Table, because we would more briefly touch the particular duties which under them are contained, referring the Reader unto such Catechisms and Common places of divinity as handle them more fully and perfectly, especially to those exact Tables upon the Commandments, lately published by the right reverend, and my most honored and dear brother, from whose full and living fountain, I have in a great part derived these streams: Not that I take any pleasure in doing that again, which was much better done before, but because this Treatise of a godly life should have been maimed, if I had not in some manner handled the main parts and principal duties required unto it; and I could add no more unto that exact abstract in so short a discourse, then light unto the Sun, by setting up a dim shining candle; nor alter the method and manner of it, unless I could have been content for varieties sake to have made it worse, and to go out of the right way, because I would not travail in the beaten path. The duties and virtues then required, and the vices and sins forbidden in the second Table, are either peculiar to superiors and inferiors in the fifth Commandment, or common to all in the five other. The duties and virtues required in the fifth Commandment, are, either common to all superiors and inferiors; or peculiar to the diverse sorts of them. The general duties belonging to all superiors, are first to approve themselves worthy of honor, both in respect of their own virtues and good parts, and also in their carriage towards their inferiors; and as they desire the honor of parents, so to perform the duties which belong unto them. Secondly, to behave themselves moderately, modestly, and gravely towards their inferiors, and not with proud insolency and vain lightness. Thirdly, to go before them, according to knowledge, and to shine unto them in a good example, and the light of a godly life. The duties common to all inferiors, are both inwardly to esteem reverently of them according to their place, acknowledging God's Image in them, and honoring those gifts of excellency which he hath bestowed upon them: and also outwardly to show reverence and respect of them both, in all signs of honor; as rising up to them, putting off the hat,

bowing the knee, going to meet them, giving them precedence both in place and speech, and using unto them words of reverence and due respect; and also by our approving of the inward reverence of our hearts, and the outward reverence showed in these signs and complements, in truth and substance by all our actions, when we have any occasion of performing this real reverence.

Sect. 2 - Of the duties of superiors in excellency, and of inferiors towards them.

The special duties respect the diverse sorts of superiors and inferiors. For men are superior unto others, either in excellency only, or in authority also and government. In excellency, as first, those who are endued with better gifts, whether inward or outward; Inward, as the gifts of the mind, to wit, virtue, wisdom, learning, arts, and sciences; whose duty is, that acknowledging them as talents lent unto them by God, of which they must give an account; they be not puffed up in pride because they excel others, but rather be the more humble, in respect of that straight reckoning which shall be required of them; and also, that with all care and good conscience they employ these gifts principally to the glory of God that gave them, and in the next place, to the good of their neighbors, and furthering of their own salvation. The duties of inferiors, are first, to acknowledge their gifts, to the glory of God, and praising his bounty and goodness towards them. Secondly, to reverence and respect the party endued with them, and to seek to be profited by them, as our need requireth, and opportunity is offered. Superiors in outward gifts and place, are first the aged, whose duties are to be in all their carriage and behavior grave and sober, to counsel and instruct the younger out of their greater wisdom and experience, and to be examples and precedents unto them of all good duties. And the duties of the younger sort towards them, are to reverence them inwardly and outwardly as fathers; to imitate their good example, and acknowledging their wisdom and better experience, to make use of their counsel and

instructions for their information and direction. Secondly, superiors in birth and place, as nobility and gentry; whose duty is, that as they are Peers of the Realm and pillars of the Common-wealth, so they above others seek the good and flourishing estate of it, and be as pillars of Marble, firm and strong, to uphold it with their strength, like those pillars, Iachin and Boaz, which Solomon built, and not through luxury, prodigality, and all excess, wasting their estates, and retaining only their titles and honors, become like rotten posts, gilded and painted, which let the building fall when it leans upon them. Secondly, that they approve themselves truly noble and generous, by being like the nobles of Berea, more forward in receiving the Word, and embracing true Religion, than ordinary men. Thirdly, that being placed like stars in this earthly firmament, they do good to their inferiors, both by shining unto them in the light of a good and holy example, and by those vital influences of comfort, in the works of protection, mercy, and Christian charity, unto which, their greater means, high places and dignities do enable them; and not like wandering Planets, which keep nowhere any settled residence, and are so clouded with obscurity, that the poor know not where to find them when they most need them. The duty of inferiors towards them is, that they give unto them that honor and respect which is due unto their places; and not envy unto them their high dignities, knowing that promotion cometh neither from the East nor West, but from God only wise, who pulleth down one, and setteth up another, as it seemeth best to his godly wisdom. Thirdly, superiors in wealth and riches, whose duty is to use them as great and notable instruments of doing good, both publicly in the Church and Common-wealth, and privately to particular persons, as God offereth unto them occasion and opportunity; and not wastefully consume them on their own lusts, nor ungenerously hoard them up, doing no good with them, either to themselves or others. The duty of inferiors, and the poorer sort towards them, is, that as God hath advanced them above themselves in these temporal blessings, so in humility acknowledging their preferment, they give unto them that respect which their place and state requireth; and communicate unto them the benefit of their labors, as the other unto them the benefit of

wages and rewards. Secondly, that they reverence them, in respect of that ability with which God hath enabled them, to do good publicly to Church and Commonwealth; and privately unto themselves and others. Lastly, among superiors in excellency, we are to number benefactors, whose duty is to give their benefits cheerfully, without grudging and quarrelsome wrangling, which displeaseth more than the gift contenteth. Secondly, to give freely, and not with sordid respect of greater advantage. Thirdly, speedily, whilst there is power in their hands, and not after many delays. Fourthly, discreetly making choice, either in respect of the parties worth, or at least, present necessity, and not rashly and carelessly, which is rather through neglect of the gift, then for love of the party upon whom it is bestowed. Lastly, having bestowed benefits, they must not boast of them to others, nor insult over the party to whom they have done good, which were but to make their benefit as a golden chain to bind them to slavery, nor finally to upbraid them with what they have done upon every slight occasion, which is no more pleasant to the party who hath fed of their favors, then the distasteful upbraiding's which follow a surfeit. The duties of inferiors towards their benefactors, are first, inward and hearty thankfulness, whereby they acknowledge them as God's instruments in doing them good, and accordingly love and respect them according to their desert. Secondly, they are not to vilify the benefit, but highly to esteem it, either for its worth, or their necessity and use of it, or the mind and good will of the giver. And outwardly also they are to testify their thankfulness, both by word in thanksgiving, praising their benefactor as opportunity is offered, and magnifying the greatness of the benefit received; and also in deed, both by being always ready to make requital when God shall give ability; and by supplying what is wanting in their power, by their fervent prayers for them unto God, who is all-sufficient to recompense and reward their bounty towards them.

Sect. 3 - The duties of superiors in authority in general, and of inferiors towards them.

Superiors in authority are such, as have not only a place of excellency above us, but also of power and jurisdiction as our governors. Whose duty in general is to use all good discipline, both in respect of rule and government, and also due correction and punishment. They ought to govern them in the Lord as his deputies and in his stead, and therefore to do the acts of justice, as if God himself were present, or did but use their bodies, tongues and parts to perform his own will. In which respect their chief care must be, as to do Justice themselves, and administer righteous judgment; so to contain their inferiors in the duties of piety and justice, therein seeking not themselves or their own gain, by corruption, bribery, extortion, or any kind of wrong and oppression, but the glory of God chiefly, and next unto it, the good of their societies, and of every particular person under their government. In respect of correction and punishment, their duty is, to administer Justice, according to the quality of their inferiors offense, wherein they are to use discretion, rightly judging both of the cause and the disposition of the offender, and correcting lighter faults and infirmities, with rebukes and threatening's, and greater faults committed willfully, with real punishments, proceeding herein with wisdom, judgment, love and patience, seeking either the amendment of the parties if they be corrigible, or of the societies in which they live, by taking away sin and evil, averting God's more fearful and general judgments, and causing others to fear, and so to avoid the like sins; and not out of passion, choler, and hatred of their persons. And secondly, they must use herein equity and moderation, so mixing and tempering justice with mercy, as that they be in inflicting these corrections and punishments, neither indulgent and remiss, nor over-severe and cruel. The duties of inferiors towards them, are to reverence and stand in awe of them, as standing in God's place, and executing his judgments, and not to contemn them or their government; to obey them in all things lawful, and to submit themselves unto their corrections, without resistance or murmuring; and to testify their

love and thankfulness towards them, by their cheerful service, and by communicating their goods unto them, as their own ability, and their necessity shall require.

Sect. 4 - The duties of superiors and inferiors in the family: And first, of man and wife towards one another.

The special duties of superiors in government and their inferiors, are to be distinguished according to their several sorts. For Governors are either private in families, or public in the Church and Commonwealth. In families, as the husband, who is superior in government over his wife, parents over their children, and Masters and Mistresses over their servants. The duties of man and wife are either common to both, or special belonging to either party. Common duties are first, conjugal love, whereby being one flesh, they love one another above all others, both in respect of their souls and bodies, temporal and spiritual good, and all that belong to either party, as kindred and friends. Secondly, communion and communication, first, of their bodies by mutual benevolence performed by one to the other; and conjugal fidelity, whereby either of them keep themselves proper to the other, and preserve the marriage bond inviolable; and finally, as a means of both the other, there is required cohabitation and dwelling together, unless it be for a time, and upon necessary occasion. Secondly, communion of their goods, labors, endeavors and mutual help for the good and comfort of one another. The peculiar duties of the husband are, to behave himself as an head to the body; to carry himself in his place according to knowledge, governing, guiding and instructing his wife in all good duties; to protect her to the uttermost of his power against all evil and injury; to bear with her infirmities, and to cover her weaknesses and frailties; to cherish her as the more tender part of himself; to provide for her, according to his ability, all things needful and comfortable; admitting her to the joint fruition of all their goods, and finally, to rule her with a sweet and amiable government, so as

not only her body, but also her will and heart may be subject unto him. The duties peculiar to the wife, are, to acknowledge her husband to be her head and governor, and accordingly, in her heart to reverence and respect him, in her words to be dutiful, humble and pleasing, and in all her actions and behavior, to be meek, submissive and obedient, as unto her Lord and head. To be amiable and gracious, endeavoring in all lawful things to please him, and not to usurp dominion over him, or to vex him, by being of an unquiet and provoking spirit. To cherish her husband as the better part of herself; and to minister unto him all things necessary and comfortable; to keep his secrets, and preserve his honor; to manage well, as becometh a good housewife, all things committed to her charge, for the good of her husband and the whole family, and to be a fit helper, and no less loving then careful, assistant for the good of his body and soul, and for the well managing of their estate, and the wise government of the whole family.

Sect. 5 - The duties of husband and wife towards the rest of the family.

And these are the mutual duties of man and wife between themselves. Besides which, there are diverse duties by them to be performed, as they are governors over the family; and those are either common to all the household, or else special, as they are parents over their children, or masters and mistresses over their servants. The common duties are, First, to rule them in the Lord, keeping them in godly obedience: and Secondly, to provide for them. They are to be ruled both by instruction and discipline. By instruction, as by doctrine and example. By doctrine, respecting private catechizing, reading of the Scriptures, and religious writings, and the public ministry, by causing them not only to frequent it, but also by teaching them to use it aright, both by preparation before they go to hear, and examination afterwards. So likewise they must be no less careful to teach them by example, both in their holy

profession of Religion, and conscionable practice of all Christian duties; knowing that examples especially of governors, are no less powerful then precepts, either to draw them to good, and withdraw them from evil, or contrariwise: unto which instruction, discipline must be adjoined, both by rewarding those that deserve well, and correcting them that offend, either in words only, as by reproofs and threatening's; or in deeds also, by blows and stripes, to be inflicted in wisdom, love and moderation. Finally, as it is their duty to rule them; so also to provide for them all necessaries, as food, raiment, wages, rest and recreation.

Sect. 6 - The duties of parents and children.

The special duties of parents towards their children, are, that they love them with parent-like affection, and take singular care of them; and both these, first, in regard of their natural life, in which respect there is required, 1. that they nourish and bring them up: 2. that they fit them for some honest calling according to their own ability, and the disposition and gifts of their children: 3. that they govern and direct them in matters of moment, and chiefly in contracting marriage: and lastly, that they provide and lay up for them, as God shall give honest and lawful means, not wronging others, nor defrauding themselves of things necessary and comfortable. In respect of their spiritual life, their duty is, as they bring them into the covenant of grace, made not only to them, but also to their seed, so to procure for them the Sacrament of the covenant. Secondly, that they bring them up in the fear of the Lord, both by instruction, example and discipline. Lastly, that they pray for them, and give them their daily blessing. The duties of children towards their parents, are first, to be answerable to them in love. Secondly, to reverence them highly, though their state be never so mean, in and for the Lord. Thirdly, to stand in awe of them, and to have respect to their very words and countenance. Fourthly, to obey them in all things lawful and in the Lord. Fifthly, to show themselves thankful to their parents, by

helping them, if need require, with their goods or service. Sixthly, to hearken to their parents instructions, counsels, admonitions and rebukes, and to bear with meekness and love their chastisements and corrections. Seventhly, to be contented and willing to be ruled by their parents in matters of importance, as marriage. Eighthly, to preserve their parents goods, good name, and all that belongs unto them. And finally, to love and respect those who are near and dear to their parents, for their sakes.

Sect. 7 - The duties of masters and servants.

The duties of masters and mistresses towards their servants, are, first, equity and moderation, both in their commandments, which ought to be lawful, possible to them, profitable, proportionable to their abilities, and on the Sabbath necessary; and also in their government, which ought to be mixed with love, and sustaining the place of parents, to use them as children, as brethren in Christ, and children of the same Father, and as fellow-servants of the same heavenly Lord and Master. Secondly, they must use towards them bounty, and liberally reward their well deserving, both by suffering them to thrive with them whilst they are in their service, by preferring and rewarding them when they depart upon good terms and after a lawful manner; and by esteeming them after they are departed, as their friends. The duties of servants towards their governors are, First, that they love them; and out of this love, tender their credit and welfare, and bear all good affection to their children and friends. Secondly, that they reverence, honor and fear them. Thirdly, that they submit themselves to their commandments, and obey them in all things in the Lord; and also to their corrections and chastisements. Fourthly, that they be diligent and painful, not idle and slothful. Fifthly, faithful and true, doing their work not with eye-service, but as well when their governors are absent as present. Sixthly, that they be quiet and patient, being reprov'd, and not stubborn, giving one word for another. Seventhly, that they be secret,

and not discover their masters secrets. Eighthly, that they be thrifty, respecting in all things their masters profit, and not riotous and wasteful; And lastly, that they be ready to please them in all things lawful or indifferent.

Sect. 8 - The duties of Ministers and people.

And so much for the duties of superiors and inferiors in the family. Public governors and their inferiors, are such as are in the Church or Common wealth. In the Church, superiors governing, are the Ministers, and inferiors governed, are the people committed to their charge. For Ministers are the spiritual fathers of the people, being the ordinary means of begetting them, and of their regeneration and new birth, by the immortal seed of God's Word; and the people are their children, begotten unto God by their Ministry. The which should move the Ministers to carry themselves towards their flock, as it becometh fathers, in all love, care, vigilancy, diligence, in providing for the good of them by all means, especially the spiritual good of their souls, as they desire to have the honor, reverence, and respect, which is due to fathers; and the people to perform all duties of children towards their Ministers, loving, reverencing, and obeying them in all things appertaining to the good of their souls, as they desire that they should receive from them the privileges of children, and the benefit of their Ministry, for their regeneration and new birth. The special duties of Ministers respect either their Ministry, or their life and conversation, in both which, they are to go before the people, both in doctrine and holy example. In regard of his Ministry, he is to preach the Word of God truly, sincerely, diligently, and powerfully, in season and out of season, respecting herein the performance of his own duty to the glory of God, and the furtherance of his own salvation, and the good of the people committed to his charge. In his life he ought to be an example unto his flock. Unto which is required generally, that his life be blameless, and more specially, that it be in respect of God, holy and religious, in respect of

his neighbors, just, charitable, meek, courteous, and liberal; and in respect of himself, sober, temperate, chaste, and modest. The special duties of the people towards their Ministers, are first, that they love them dearly. Secondly, that they have them in high reverence and esteem for their works sake. Thirdly, that they submit themselves to their Ministry, and obey them. Fourthly, that they allow them liberal maintenance.

Sect. 9 - The duties of Magistrates and subjects.

In the Common-wealth political duties to be performed, are either common to all the members of this body, which is, that they love their country, and prefer in their judgments, desires and endeavors the good of it, before the good of all others, or of themselves; or the special duties of superiors and inferiors, as the supreme Sovereign and Magistrates, or subjects and people. The general duty of the former is, that as they desire the honor of parents, so to carry themselves in all things as fathers of their country and subjects. The special duty of Sovereign Princes, is the good, lawful, and commendable exercise of his sovereign power, especially in making good Laws, and seeing them duly executed; in creating and making good Magistrates of State, and containing them in their duty; in showing mercy unto those whom they may lawfully pardon, being obnoxious to the rigor of the Law, and Justice towards those, who by the Laws of God and the Common-wealth ought to die. In hearing of causes of great importance, which respect the good of the Common-wealth, and of particular persons, especially of high and last appeals; in waging wars, and concluding peace, so as they may be just, profitable, and safe for their Country. In all which, he is to aim chiefly at God's glory, and the good of the Church and Common-wealth. Which duties that he may perform, he must be qualified and furnished with many excellent virtues; as piety, religion, and the true fear of God; Justice, clemency, bounty and liberality, wisdom and learning, fortitude and courage, temperance and sobriety, chastity,

modesty, and humility. The special duty of Magistrates is, that in executing of their office, they conscionably labor to advance the glory of God, the honor of their Sovereign, and the good of the whole Common-wealth, and of all the particular members of it. Unto which these virtues are required in them, that they be men of k courage, fearing God, lovers of justice, haters of wrong and all evil, faithful and true, free from covetousness, and haters of bribes and rewards, wise and prudent, just and impartial, having in judgment no respect of any man's person. The special duties of subjects towards their Sovereign, are first, a singular love of them, approved by their special care of their safety, by their high esteem of them, and frequent and fervent prayers for them. Secondly, to honor and reverence them as the supreme governors under Christ, over all persons, and in all causes. Thirdly, to be obedient and subject unto them in all things lawful, and that in the Lord, and for conscience sake. Fourthly, to be serviceable and helpful unto them, both with their bodies and states. The special duties of the people towards their Magistrates are, to love and reverence them as God's deputies, to submit themselves to their lawful Commandments and punishments, and finally to be thankful unto them, and ready with all cheerfulness to allow unto them such stipends and fees, as are due for their maintenance.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the duties required in the sixth Commandment.

Sect. 1 - Of the sum of this Commandment: And of anger and hatred.

In the four following Commandments are all those common virtues and duties required, which concern all our neighbors in general, and all the contrary vices and sins forbidden; all which concern either

their person and life, or the adjuncts belonging to them, as their chastity, goods and fame. Those virtues and vices which respect the person and life, are enjoined or forbidden in the sixth Commandment, in these words, Thou shalt not kill; which hath precedency before the other, because the person and life are of greater worth and excellency then the adjuncts that appertain unto them. The sum whereof is this, that we in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, embrace all virtues, and perform all duties which tend to the good of the person, and preservation of the life, both of our neighbors and ourselves, and flee the contrary vices and sins, whether they be inward or outward. And these are either the roots and fountains from whence the rest do spring and flow; as anger and hatred; or the fruits and streams which arise and issue from them. The first duty commanded, is just anger against the sins of our neighbors and ourselves; unto which is required, that it arise from just causes, and be directed to good ends, that it be in a lawful manner and measure, and continue a fit and convenient time. And hereunto are required as the means of it, patience, longsuffering, and mildness, goodness, slowness to anger, and readiness to forgive. The contrary vice whereof is here forbidden, of which I will not here speak, having written largely of it in another place. The second virtue commanded, is an holy hatred of our own and our neighbors sins, which is always joined with the love of the persons. Now the fruits of holy and just anger and hatred, are to pass by an offense, freely to forgive wrongs and injuries, and even to forget them; and to requite good for evil to those who have wronged us, by helping and praying for them; and finally, to use all humanity and courtesy towards all men, acquaintance and strangers.

Sect. 2 - Of the inward duties and virtues here required

Other more special fruits may be distinguished, according to the difference of persons towards whom they are referred. As first, if our neighbors are in prosperity, we are not to envy them if they be our

superiors, nor to emulate them being our equals, nor to disdain them being our inferiors; but contrariwise, wish unto them all good things which we have, or they want, and congratulate their well-fare, and communicate with them in our rejoicing at their happiness. If they be in adversity, we are not to contemn, or to be hard-hearted towards them, much less to rejoice at their evils and miseries, but to take pity and compassion on them, and according to our ability, to show mercy unto them. Unto these virtues and duties we may add Christian friendship in the Lord, which ought to be sincere and constant Christian charity, whereby we love our enemies for the Lord's sake, placableness and desire of reconciliation, abstaining from all enmity, open hostility, and secret grudge; a desire and forwardness to preserve friendship between others, and to restore it being dissolved, by making peace and amity. Toward those which are under our power, we must abstain from all cruelty, backed either with our authority or might, and use all clemency towards them, as much as will stand with their good; and contrariwise, from indulgence and fond cockering, not bearing with their sins, for foolish love to the parties, but using due and necessary severity, when vices can no otherwise be reformed and amended. Unto those who dwell in the same society, we are to use concord and peaceableness, to which purpose we must resist the beginnings of contention, take away the occasions, and sometimes depart from our own right, to preserve or redeem peace. And towards strangers, our duty is to use good hospitality, especially to the poor and harborless. Finally, as we are to preserve our neighbors person and life, by performing all these inward duties unto them, so are we to show the outward signs of them in our countenance, eyes, gesture, and voice, which must be so mild, sweet, and gracious, that they promise to the beholders and hearers nothing but humanity, brotherly love, and good will.

Sect. 3 - Of outward duties here required, respecting the person of our neighbors.

The outward duties, tending to the preservation of our neighbors person and life, respect our words or deeds. In respect of the former, there is required, that we have a peaceable tongue, which speaketh all good and no evil, to and of our neighbors. Unto them, we must use loving and courteous speeches, and abstain from all brawling and scolding, railing and reviling, scoffing and scorning, unchristian menacing's towards inferiors, and murmuring towards superiors; and cursing's and imprecations towards any man. And of them, we must not behind their backs use tale-bearing, and slandering, nor lend our ears to those who offer these wrongs unto them. In respect of our deeds, all our works and actions must tend to the preservation and defense of our neighbors life and person, but especially of his immortal soul, which ought, as it is most precious in itself, so to be most dear unto us. In which regard, we must omit no duty which may defend and preserve the life and person of our neighbors, when we can and may lawfully perform it. We must not by our negligence leave anything undone, nor by our willfulness do anything whereby they may be endangered. Neither must we commit any act which tendeth to his hurt and hazard. But we must have peaceable hands, and not in time of peace, quarrel and fight; and innocent hands, free and clean from blood, neither hurting and wounding the body of our neighbors, nor killing and taking away his life; but contrariwise we must be beneficent, and in all our actions do them all good; using humanity and mercy to all, and brotherly love and kindness towards those who are of the household of faith.

Sect. 4 - Of the duties which we owe to our neighbors soul.

The duties which tend to the preservation of the life of our neighbors soul, are either natural or spiritual. In the former respect we ought to preserve their lives, in cheering and comforting them by our sweet and Christian conversation; and not unjustly offer unto them any occasion whereby they may be vexed and grieved. In respect of the latter, we are not to hinder by any means the salvation of others, nor

to be any ways an offense unto them, neglecting their salvation, as though it were a thing not belonging to us; but contrariwise, use all good means whereby they may be won to Christ, edified in their most holy faith, and furthered in the way of holiness and righteousness, which will bring them to everlasting happiness. To which end, we must not commit any act whereby we may be scandalous unto another, and a cause of his sin, either by provocation, evil counsel, or bad example; but contrariwise perform cheerfully all duties belonging to the communion of Saints in spiritual things, as mutual observation one of another, instructing the ignorant, confuting, convincing and reclaiming him that erreth, that he may be sound in the faith, admonishing and exhorting the negligent and backward, reproving those that offend, comforting the comfortless; and shining before all in the light of a good life and holy example.

Sect. 5 - Of duties belonging to our own persons.

Besides which duties which we owe to our neighbors, there are diverse others required in this Commandment, which are to be performed to ourselves, for the good, preservation, and defense of our persons and lives, and especially for the salvation of our souls. In respect of our bodies and lives here is required, that we use all good and lawful means whereby our health may be preserved, as temperance and sobriety in diet, moderate sleep and labor, honest and moderate recreations of body and mind, cheerfulness and honest joy, rejoicing in the fruition of God's blessings; or if it be lost and impaired, whereby we may recover it, as good diet, physic, &c. Secondly, that we by all good and lawful means preserve our safety, by avoiding unnecessary dangers, or recover ourselves out of them, if we be fallen into them; by repelling gross injuries, and avoiding causeless quarrels, and all other means, whereby our lives are needlessly hazarded. But above all, here is required, that we earnestly endeavor in the use of all good means which may further the salvation of our souls, and avoid the contrary whereby it may be

hindered. The which must not be delayed, nor posted off from time to time, as it is the practice of those, who from day today defer their repentance; but we must first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, both in order and time, giving it the precedency; and also in degree, more earnestly in our judgments esteeming, in our affections embracing, and in our practice seeking and laboring after the means of our salvation, especially our effectual calling and conversion, our justification by a lively faith, and sanctification unto holiness of life, then in anything in the world besides; yea contemning and rejecting all earthly pleasures, profits, and preferments, as vain and unprofitable in comparison of them. And with the like care and endeavor, we must avoid all means whereby our salvation may be hindered, especially sin, which is the bane of the soul, and not give way to the committing of it wittingly and willingly, though for hire, the whole world were offered unto us, the gain whereof, will in no sort recompense the loss of our souls, as our Savior telleth us. Or if we be overtaken with it, and by the law of our members, warring against the law of our minds, be led captive unto sin: our next care must be, not to lie in it, no not for an hour, but to rise out of it speedily by unfeigned repentance, and by humble confession and earnest suite for pardon and remission, seek reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the duties required in the seventh Commandment.

Sect. 1 - The sum of the seventh Commandment: The duties which it enjoineth, and vices which it forbiddeth.

The three following Commandments respect the adjuncts of our neighbors persons: for after that God had provided for the life and person of our neighbor and ourselves (which is the chief and principal) in the former Commandment he descendeth down lower, to make provision for the good, and preservation of all that belong both unto them and us. And these are either internal or external: internal, as the chastity and purity of our own, and our neighbors persons, in the seventh Commandment: external, as the preservation of propriety in goods in the eighth, and our own and neighbors good name in the ninth. Next unto the Commandment that respecteth life, the seventh Commandment which provideth for the chastity and purity of the person, hath place, as coming nearest unto life in worth and excellency, and to be preferred before all outward things, either goods or good name. For if the persons of men be unchaste, and defiled with unclean lusts, then must also marriage, which is the fountain of life and generation, be defiled; and from such a fountain what can spring, but an unclean and filthy life, which is not to be preferred before death itself? And therefore next unto the preservation of our lives, our chiefest care must be to preserve our chastity and purity, which is the very life of our life, and without which, it would bring no true joy or comfort unto us. The which, the Lord requireth of us in the seventh Commandment, in these words; Thou shalt not commit adultery. In which words, the Lord forbiddeth all unclean lusts, with all the means and signs of them, and also that we should be accessory unto the uncleanness of others; and contrariwise commandeth the preservation of our chastity and purity, with the means and signs of it, and also, that as much as in us lieth, we provide for the chastity of our neighbors. Now this chastity is either inward in the soul and heart, or outward in the body. First then, we must preserve the inward chastity of the soul, from all motions and passions of unclean lusts, and unlawful concupiscence of the flesh, which is the adultery of the heart, that our Savior condemneth, and that concupiscence of the flesh, and evil concupiscence, which the Apostles forbid. Neither is all concupiscence evil and to be condemned; for that is lawful, whereby we desire the propagation of mankind by natural generation, being

God's ordinance, and enjoined in the state of innocence; if it be neither immoderate, immodest, nor unseasonable. Secondly, we must preserve our outward chastity, and possess our vessels in holiness and honor. Unto which is required the chastity of our eyes, containing them from beholding wanton and unclean objects; of our ears, stopping them against all rotten, corrupt, and filthy communication; of our tongues, restraining them from all beastly and bawdy speaking; and of our actions, abstaining from all acts of uncleanness, wanton and unchaste pleasures. And thus we are to preserve our chastity, either in single life, which is the gift of continency and pure abstinence, both from unclean lusts, and also from marriage; or in wedlock, unto which is required conjugal fidelity, the moderate, modest, and seasonable use of the marriage bed; and pure abstinence, upon necessary and just occasions, as in time of absence, and of the woman's separation, or that upon fit occasions we may wholly give ourselves to fasting and prayer.

Sect. 2 - The means of preserving chastity.

But whosoever would thus preserve their chastity, they must be no less careful to use all good means of it, and to shun the contrary means and occasions. As first, they must beg it of God by prayer, seeing it is his gift alone. Secondly, they must have no society and familiarity with the unchaste and filthy, wanton and effeminate, drunken and gluttonous persons; but keep company with those who are sober and chaste, modest and temperate. Thirdly, they must use the preservatives of chastity, as sobriety, which consisteth, as it is here considered, in moderating the delights of the taste, in the temperate use of diet, and abstinence from gluttony and drunkenness, or the excessive drinking of wine and strong drinks; and also of the sight, in abstaining from unchaste and immodest objects, as beautiful and wanton persons, obscene pictures, unchaste and wanton Interludes, Plays, and Books. Secondly, diligence and painfulness in our callings and honest labors, not giving way to

idleness and sloth; vigilancy and abstinence from immoderate sleep; and finally, modesty in our eyes and countenance, in our speeches and communication, in our gesture and gate, and in our habit and attire. Which means if we find insufficient for the preserving of our souls and bodies in purity and chastity; then are we called of God, to use the lawful remedy, which is the holy and honest estate of marriage, that we may live chastely in wedlock, when we cannot do it in single life.

Sect. 3 - Of the duties which are required in the right getting of our goods.

The eighth Commandment, expressed in these words, Thou shalt not steal, enjoineth us to preserve and increase by all good means, as much as in us lieth, our own and neighbors good, respecting goods and possessions; and not only forbiddeth all those vices and sins whereby they are any way hindered or impaired, but also requireth all virtues and good duties, whereby they are preserved and advanced. And these duties are either more general or special. The general duties stand in these degrees. First, that we be not hurtful to our neighbors, in hindering or impairing their estate, by doing them any wrong or injury; or if we have, that we make them satisfaction and amends. Secondly, that we preserve, as much as in us lieth, our own and neighbors goods from all waste and damage. Thirdly, that we be beneficial and helpful to all, as far as we are able, and their necessity requireth, and employ our goods as we ought, to our own and others good. The special duties respect either the just and honest possession of our goods, unto which is required that we both get and keep them in a good manner, and by just and lawful means; or the lawful and laudable use of those goods, which we have thus lawfully gotten. Unto the just getting of our goods, four virtues are required. First, that we do not immoderately love money, which is the root of all evil, nor set our hearts upon riches and the earthly Mammon. Secondly, contentedness with that condition, which God in his wise,

just and Fatherly providence hath allotted unto us; for discontent disposeth men to covet and seek more than is needful, though it be by unlawful means; to which vice they make themselves subject, who have not learned to live within their compass. Thirdly, a moderate desire of such things as are necessary and convenient, both for our own maintenance according to the necessity of nature, person and state; and also for the relief and benefit of others, and that both for private persons, and public service of Church and Common-wealth. The which desire ought on the one side to be free from a Frier-like affection of poverty, and on the other side, from covetousness and ambition, whereby men setting their hearts immoderately upon earthly profits and preferments, do resolve that they will compass them by what means soever, good or bad; and make all possible haste to achieve their ends; having, after they have much, an insatiable desire of obtaining more. Lastly, a moderate, provident and wise care to provide those things which are convenient and necessary for us and those that belong to us, by honest and lawful means; so that we be neither carelessly improvident, nor vex and turmoil ourselves with an immoderate, diffident and carking care. And these are the things which are required inwardly in our own hearts and affections unto just getting of our goods. Now goods are thus gotten either without contract, and that either by ourselves, or received from others. By ourselves either accidentally, as by finding things lost, the owners being unknown, though diligently inquired after, or ordinarily by our honest and painful labor in a lawful calling. Or else they are gotten in lawful contracts, the general rule whereof is this, that in all our dealings, borrowing and lending, buying and selling, letting, setting, taking and hiring, &c. we behave ourselves uprightly without dissimulation or guile, as in the sight of God, observing in our words, truth; in our promises, faithfulness; in our deeds; justice; and in all things keeping a good conscience towards God and men, not dealing deceitfully with any, nor using any fraud for the getting of our goods, either in respect of matter or manner, quantity or quality, or any other unjust means whatsoever. Or if we have failed in any of these, and gotten any goods by fraud and deceit, we must repute it no better than theft, and therefore hold ourselves

bound to make restitution unto those whom we have wronged; or in case they cannot be found or known, unto the poor or Church, or good uses; without which we can never approve our repentance for these sins to be found and sincere, so as it will be accepted of God, and bring comfort unto our own souls.

Sect. 4 - Of the duties which respect the right use of our goods.

And these are the duties which we ought to perform, in respect of the lawful getting and possessing of our goods; the duties which concern the right use of them, respect either ourselves, which is the lawful and comfortable fruition of them; or others, which consists in the free and wise communication of them. Concerning the former, having justly gotten goods into our possession, we are comfortably to enjoy them, as the good gifts and blessings of God; unto which, two virtues are required; First, that (shunning miserliness, which keepeth men not only from the communicating of their goods to others, but also from enjoining them for their own benefit, committing therein a double theft) we do embrace parsimony, which consisteth in the honest saving and sparing of our goods, that they be not idly and unprofitably wasted and spent. Secondly, that avoiding wastefulness, and misspending our wealth to uses either dishonest or above our means and ability; we do embrace frugality, which consisteth in the discreet, sober and moderate spending of our goods, according to our calling and ability, to profitable, charitable and needful uses, in which this rule is to be observed, that our expenses in some reasonable good proportion, be less than our comings in. To the free communication of our goods to the benefit of others, two other virtues are required. First, that shunning covetousness and hardheartedness, which depriveth us of all pity and compassion towards those that are in want, we do embrace bounty and liberality, whereby we communicate our goods willingly and cheerfully unto those that need our help. And secondly, that avoiding prodigality and riotous wastefulness, we do embrace justice and

equity, giving only our own, without wronging others, and in such a discreet proportion and moderation, that we dry not up the fountain of our beneficence, so as we cannot be helpful to ourselves or others. Now this free communicating of our goods, is either for a time by lending, or forever by giving, either publicly to good uses, civil or ecclesiastical; or privately, as by bestowing benefits upon them who have well deserved, or by giving alms, and relieving the necessities of our poor brethren, of which I have entreated more fully in another place.

Sect. 5 - Of truth, which is required in the ninth Commandment.

The ninth Commandment is expressed in these words: Thou shalt not bear, or utter a false, or vain testimony against thy neighbor. Wherein is commanded, that we should think and speak concerning our neighbors, both that which is truth, and also that which is charitable, tendering his and our own credit and good name; and avoiding all speech which is false and uncharitable, especially such as tendeth to the reproach and defamation of ourselves and our neighbors. And consequently, here is commanded the preservation of truth amongst men, and of our own and neighbors fame and good name. Now this truth is an agreement and conformity of our speech with our mind, and of our mind, with the truth of the things themselves; the which in all our speech is religiously to be observed, and all falsehood in speech to be avoided, whether we speak that which is false, or the truth falsely, and with an intent to deceive, whether it be in jest, or in earnest, either to help our neighbor with an officious lie, or to hurt him with a pernicious lie. The manner how the truth is to be professed, is first, that we do it freely and charitably, simply and with discretion; avoiding in the excess, indiscreet and unseasonable profession of the truth, to the unnecessary hurt or danger of ourselves or others; and in the defect, the denying or betraying of the truth, out of fear or any sinister respect; as also a double and deceitful tongue. The means of this

truth are to be carefully used of us, which are, First, to know it; to which end we must be lovers of it, and docible and teachable in learning and conceiving of it, and not voluntarily affect ignorance, nor embrace untruth out of vain credulity. Secondly, we must preserve and maintain it, using to this end constancy and steadfastness in the truth, and shunning inconstancy and pertinancy in error. Thirdly, profitable speech tending to God's glory and our neighbors good, both spiritual, as tending to his edification, and temporal, serving for his honest delight and profit. Fourthly, that we use the means of entertaining profitable speech, as affability and pleasing communication, and the remedy against unprofitable speech, which is taciturnity and seasonable silence. And contrariwise, we are to avoid all speech which is either vain or hurtful, tending to God's dishonor and our neighbors hurt; as all rotten and infecting communication, scurrility, taunts and disgraces, counterfeit complements, morosity, vain babbling, and smothering of profitable truth by silence.

Sect. 6 - Of the preservation of our neighbors good name, and the means of it, respecting our inward disposition.

The means of preserving our own and our neighbors fame and name, is to have an inward disposition unto it, and a high esteem and great regard of it. And secondly, an outward professsion of the truth concerning our neighbor, joined with charity and discretion. The inward disposition is a true care of our own and our neighbors fame and credit, with the fruits of it, whereby we tender our own and their good name, out of true love and charity. The fruits of which care are referred either to the fame itself, as to rejoice in it, if it be good, and sorry, if it be bad; or else to our hearing, judging and reporting of our neighbor. In respect of hearing, we are not willingly to hear rumors and reports, tending to the infamy of our neighbors, but to repel talebearers; and contrariwise, with all readiness to hear their praises and commendations. In respect of judging, we are to be charitable;

and to show it by the fruits thereof, in not being suspicious, and in repressing the unjust suspicions of others; in not believing, or determining anything rashly against our neighbor; and in interpreting good things well, and doubtful things in the better part. In respect of reporting, we must report no ill of our neighbor, though it be true, unless it be in charity, when as it is either profitable for the party of whom we speak, that he may be reformed; or for the party to whom we speak, for the prevention of danger intended, or infection like to ensue by his company, or else necessary for ourselves, when as silence will make us guilty of his fault.

Sect. 7 - Other duties respecting our outward profession.

And these are the duties which respect our inward disposition: now of those which concern our outward profession; in which respect, our testimony of our neighbor, must be both true and charitable; and neither false simply, nor in show of words true, but false in sense; neither yet uncharitable and malicious; all which ought to be observed of us in all our testimonies, both public and private, being ready in all things, and at all times, to profess the truth concerning our neighbor, with charity, both in respect of his virtues, which (as just occasion is offered) we ought to acknowledge and commend, both in his presence and absence; and also his vices, which we are to tell him of before his face, and not suffer sin to rest upon him; and not to make mention of them behind his back, but upon necessity, as to those that may help to reform him, or to those who may be hurt or corrupted by his company or example, that they may, taking warning hereby, escape these dangers. And contrariwise we ought to avoid flattery, wherein we may offend in respect of the matter of our speech, as when we praise men for their vices; or the manner, in commending, either feignedly or above measure; or the end, either seeking our own profit like parasites, or the hurt of the party whom we flatter. And on the other side we must shun evil and cursed speaking, which any ways tendeth to the impairing of our neighbors

credit and good name. The which is used either in his presence, by reviling and contumelious speaking; by deriding and scorning him; or in his absence, by whispering or talebearing, slandering and backbiting.

Sect. 8 - Of the preserving our own good name.

The duties which every man is bound to perform unto himself, are, first, a care to procure and preserve his good name and credit, and secondly, that he give a true testimony of himself. Our care to procure and preserve our good name, consisteth in using the means whereby it is gotten; as glorifying God, seeking his kingdom and righteousness, walking uprightly, being such as we would seem to be, and in keeping a good conscience. And also in avoiding the means, both of vain-glory; as seeking to please men more than God; hypocrisy, seeking commendation by vanity and vices, loving of flatterers; usual censuring of others, attempting matters above our ability and gifts. And also of infamy, which either arise from ourselves, as all sins both open, with all appearances of them, and secret, which God to our shame will bring to light; or else from others, as all disgraceful lies, slanders, and opprobrious speeches, against which we ought (especially if we be public persons) to defend and maintain our credit and good name. The true testimony of ourselves is either concerning good; which if it be true, we must upon just occasion confess it with modesty to God's glory; or if false, with modesty and humility to deny it; or else concerning evil, which if it be true, we must confess it both to God with earnest desire of forgiveness, and also to man, when by our confession we may advance God's glory, and either our own or our neighbors good; or if it be false, that we constantly deny it. Contrariwise we are by this Commandment bound to shun the contrary vices to these virtues; as to deny the good things in us to God's dishonor that gave them, and to speak more basely and meanly of our own gifts and good parts then there is cause, or then that which we truly conceive, either to

avoid boasting, which is no better than a modest lie; or to draw commendations from others, which is counterfeit modesty, and a cunning kind of arrogancy. And also on the other side, vain and false boasting, wherein we may offend, either in respect of the object, in boasting of that which is not good, but evil, or being good, is not in us at all, or at least in that measure which we assume unto ourselves. Or else in respect of the end, as when we speak of the good things in us, or done by us, for our own glory, especially when it is joined with neglect of God's honor, or the disgrace of others, or else for our gain and advantage. Or finally in respect of evil, when out of pride and self-love, we deny that evil which is truly affirmed, or affirm that evil of ourselves which is false, to gratify others, or to pick a thank.

Sect. 9 - What is required in this Commandment, to wit, original righteousness, and spiritual Concupiscence.

In the former Commandments, as we have showed, the Lord forbiddeth all external sins both in word and deed, together with the internal sins of the heart committed against our neighbors, which are joined with consent of the will, and commandeth the contrary virtues: and now in the tenth and last Commandment, that he might show his Law to be spiritual, and of such large extent, that nothing, no not the least motions or first thoughts are exempted, and out of the reach of it, he requireth the inward purity of the mind and imaginations, thoughts and intentions, heart and affections; and the rectitude, orderly and just government of them all for our own and our neighbors good: and contrariwise condemneth and forbiddeth, not only those gross kinds of concupiscence and lusts of the flesh, which are joined with consent of will, but even the first and least motions of evil concupiscence, which go before consent, which are the roots, seeds, and fountains of all other sins, as all evil thoughts, inclinations and desires which are repugnant with charity; yet thought of most, to be no sins, and free from the censure of law, the which the Papists do stiffly defend, making this concupiscence and

lust after baptism to be no sin. Now this purity of mind and heart here required, consisteth of two parts, original righteousness, and perfect love of our neighbors and ourselves, and the concupiscence of the Spirit. Original righteousness, is both a cleanness from all unrighteousness, and evil concupiscence against our neighbors, and a disposition and proneness to all the duties of charity; the which righteousness, the Lord having in our first creation planted in our natures, doth justly require it of us in his Law, though by our fall in the loins of our first parents we have lost it, and can never attain unto it in any perfection. Yea, he doth it not only in justice towards all, but also in mercy towards his elect, to this end, that seeing hereby their unrighteousness, corruption and misery in themselves, they might be forced to renounce themselves and their own righteousness, and flee unto Christ, that both they might be clothed with his righteousness, and by his Spirit be renewed according to his Image, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness. Contrariwise, here is forbidden evil concupiscence, which is either original concupiscence, or sin, as it is referred against our neighbors; the which is that habitual corruption of our natures, and that evil inclination and proneness to lust against our neighbors, contrary to the Law of God: or actual concupiscence's, which are evil motions in our minds and hearts against our neighbors, both hurtful and foolish; which motions are either evil phantasies and thoughts of the mind, or evil affections and perturbations of the heart; all which inclining men to evil, are repugnant to charity.

Sect. 10 - Of the Spirit lusting against the flesh.

The spiritual concupiscence here required containeth the good motions of the Spirit, and the lusting of the Spirit against the flesh. The good motions of the Spirit, are righteous and charitable cogitations in our minds concerning our neighbors, and like affections in our hearts towards them, which are to be embraced and nourished in us; and contrariwise, evil thoughts are to be shunned,

which either are cast into men's minds by the devil, and are called his suggestions; or arise from original corruption and habitual concupiscence; and both of them either sleeping or waking. The lusting of the Spirit against the flesh, whereby we fight against our corruptions, and crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof, is here also commanded, and to be entertained and embraced of us. Of which I have written more fully in another Treatise.

Sect. 11 - Of the means enabling us unto the obedience of this Commandment.

The means whereby we may be enabled to yield obedience to this Commandment, are of two sorts, first, such as tend to the attaining and preserving of the pureness of the heart, which are, First, to walk with God, seeking to approve our hearts unto him, who searcheth and trieth as well our secret thoughts and inclinations, as our outward words and actions. Secondly, to observe and watch over our hearts and senses, that no evil concupiscence do arise in us, or enter into us, or if they do arise, or be suggested, that we do not admit them, or forthwith extinguish and quench them. Secondly, to watch over ourselves, that no evil concupiscence do arise in us, or enter into us, to which end a twofold care is needful, 1. When we are awake, to keep our minds occupied in good and holy meditations, and exercised about lawful things, not suffering them to be idle, or to wander about things vain and unlawful. 2. When we are to sleep, that we commend our souls into the hands of God, desiring him to keep them safe from temptations, and pure from concupiscence's. Thirdly, to observe and guard our senses (especially our sight) by whose ministry the objects of concupiscence are represented to the mind. Fourthly, that we put on, and keep fast buckled unto us the whole spiritual Armor of God, which is mighty to cast down imaginations, and to subdue evil thoughts. And finally, that we frequently use fervent and effectual prayer unto almighty God, that he will assist

and govern us with his holy Spirit, against all temptations and suggestions of the devil, the world, and our own flesh.

THE THIRD BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

Containing in it those duties which are required in our daily exercise, both generally at all times of the day, and upon all occasions, and specially in the several parts of it.

CHAPTER I.

That the duties of a godly life ought daily and constantly to be performed, and not by fits and spurts only.

Sect. 1 - That the duties contained in the former Book, are to be performed daily and constantly upon every fit occasion.

And thus have we entreated of the duties which are to be performed of all those who desire to lead a godly and Christian life. Now we are to show how all these duties of piety, righteousness, and sobriety, are to be daily and continually exercised of us, so far forth as our callings and occasions, means and opportunity will suffer and enable us. Neither is it possible that all these duties should be performed by every man, seeing diverse of them are appropriate to diverse persons, sexes, and callings; in which respect, the subject is not tied to perform the duties of the Prince, nor the Prince of the subject; the husband of the wife, nor the wife of the husband, &c. nor yet that all duties, common to all Christians, should be performed every day, seeing many times we want fit objects to exercise them upon, as also

convenient time and leisure, ability and opportunity. But this is required of us, that at no time we commit anything against the holy Law of God, or think that any time, company, or other circumstance, can make sin seasonable; nor yet omit any of the former duties, when God requireth them at our hands, giving us fit objects, occasions, means, and ability to perform them: And that not only some spare time be allotted to these Christian duties, taking liberty to spend the remainder of our days after our own sinful lusts, or in the unlawful and base service of the world, and the prince thereof, for the worthless hire of earthly vanities; but we must be wholly taken up of them, and be still exercised in the practice of someone or other of them, as shall be most convenient, and will best sort with the advancing of the glory of God, and the spiritual and temporal good of ourselves and our neighbors, in respect of means and occasions offered unto us. Neither must we think it sufficient unto a godly life to reserve his Sabbaths for God's service, and spend the rest of the week in the service of the world and our own lusts; nor that we serve him in some things, and these in others; nor on some other days besides the Sabbath, or some part only of every day, reserving the rest to live as we list. But we must constantly and continually, in everything, and at every time, perform service unto God in all our actions, and throughout our whole course and conversation; not only in abstaining from all sin which he hath forbidden, but also in performing of some Christian duty of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety, which he hath commanded, or in using the means whereby we may be enabled unto them. Neither is God alone served, when we perform some religious act, as praying, hearing the Word, singing Psalms, or some eminent works of charity and sobriety, but also in the meanest duties of the basest calling, yea even in our eating and drinking, lawful sports and recreations, when as we do them in faith, which not only assureth us that these actions are commanded of God and warranted by his Word, but that we and our works are accepted of him; and so enableth us to do them with cheerfulness and delight, as being not chiefly the service of men but of God. And also when in doing these our ordinary businesses which belong to our callings, we do repose our trust and affiance in God, that he will bless us in them,

and give them such success, as shall be most for his glory and our good; and enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as blessings sent from God with praise and thanksgiving. And when as in them we have an eye and due respect to God, seeking in them chiefly his glory, and doing them in love and obedience to his Commandments; and not for necessity only, praise or profit, fear of punishment, or hope of reward, which though we may respect secondarily and in some degree, in the ordinary actions of our lives, yet not first and principally, if we would be accounted to do God service in them. And in the next place, to our own and our neighbors mutual good, especially the enriching of us with spiritual graces, and the everlasting salvation of their and our own souls.

Sect. 2 - That no time is exempted from God's service, proved first by testimonies of Scripture.

In which general sense if we take the service of God, and thus largely with these references, understand the Christian duties of a godly life, then is there no day, hour, or minute, wherein we are not to be exercised in some of them. And this appeareth both by testimonies of Scriptures and firm reasons. The Scriptures require that our whole lives be spent in the service of God, and that we daily perform unto him the duties of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety. So the Apostle would have us to walk daily, according as God hath directed us, and make his Word the rule of our conversation, from which we must never swerve, neither on the right hand nor on the left; and to keep a continual watch over ourselves, lest there be at any time in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; and to exhort one another daily, whilst it is called today, lest any of us should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. The Apostle Peter persuadeth us to pass the whole time of our sojourning here in the fear of God, and not some part of it only, which we can best spare, and that we live no longer, the rest of our time in the flesh, according to the lusts of men, but the will of God, seeing the time

past of our lives may be enough, yea far too much, to have walked and wrought after the will of the Gentiles. The grace of God appearing, hath taught us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, whilst we continue in this present world. And therefore hath the Lord redeemed us, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. Of which, we have also examples in the Scriptures, in the Saints and servants of God, who after their conversion, passed their whole time in his fear, and spent their strength, in doing unto him continual service. So Enoch is said to have walked with God, that is, in the whole course of his pilgrimage to have kept him in his sight, and to have carried himself in all his actions as in his presence, that he might be accepted of him. And David, as he maketh it a mark of a blessed man, to meditate and exercise himself in the Law of God, day and night, so doth he in many places show that it was his own practice. My mouth (saith he) shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud. O how love I thy Law! It is my meditation all the day. I have inclined my heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the end. Every day will I bless thee, and will praise thy name forever and ever. So the Apostle saith of the whole Church of the Jews, that they did instantly serve God day night: and particularly of himself, that it was his continual exercise to have always a good conscience, void of offense towards God and towards men. But the best president of all for our imitation, is our Savior Christ, who spent his whole time in doing the works of him that sent him, in the day time preaching and doing miracles and works of mercy, that he might bring salvation unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and in the night sequestering himself for prayer and meditation in the mount of Olives. Secondly, God hath given his Law, not that we should sometimes observe his Commandments, and sometimes break them, but that we might observe them daily and continually, in all things and at all times; and that it might serve as a rule and squire, according unto which we are to frame our whole lives, and every particular action. For there he

prescribeth duties to be performed at all times; on his Sabbath, and on the six days besides, the general duties which belong to all, and those that respect us in our particular callings; the duties of piety, whereby we offer unto him immediate service; and of righteousness and sobriety, whereby we serve him mediately, in doing the duties which he hath commanded towards our neighbors and ourselves, because in doing them, we obey him. Whereby it appeareth, that there ought to be no time nor any action of our lives exempted from God's service, seeing he hath given us his Law, to serve for our direction at all times and in all things. Finally, the Word of God giveth unto us directions and rules, according to which we are to frame our whole lives, both in respect of persons and callings, as the duties of superiors and inferiors, fathers and children, magistrates and people, domestical and political, towards God, themselves, and one another; and also in respect of every part of the day, for the well beginning, continuing, and ending of it, and of all states and conditions, whether we be merry and cheerful, or sad and sorrowful, in sickness or in health, in poor or rich estate, prosperity or adversity; to show unto us that there is no time or state, wherein any man is left to his own liberty to live as he list, but that continually and in all conditions, every man is bound to conform his life in every particular action, according to God's revealed will. To which end, we are enjoined at all times to meditate and speak of God's Law and Commandments, to have them in our hearts, to teach them unto our children, at home and abroad, at our lying down, and at our rising up, and to bind them for a sign upon our hands, and as frontlets between our eyes. And so the Wiseman commandeth, that we bind them continually upon our hearts, and tie them about our necks; because when we go, it shall lead us, when we sleep, it shall keep us, and when we awake, it shall talk with us; the Law being such a lamp and light, as is sufficient to guide and direct us in all our ways.

Sect. 3 - Divers reasons proving the necessity of the daily exercise of a godly life.

Secondly, this daily practice of all Christian duties, in the whole course of our lives, and in every particular action of them, may be enforced with these reasons; first, because the Lord hath created and redeemed, and doth continually preserve us to this end, that we should spend our whole lives in his service, by performing the duties of holiness and righteousness; and not some part only, reserving the rest for the service of the world, and the satisfying of our carnal lusts. Secondly, he giveth unto us the continual wages of his blessings and benefits for the present, and hath promised to give unto us the everlasting reward of heavenly happiness in the life to come, not that we should do our own wills and works, much less of his professed enemies, but that we approve ourselves and our service unto him in all things, who hath given unto us this rich wages; and chiefly respect his glory in whatsoever we do, either in his immediate service, or in performing the duties which he hath commanded us towards our neighbors and our own persons; seeing we are bought at an high price, that we might no longer be our own, but his, and glorify him both in our souls and body, by offering unto him that service which he requireth. Thirdly, seeing it is the best wisdom to employ all and every of our actions to the best purpose, and no time is so well employed as in God's service, whether we respect God our chief Goodness, to whose glory all should tend, as unto their supreme end, or our own salvation, which by this and no other means can be assured unto us; and contrariwise, the greatest folly to spend our lives or any part of them in vain, to no purpose or profit, as all that time is, which is not taken up in God's service, by performing some duty of piety, righteousness, or sobriety, seeing those main ends, at which we ought in all things to aim, namely, God's glory in our own salvation, are not hereby advanced and furthered, but crossed and hindered. Fourthly, to be daily exercised in Christian duties, is the best means to keep our souls in good plight and state, by nourishing in them all saving graces; for as it is not enough to keep our bodies in a good case and habitude, that we preserve the vigor and strength of them, by seasonable and convenient food, unless we also digest it, and confirm our strength by fit exercise; so for the preserving of our souls in good state, it is not sufficient that we nourish God's graces in

us, by hearing the Word, and feeding on this spiritual Manna, unless we daily exercise them in the performance of all Christian duties. And as it is the best means to preserve our souls in health, when they are well, so also to recover them, when through surfeits in sin, it declineth and is impaired; whereas if we have only some general purposes of living Christianly, or perform these duties but by fits and starts; we shall easily fall into spiritual consumptions of grace, and dangerous sicknesses of sin before we be aware, and when they have by neglect and customable continuing in them taken fast hold of us, we shall either not recover, or at least, with great difficulty.

Sect. 4 - The many and great dangers which follow the neglect of this daily exercise.

Fifthly, we may be moved to this daily and continual exercise, by consideration of the many and great dangers which do accompany the neglect of it; first, because we shall move the Lord to withdraw from us his graces, when as we are secure and slothful in the exercise of them. For he giveth unto us these spiritual Talents, not that we should wastefully misspend them, or idly tie them up (as it were) in a napkin, and cast them in a corner, where they do no good; but that we should by employing, improve them to the glory of our Master, and good of ourselves and our fellow-servants; which when we neglect to do, he will take them from us, and give them unto others, who will use them to more purpose and profit. And thus David growing secure, and beginning through sloth to remit something of his spiritual exercises, in which he had been formerly zealous, was left unto himself to fall into temptation, God withdrawing the assistance of his grace and holy Spirit, and so was overtaken of foul and gross sins. Secondly, without this daily exercise we shall soon fall off from all power of godliness, and grow by degrees from bad to worse, till there be no prints of goodness remaining in us. For our course and proceedings in piety is no natural motion, but against the current and stream, wind and tide of our corruption; and therefore

we must at no time intermit our labor, for so we shall in short time be carried further back, then we can recover in a great space and with much labor; but we must be in continual exercise, and (as it were) with unwearied diligence ply the oar, until by death we arrive at the haven of happiness. Our hearts, like the plummetts of a clock, draw us with the weight of their corruption downward, till they pitch themselves and rest upon earthly vanities, unless every day, yea many times a day, we pull them up, and give spiritual motion unto them by these Christian exercises. Thirdly, sin is so wily and deceitful, that if we cease from the duties of a Christian life, and intermit the keeping of a straight watch over ourselves and actions, it will soon steal upon us, and fortify itself against all virtue and goodness. For though at the first it seemeth content, that we should but for a little space displace good duties, and give but a little way for a small while to the pleasures of it, yet it will increase in strength, coming to live (as it were) in its old home and proper element, and hardly leave its hold, or give way to the re-entry of those virtues and Christian duties which it formerly expelled. In which regard we shall be blessed, if fearing always, we stand continually upon our watch, and not only keep our souls strongly manned with saving graces, but take care that they may be daily trained and exercised in all Christian duties, that so we may not be beguiled and hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Lastly, there is no less danger from outward enemies, the world and the devil, if we neglect the daily exercise of a godly life. For the world, if it once find our hearts Dinah-like, straying from God, will easily ravish and defile them with her filthy pleasures; and when we have been at some time enticed to accompany her favorites in the delights of sin, we shall hardly get out of their embracement's, nor purge ourselves from that pollution wherewith they have tainted us. The devil also like a malicious enemy walketh about continually, and as a roaring Lyon seeketh to devour us; and if he find us at any time clean swept of God's graces, and garnished with the hellish ornaments of vices and sin, he will enter into us, and taking possession, reserve us for his own use. And therefore it behooveth us with like diligence to prevent his wiles and malice, by keeping our souls continually furnished with God's graces,

and ourselves exercised in all Christian duties, that so we may never be at leisure to admit of his temptations. And seeing this evil one is ready, even whilst we sleep, to sow his tares of temptations in our hearts (a ground too fruitful for such a grain) our care must be with like diligence, to cast out this hellish seed, that it take no rooting, or if it have, to weed them out as soon as they have sprouted up, and do outwardly appear in our words or actions.

Sect. 5 - Another reason taken from our calling and profession.

The sixth reason to move us to this daily exercise, is taken from our calling and profession; for we are Citizens of heaven, and pilgrims on earth, and therefore though our bodies are here beneath, yet our conversation should be in heaven, and our minds and affections should be on things above; our speeches should be of those things that concern our own country, and in all our actions we must endeavor to further our journey towards our heavenly home; neither must we one while go forward, and another while backward, or idly sit still; we must not one part of the day go in the right way, and in another part err and wander in the by-ways of sin, but we must be still going forward and holding the right road, never turning out of it, till we come to our heavenly home. We are called to be God's servants, and therefore we must not divide our service between him and the world, seeing it is fit we do only his work from whom we receive so liberal wages; neither can we serve God and Mammon which are of so contrary a disposition: but whilst we incline to the one, we must of necessity neglect the other, as our Savior hath taught us. We are called to be his Soldiers, and therefore we must only fight his battles, and not spend some part of our life and strength in his service, and some part in fighting on the devils side, by quenching the good motions of God's Spirit, and contrary to the light of our own knowledge and consciences, neglect holy duties, and run on in such courses as are displeasing unto God. We are called to be God's laborers; and therefore we must intend our business, that it may

prosper in our hand, and not undo in one day, that which we have done in another. We must not, like unskillful husbandmen, sometimes plant, and soon after pluck them up, one while sow good seed, and another while tares; nor like foolish builders, pull down one day, what we have set up in another; nor like unfaithful Watchmen, one while sit in the watch Tower, and soon after slothfully sleep, and give over our charge; nor like careless Pilots, guide the ship one day toward the wished haven, and the next, through sloth and negligence, let it roam whither the wind and tide will carry it, till it run upon the sands, and split itself against the rocks: But we must in the whole and daily course of our lives, give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, by holding a constant and continual course, in the Christian exercises of a godly life.

Sect. 6 - The last reason taken from the uncertainty of our lives.

The last reason to move us unto the continual and daily exercise of Christian duties, is taken from the uncertainty of our lives, and when by death we shall be called to Judgment; For seeing we know not at what time our Master will come, it shall be our wisdom to keep our accounts always even, that we may be ready at all times without fear, to yield up our reckonings; and to carry ourselves continually, like wise and faithful servants, in the exercise of holy, righteous, and Christian duties, that so we may be blessed, when our Lord coming upon the sudden, shall find us so doing: and because we are uncertain when the Bridegroom will come; let us, like the five wise Virgins, have our lamps and oil of faith, and lights of a godly life always prepared, that so we may enter with him into the marriage Chamber of heavenly happiness, and there eternally solace ourselves in the fruition of his love; lest coming upon the sudden, in an hour that we think not, and taking us unprovided, without the lamp of profession, or the oil of grace, or the light of an holy conversation; either hunting after worldly profits and preferments by unlawful means, or with immoderate desires, or wallowing ourselves in fleshly

delights, he shut us out of doors, and utterly exclude us from having any communion, or interest with him in those heavenly joys.

CHAPTER II.

Of some special duties of a godly life, which are to be performed in our daily exercise: And first, of the renewing of our repentance.

Sect. 1 - Of the daily renewing of our covenant with God, by the renewing of our faith and repentance.

BY the testimonies and reasons before alleged, we have made it evident, that it is not sufficient to serve God by fits and at sometimes, neglecting his service, and serving the world and our own lusts at another; but that the daily exercise of a godly life, in the continual performance of all Christian duties, is most profitable and necessary. And now it remaineth that we give some directions, for the well-performing of this daily exercise. To which end, we are to know that these duties, wherein we are daily to be exercised, are of two sorts. First, general, which are not only every day necessarily to be in some degree and measure performed, but also to be observed in every part of the day, and in all the particular acts and exercises of it, as occasion serveth. The second more special, and belonging more principally and properly unto the diverse parts and several occasions of every day. The former are more internal and spiritual between God and us, serving to set our hearts in due frame, and to make them constant and resolute to consecrate ourselves wholly to God's service, and in all things to please him. The latter more external for the most part, and visible, which are the outward exercises proceeding from the other, and (as it were) the pleasant fruits which spring from those inward and hidden roots. The first main duty, which ought to be of every Christian daily and duly performed, is to confirm, and in some sort to renew the Covenant of grace between God and us in Jesus Christ, wherein God for his part doth of his free grace promise the remission of all our sins, his spiritual graces, his favor and reconciliation, justification and adoption, his holy Spirit with all spiritual and temporal gifts and graces in this world, and everlasting

life and salvation in the world to come, in and for his Son Christ. And we for our part do promise and covenant, that we will receive and embrace Christ with all these benefits by a lively faith, and bring forth the fruits thereof in hearty repentance and new obedience. The which Covenant, is the main ground and foundation of all the good things we receive from God in this life, and of all the joy and comfort which we take in them; and of our future hopes and happiness in the life to come. And therefore as Citizens do chiefly look to the preservation and establishment of the grand Charter, that containeth all their privileges: And as Soldiers in time of a siege, do every day look unto their main fortifications and bulwarks, and if they be any way shattered and shaken in the last assaults, do with all care and diligence repair and strengthen them: So must we who profess ourselves Citizens of the spiritual Zion and heavenly Jerusalem, use all good means to ratify this Charter, which is the chief assurance of all the good which we either now can have, or hereafter expect; and seeing in the time of our spiritual warfare, Satan with his assistants seek to shake and weaken this chief Tower of our strength, with the engines and Canon shot of their temptations; therefore we must daily have a special eye to this our principal Bulwark, and use continually all good means, whereby the breaches may be repaired and strengthened against the next assault. And howsoever we are after a more principal manner to renew and confirm our Covenant with God at set and solemn times, as generally before we come to the Lord's Table, and specially in the time of thanksgiving, for some singular and extraordinary benefits, or of extraordinary humiliation in respect of some sins, into which, after our conversion we have relapsed; or some grievous afflictions, from which we desire to be delivered; or some dangerous sickness, the usual fore-runner of death and Judgment, as we shall more fully show hereafter: yet seeing we must daily and hourly live by faith; and seeing faith hath no other ground to rest upon, for the applying and appropriating of any of God's benefits, but the Covenant of grace which he hath made with us, the which, though on God's part it be more immoveable then the rocks and mountains, yet is often shaken in respect of our weak apprehension, even as a rock may seem to move, when it is lightly

touched with a trembling hand, and a mountain to shake, when as it is beheld with a weak and quivering eye; who seeth not how necessary it is to use daily all good means, whereby we may make this covenant which is so strong in itself, to be also strong unto us, and a firm foundation whereupon we may build our joy and comfort?

Sect. 2 - Of the daily renewing of our repentance. First, by recalling our sins to remembrance; And secondly, by humbling ourselves before God in the sight and sense of them.

Now the principal means of renewing and confirming this covenant of grace, is, daily to renew the condition on our part, which is a lively faith, approved by the fruits of it in unfeigned repentance. The which latter, because it is the infallible sign and touch stone of the former, and the outward and sensible fruit, which assureth us of the hidden root, that it liveth and groweth, I will in the first place speak of our daily exercise in renewing of our repentance; unto which is required, first, that we call to our remembrance our former sins, together with the cursed root of original corruption from which they spring; but especially the sins, frailties and falls, which have overtaken us since the last time that we performed this exercise, to which purpose it behooveth us to keep a strict and narrow watch over all our thoughts, words and works, that these spiritual enemies of our souls may not slyly pass by, or secretly lurk in us unespied, and consequently unrepented of; and also to take special mark of them, that they do not slip out of our mind and memory. For which end we must look ourselves often in the glass of God's Law, and examine our lives by this rule, that so we may take notice of our spiritual spots and deformities, of our errors and averseness to good, and proneness to evil, and so bring them into the Court of conscience, that being thereby, in the presence of God our supreme Judge, accused and condemned, our hearts may be smitten with godly sorrow in the sight and sense of them, and affected with a loathing and mislike of our former evil proceedings; according to the practice of the faithful,

foretold by the Prophet: Then shall ye (saith he) remember your former evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. The neglect of which duty is reprov'd and condemn'd in the people of the Jews: I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Everyone turned to his course, as the Horse rusheth into the battle. Secondly, Humiliation is here also required, in which, diverse things ought to concur; first, when we have called our sins to our remembrance, and set them in order before us, we must in the sight and sense of them have melting, relenting, broken, and contrite hearts and spirits, which will truly mourn with bitter grief, because by our sins we have displeas'd so gracious and good a God, who hath multiplied upon us so innumerable benefits and blessings, both in temporal and spiritual things, especially in giving his only Son to the death for us, when as we were strangers and enemies unto him. Upon which consideration we must, looking upon him whom we have pierc'd, mourn for him, as a man mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. We must not slight over our sorrow, but labor with Peter to weep bitterly, and with the Israelites, to pour forth our melting souls before God, like water drawn out of a well; and finally, with David we must labor to bring our mourning for sin into daily practice; Every night (saith he) make I my bed to swim, and I water my couch with my tears. And if through the hardness of our hearts, we cannot thus sorrow for our sins, we must be griev'd, because we can be no more griev'd, and lament the hardness of our hearts, because we can no more heartily bewail them. Which if it be unfeign'd, then will it move us to use carefully the means whereby our grief for sin may be increased; as to meditate on the innumerable multitude, and the grievous heinousness of our sins, the manifold imperfections and corruptions of our best actions, the majesty, power and greatness, the infinite goodness and graciousness of God towards us, against whom we have committed them, our own baseness and vileness, who have provok'd to wrath so infinite a majesty, the small and contemptible inducements which have allured and enticed us to

offend so merciful a Father, even the base baits of worldly vanities; our continuing in these sins without repentance, notwithstanding that the Lord hath given us so manifold and effectual means of reformation and amendment, as the preaching of the Gospel, admonitions, instructions, reprehensions, the good motions of his Spirit checking us for our sins, and inciting us to holy duties; his promises alluring us to serve him; his threatening's terrifying us that we may not offend him; his mercies and benefits encouraging us to all good; his chastisements and fatherly corrections discouraging and stopping us in our evil courses: notwithstanding all which helps and means, we have impenitently continued in our sins, without any reformation; our dishonoring of God hereby, who hath been so gracious and bountiful unto us, and abusing of his mercies, patience and long suffering, which should have led us to repentance; our piercings, wounding, and as it were, crucifying afresh the Lord of life, our blessed Savior and Redeemer; and our vexing and grieving of the good Spirit of God, whereby we are sanctified; by quenching the good motions which he hath suggested unto us, and by dulling and deadening his gifts and graces in us. Secondly, we must be much displeased with ourselves, because we have so many ways displeased God by our sins, and be inflamed with a godly anger against our flesh and sinful lusts, which have caused us to break out into all these impieties, the which must show itself in our readiness to be revenged of them, by using all good means whereby they may be mortified and crucified. Thirdly, we must have our hearts affected with confusion and astonishment, and our faces filled and discolored with shame and blushing, that we have thus many ways showed ourselves so unkind and ungrateful to so good a God; and when we see that God remembereth his covenant, to establish and make it good to such unworthy wretches, we, with the Church of the Jews, repenting of our sins, must remember our former wicked ways, and be ashamed and confounded, in the fight and sense of our unworthiness. Finally, we must in the former considerations cast away all pride, carnal love and self-conceitedness of our own worth and excellency, and be humbled and cast down in the apprehension and feeling of our own baseness and vileness; confessing that we are but dust and ashes;

with David, that we are worms, and no men; and saying with Job unto corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister; yea with him, we must abhor ourselves, and unfeignedly repent in dust and ashes. The fruits of which humiliation we shall find inestimable. For we shall hereby offer unto God a sacrifice which he most delighteth in, and make him hereby propitious and gracious; yea to dwell with us, and to replenish and cheer our hearts with our sweet communion and fellowship with him in the gracious comforts of his holy Spirit, according to that of the Psalmist, The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit; And the Lord's own speech by his Prophet, Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of contrite ones. We shall bring ourselves within the compass of Christ's call, and interesse ourselves unto his gracious promises of easing us of the unsupportable burden of our sins, and curing us of all our spiritual sicknesses and sores of sins: for he came to be the Physician, not of the whole, but of the sick, and to call, not those who have no sense and feeling of their sins, but such as labor and are heavy laden, not the righteous in their own opinion and conceit, but sinners to repentance. We shall make ourselves fit hearers of the glad tidings of the Gospel, and entitle ourselves to all the gracious comforts of God's holy Spirit, according to that of the Prophet, cited and applied by our Savior; The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me: to preach the Gospel to the poor and meek, he hath sent me to bind up and heal the broken-hearted, to preach liberty and deliverance to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to comfort them that mourn; giving unto them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness. Moreover, by this humiliation we may come to the assurance of the remission of our sins; for if we humble ourselves and pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways; then will the Lord hear from heaven, and will forgive us our sins, and heal our plagues; as we see in the example of Manasseh, one of the

greatest sinners that ever lived, who humbling himself greatly before the God of his Father, and seeking and suing unto him for pardon, the Lord was entreated of him, and heard his supplication. Finally, if we thus daily humble ourselves, the Lord hath promised to lift us up and exalt us, to furnish us with all saving graces, to fill and replenish our empty souls with all good things, to cheer us in our mourning with the comforts of his Spirit, and to make us blessed in the eternal fruition of his heavenly Kingdom.

Sect. 5 - Of the daily confession of our sins, and judging ourselves for them

Thirdly, unto this daily renewing of our repentance, is required a humble confession of our sins, which must be of unknown sins generally, of known sins particularly, with the aggravation of them by their several circumstances. Especially we must acknowledge and lay open the root and fountain of them, our original corruption, from which they have sprung and flowed, and then the cursed fruits and filthy streams that have issued from them; but above all, we must not forget in this our confession, those special sins, unto which we are most inclined, and wherewith we have most offended and dishonored God; nor those sins which we have committed lately, and since the last time of renewing our repentance. And withal we must judge and condemn ourselves as unworthy, by reason of our sins, the least of God's mercies, and most worthy of the greatest of his judgments and punishments, coming into God's presence as Benhadad's followers before Ahab, and acknowledging, that if we had our desert, death and condemnation were due unto us. And this we must do, to justify the Lord when he judgeth, and to glorify his name, in giving unto him the praise of mercy and forgiveness; and that thus judging ourselves, we may not be condemned of the Lord. Neither are we to stay here under the sentence of the Law, but to flee unto the throne of grace, begging mercy and forgiveness at the hands of God, for his own names sake, for his truth sake in his covenant and

gracious promises, and for his Christ's sake, his merits, satisfaction and obedience performed for us. The fruit and benefit of which humble confession, is the full assurance of the remission of all our sins, grounded upon the truth of God's promises; For, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And again, He that hideth his sins, shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy. Both which we see verified in the example of David, who whilst he concealed his sin, found the hand of God heavy upon him, which vexed his very bones, and made him roar in sense of pain. But when he confessed and acknowledged his sin, the Lord forgave him all his iniquities.

Sect. 4 - Of our detestation and hatred of sin.

Fourthly, there is required hereunto a hearty hatred and detestation of all sin. To which end we must consider, that it is an offense against God's infinite Majesty, and supreme Justice, and that nothing in the world is so contrary unto his most pure and holy nature; nothing so odious and loathsome unto him, as appeareth by his most just severity, in punishing of it with most sharp and grievous punishments. For though our first parents in the state of innocence, were his most excellent and best beloved creatures, yet for one transgression he rejected them, and punished not only them, but also all their posterity with temporal punishments of all kinds, and everlasting death and condemnation both of body and soul. Though the world and the creatures therein were his excellent workmanship, yet when it was defiled with the sin of man, it was with all its inhabitants (saving those which were reserved in the Ark) destroyed with a universal deluge. For sin he consumed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven, and rejected the whole nation of his beloved Israel from being his people. Yea, when our Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, bore our sins as our surety, he spared him not, but caused him in his body to suffer most grievous

punishments, and in his soul to bear the full viols of his wrath, till his Justice, by his all-sufficient sufferings, was fully satisfied. The which considerations must make us daily to renew our hatred against all our sins, which God so mortally hateth, and especially those which cleave fastest to our corrupt nature, and unto which we are most inclined, because by them we do most often displease and dishonor our gracious God and loving Father: And to proclaim continual war against them, that we may vanquish and subdue, mortify and crucify them; and seriously to resolve with ourselves, that we will upon no conditions live any longer in them, but renounce and forsake them with our uttermost endeavor, how pleasant and profitable soever they have formerly seemed to our carnal appetite.

Sect. 5 - Of our fear and care that we be not circumvented with sin.

Fifthly, in consideration of our own frailty and infirmity, and the malice and subtlety of our spiritual enemies, we must daily and continually fear that we be not overtaken with the deceitfulness of sin, nor caught in these snares of the devil, which ought justly to be so odious and loathsome unto us; and have our hearts taken up with fervent and zealous desires, to preserve our souls and bodies in purity and honor, free from the pollution of any sin. To which end, we must daily with all conscionable care, keep a diligent and straight watch over all our works and ways, but especially over our hearts, that they be not overtaken with any love or liking of sin, but constantly repel the first motions and allurements of it, when they present themselves unto us; especially we must have an eye to our natural infirmities, and those sins, unto which being most prone, we are most easily overtaken of them. Yea, we must in this watch carefully avoid, not only the sins themselves, but also all the occasions and means which may draw us to the committing of them; especially the familiar society of wicked men, who are most apt to corrupt and infect us with their persuasions and evil examples. Finally, we must daily resolve and endeavor, not only to leave and

forsake all sin, but also to serve the Lord, in performing all the contrary duties of holiness, righteousness, and sobriety, according to all good occasions and opportunities, which in the whole day, or any part thereof shall be offered unto us, and in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, to please the Lord, by yielding cheerful obedience unto his holy will. Especially, our care and endeavor must be to perfect those graces, in which we find ourselves most defective, and with extraordinary diligence to practice those duties towards God, our neighbors, and ourselves, which our consciences tell us we have formerly most neglected, and unto which we feel our corrupt natures to be most backward and averse; that so we may daily aspire to a greater growth in godliness, and bring forth, the longer we live, the more and better fruits of new obedience.

Sect. 6 - The benefits which would arise of this exercise of renewing our repentance.

And if we would thus daily renew our repentance, the benefits arising unto us from this holy exercise would be inestimable. For first, we should prevent innumerable sins, into which, through the neglect of this duty, we fall daily, unadvisedly, and at unawares; but especially we should be armed hereby against all sins committed against knowledge and conscience. Secondly, if at any time through frailty we be overtaken with any sin, we should not lie in it, but rise again by unfeigned repentance; and so heal the sores of sin, whilst the wound is green, with much greater ease, and not suffer them to fester and rankle, to our greater pain and danger. Thirdly, we should much abate the violence of our fleshly lusts, when as though they with much labor put us to a foil, yet they shall not be able, no not for one day, to keep their hold and rule over us; and who will take any great pains to so little purpose? Or swallow down that potion with any pleasure, which he must be forced to cast up so quickly with much grief? Or embrace that sin with any great delight, which within a few hours shall be plucked from him with a holy violence and

indignation? Or offend so good a God, or hazard a precious soul, or disturb the sweet peace of a good conscience, for the fruition of a sinful pleasure so vain, so momentary? Fourthly, though through infirmity we sometimes fall, yet shall we hereby be preserved from sleeping in carnal security, and from being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and though through weakness of the flesh, we slumber with the Spouse in the Canticles, yet shall we not fall into a dead sleep, but say with her, I sleep, but my heart waketh. Fifthly, we shall hereby preserve our consciences tender, so as they will give us warning when sin maketh the least appearance, and our hearts pure and soft, so as they will easily relent with the least touch. Sixthly, we shall make the practice of a godly life, easy and familiar, and Christ's yoke light, when as we are accustomed to bear it every day. Seventhly, we shall either altogether keep it from entering into our hearts, or at least from holding possession by pleading custom and prescription. Eighthly, we shall preserve peace with God, and a holy communion with him; and the peace also of a good conscience; or if there be any cause of inward jars, we shall compound and take them up before we sleep. Ninthly, we shall go to rest securely, when as we go to bed with our quietus est, and sleep quietly, when we have our pardon under our pillow. Finally, we shall always be prepared for the approach of death and Judgment, when as we keep always our accounts ready-made; and though with the five wise Virgins, we sometimes slumber and sleep, as well as the foolish, yet having our oil in our lamps, we shall be ready to rise at the first call, to enter with our Bridegroom into the marriage chamber, and communicate with him in all joy and happiness.

CHAPTER III.

Of our daily exercise in renewing of our faith.

Sect. 1 - That the daily renewing of our faith is very profitable and necessary.

Unto this daily exercise of renewing of our repentance, we must add also the renewing of our faith, which is no less necessary then the other; for as the virtue and vigor of our bodies soon fainteth and decayeth, if they be not often and daily nourished with those elements whereof they are made and composed; so will the strength of faith be weakened and abated, if it be not daily sustained and refreshed with those means and helps, by which it was begot and begun in us, and therefore if whilst we have good stomachs in our youthful days, we think it not enough to refresh and nourish our bodies one day in a week, nor yet once in a day; but must have our dinners and suppers, breakfasts and bevers; let us not think, that it is enough for the nourishment of our souls, and strengthening of our faith, to use spiritual repast on the Sabbath only, which though it may hold life and soul together, yet shall we not be thriving and in good liking in our spiritual man, if we relieve and cherish it not with a more liberal hand, and allot some part of every day to this spiritual exercise. Again, as faith in itself will faint and languish, if it be not daily refreshed and renewed, so are there also outward causes which shake and weaken it, if it be not duly, and even daily nourished. For we daily wound and weaken it with our sins, whilst our inward guilt abateth our assurance of God's love, and confidence in his favor, by laying to our charge our great unworthiness of his least mercies. And therefore we had need to renew daily our faith, as we daily renew our sins, by laying hold on the Covenant of grace, which assureth us that our sins shall not stop the course of God's mercies, because their current is free; and if the streams be not dammed up (as it were) in the fountain with unbelief, it is not our unworthiness can keep them from us. Finally, the spiritual enemies of our salvation do daily and continually assault us, and the chief means to repel the fiery darts of their temptations, is the shield of faith; which in itself is not so impenetrable and of high proof, (were it not strengthened and made effectual to preserve us by Christ's mediation) but that it is often much battered and bruised in the conflict of temptations. And

therefore seeing their malice never ceaseth, which maketh this shield of faith always necessary, and their daily assaults do cause it to be of daily use; it is our wisdom to let no day pass, without reviving and renewing it, that we may by such means as God hath appointed, repair and strengthen it, so as it may be fit to preserve us against all assaults of temptation. Join we then with the daily exercise of renewing our repentance, this also of renewing our faith; and the rather, because they mutually further and strengthen one another being conjoined; but being severed, both are weakened and dismembered, and either cannot at all be exercised of us, or but lamely and to little purpose, in semblance and show, not in deed and truth. For faith is the cause and very life of repentance, none truly mourning for sin, but such as by faith being assured of God's love, are grieved in their hearts, that they have grieved so loving a God; and without this filial affection proceeding from faith, our repentance would be but like that of Cain and Judas, a worldly and desperate sorrow that worketh death. And contrariwise, repentance is the very breath of faith, which if it have free passage, then faith not only liveth, but flourisheth and thriveth; so that hereby, as by an infallible sign, we may know and discern it from security and presumption; but if it fail, then the life of faith also faileth, and becometh a dead carcass, without all virtue and vigor, sense or motion.

Sect. 2 - What this renewing our faith is, and the means whereby we may be enabled to do it, which consist, first, in diverse meditations.

Now this daily renewing of our faith is nothing else, but after we have humbled our souls in the sight and sense of our sins by unfeigned repentance, to refresh and strengthen it, and (as it were) to heal the wounds which our sins have made, by applying Christ with the sovereign salve of his precious blood, and the sweet promises of the Gospel made in him, assuring us of the remission and pardon of all our sins. Now the means and helps whereby we may be enabled to

renew our faith, and in the application of these benefits, may confirm and strengthen it against doubting and incredulity, do either respect meditation or action. We must meditate on the eternal and immutable, free and undeserved love of God, even before we were created, and after that by sin we had made ourselves strangers and enemies, which moved him to give his best Beloved to the death for us, and from hence conclude for the strengthening of our faith; that he will never cease to be gracious unto us, when as by Christ being reconciled, we adhere and cleave unto him with unfeigned love and hearty affection. Secondly, on God's inestimable and infinite mercies, which are far above all his works, and therefore may assure us, that they will be much more powerful and all-sufficient to save us, than our sins, though never so innumerable and grievous, can be to condemn us. Thirdly, on God's truth, which will never fail in any of his promises, and omnipotent power and wisdom, whereby he is infinitely able to accomplish them. Fourthly, on the all-sufficiency of Christ's obedience and satisfaction, for the discharging of all our debts, and satisfying of God's Justice for all our sins, if we make them our own by a lively faith. Fifthly, on the Covenant of grace, which is free, and assureth us of the pardon of our sins, and salvation of our souls, upon no condition of works or worthiness, but only of faith, bringing forth the fruits of unfeigned repentance. Sixthly, on the promises of the Gospel, which being general and indefinite, exclude none, though never so sinful and unworthy, if they will thankfully receive them as they are freely offered, and apply them to themselves by a lively faith. Seventhly, we must meditate on the Sacraments and seals of the Covenant, whereby God hath given unto us (as it were) into our hands, Christ Jesus and all his benefits; and of his most infallible oath, whereby he hath confirmed his promises unto us; as also of his Spirit, whereby he hath inwardly sealed unto us our redemption and salvation. Eighthly, on the manifold examples of his mercy and goodness, extended to all repentant sinners, and that he being no respecter of persons, is as ready to make us partakers of them, if we do not reject them through unbelief. Ninthly, on the manifold experience which we have had of them towards ourselves, both in temporal and spiritual benefits, and that being

unchangeable in his nature and gifts, he is still ready to be alike good and gracious, if by faith we will rest and rely upon him. Neither is it enough that we know, and habitually believe that God hath given unto us many and singular privileges; as his Son to be our Savior and Redeemer; his Word, Sacraments, and holy Spirit, by which he hath effectually called us to the knowledge and participation of this great work of our redemption, justification, and remission of all our sins, reconciliation and adoption, whereby we are made not only children of God, but also heirs of his Kingdom, assurance of continual preservation in this life, and of salvation and glorification in the life to come; but we must actually exercise our faith, by allotting some part of the day to think and meditate on the excellency of these privileges; as what a blessed thing it is to be saved by Christ, and delivered out of the power of all our spiritual enemies, and to live and die in the state of salvation: What a singular benefit it is to have all our sins pardoned, and our debts cancelled, so that we need not fear at any time to be called to Judgment, and to give up our accounts, seeing Christ hath satisfied for all, and made our reckonings even for us: What a sweet and comfortable a thing it is to have peace with God, and peace of conscience, and the beams of his favor continually shining upon us, and warming our hearts with joy and gladness? What an inestimable privilege it is to be the child of God, and heir apparent to the Kingdom of heaven? Which considerations, if we seriously think on them, will be singular means to inflame our hearts with God's love, to ravish them with spiritual joy, and to make them cheerful in God's service, throughout the whole day, yea to the very end of the longest life.

Sect. 3 - The second sort of means consist in the performance of diverse actions.

And unto these meditations, we are for the renewing of our faith to add diverse actions; as first, we must daily renew our promises unto God made in baptism, and bewailing our manifold frailties and

imperfections, whereby we have often failed herein, we are to resolve and promise, that if God will accept of us, and pass by our former infirmities, we will with more entire affection renounce sin, Satan and all our spiritual enemies, and consecrate ourselves wholly to his worship and service, and with greater zeal and devotion labor in the use of all good means, whereby we may attain to more perfection. Secondly, we must labor to find and feel our hearts more and more inflamed with unfeigned love towards God, in respect of his infinite goodness and absolute perfection in himself, and graciousness towards us, shining in his unspeakable and innumerable blessings and benefits bestowed upon us, which love towards God will strengthen our faith in assurance of his love towards us, seeing it is but a drop that distilleth from this fountain, and but a spark that ariseth from this infinite flame. Thirdly, we must exercise ourselves in the daily practice of religious duties, as prayer, meditation, holy conferences, and such like, which will increase our communion and acquaintance with God, and more and more assure us of his favor. And finally, we must resolve to take all good occasions of doing daily the works of mercy and Christian charity towards our neighbors for God's sake, whereby our faith will get daily new assurance, that seeing we are willing and desirous to glorify God in all things, by causing the light of our godly lives to shine before men, he will be no less willing to glorify us before his Saints and holy Angels in his heavenly Kingdom. For these duties of piety and righteousness, are the fruits which spring from the root of faith, the flames and heat which proceed from this fire, the very breath whereby it liveth, and the actions and motions wherein it is exercised; and therefore if it bringeth not forth these fruits, it is but a barren tree and dead stock, a useless fire, which being covered, giveth no light or heat; a dead carcass without breath, an idle habit without virtue or vigor, and for want of exercise languisheth and decayeth daily in strength; whereas contrariwise, if the strength thereof were used, and seasonably employed in holy and righteous actions, it would (like the strength of the body) be confirmed and redoubled by this daily exercise.

Sect. 4 - The manifold benefits which would arise from the daily renewing of our faith.

But that we may be the better persuaded unto this daily exercise of renewing our faith; let us consider more particularly the manifold and inestimable benefits which would thereby accrue unto us. For first, we shall live in covenant with God, have assured title and interest unto all his promises, without any intercession or intermission of our comfort and hope, seeing God requireth of us no other condition. Secondly, we shall no longer live the life of the flesh and corrupted nature, but the life of faith, which is principally sustained by God, and holdeth dependency, not on earthly things, but chiefly on his Word and promise, which can never fail; and the life of Christ, subjecting ourselves in all things to the regiment and government of his holy Spirit; so as we may say with the Apostle, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me; which life of grace certainly assureth us of the life of glory. Thirdly, hereof it will follow, that all our thoughts, words, and works, shall be voluntarily subjected to the good will and pleasure of God, and being daily in covenant with God, we shall, by virtue of his Spirit assisting us, keep all our faculties and functions, senses, and actions, in covenant with us, that they shall in all things obey him, and do nothing which is displeasing unto him. Fourthly, by renewing our faith daily, we shall with it renew all the sanctifying and saving graces which issue from it, and depend upon it, and by watering the root, give virtue and vigor unto all the branches and fruits which spring from it; whereas contrariwise we shall spend all our labor in vain, if neglecting faith, we use all diligence and endeavor to increase in love, patience, hope, or any other grace, or to bring forth plentiful fruits of them in a Christian conversation, and the works of mercy and charity; like those who take much pains in watering the boughs and branches of a tree, and never take care to water the root. More especially, if we daily renew our faith, we shall hereby confirm our affiance and confidence in God, in all things, and at all times; for when we firmly by faith apply unto our use the

power, wisdom, goodness, promises, and providence of God, and with strong embracement's unite them unto us, we may easily with all safety and security rest and rely upon them. We shall hereby also strengthen our hope, which is nothing but an expectation of the things believed; and according as our faith is strong or weak in apprehension of the promises, so also is our hope which waiteth for their fruition. We shall increase by it our love towards God: for the more and oftener we apprehend the divine fire of his love towards us, the more our cold hearts are thereby inflamed with the heat of it, so that we return unto him love for love: And our zeal of God's glory, there being no stronger argument to make us in all things earnest to glorify him, then to be fully assured that he will glorify us. It will work in us, and daily renew our patience, when as we daily renew our assurance, that all our afflictions are the chastisements of a loving Father, and not the punishments of a severe Judge; that they are stinted and measured out unto us, both in respect of their quantity and continuance, by a most wise providence, which will not let them exceed either our strength or necessity; that they are inflicted out of mere love, and are signs, not of our rejection, but adoption and salvation; that they shall have a good issue, and work together for the best, for the enriching of us with spiritual grace, and the furthering of our eternal glory. It will increase our peace of conscience, when as our assurance is daily renewed of our peace with God, the remission of all our sins, and victory over all the enemies of our salvation; of our safety under his protection, and that nothing shall be able to separate his love from us. It will daily replenish our hearts with renewed joys in the holy Ghost, and after that they are exhausted with our infirmities and miseries, renewed faith will like afresh hand draw new supplies from God the fountain of our joy, until they be replenished and overflow. Yea, it will make our joy, not like that of worldlings, in the fact, and not in the heart, momentary and mutable, like the cracking of thorns under a pot, whilst the brushy fuel of prosperity feedeth it, but constant and permanent, even in afflictions, and nothing shall be able to take it from us. It will fill our hearts daily with the comforts of the Spirit, when as being daily renewed, it doth afresh assure us of our communion with God, and

that Christ and all his benefits do belong unto us, which either respect this life, or the life to come.

Sect. 5 - Of diverse other benefits which follow the daily renewing of our faith.

Fifthly, the daily renewing of our faith, is the most effectual means of our unfeigned repentance; For what can be so powerful an argument to make us mourn for our sins with bitter grief, as with the eye of faith to look upon him whom by our sins we have pierced, and through the wound in his side, to see his heart so replenished with divine love, and as it were, supplying the place of that blood and water that issued out of it? And what can make us more hate sin, or to resolve to please God in all holy and righteous duties, then believing that the Lord being so infinitely just, and abhorring sin with such implacable hatred, that he spared not his only begotten and most dearly beloved Son, but when he bore our sins, caused him to bear also our griefs and sorrows, wounded him for our transgressions, and bruised him with the pains of death, and fearful burden of his wrath for our iniquities; to believe also that he is towards us, so infinitely merciful, that he gave his Son to us, and for us to suffer all these torments for a time, that we might not suffer them forever; that he wounded him for our transgressions, that we might be healed by his hurts, cleansed and purified from the guilt, punishment and corruption of all our sins with the streams of his blood, acquitted by his condemnation, and revived by his death? For who is so audaciously desperate, as to dare by voluntary sinning provoke such a Justice? Who is so hard-hearted and ungrateful, as would be enticed with the baits of worldly vanities, to neglect in anything to please so infinite a goodness? So what can more powerfully move us to flee all sin, and to practice with all diligence all Christian duties of holiness and righteousness, then by faith not only to enjoy God's present blessings in their own worth and excellency, but as earnest pennies and first fruits, pledges and pawns of heavenly

and eternal reward, wherewith God of his free grace hath promised to crown all our labors and holy endeavors? Whereas if there were no belief and expectation of reward, we should faint under the weight of afflictions, languish in the performance of Christian duties, which are so ill esteemed and accepted in the world, and be wholly taken up in the pursuit of earthly vanities, because we have entertained no better hopes. For as one saith, They savor earthly things, which believe not heavenly promises; They wholly addict themselves to things that belong unto this transitory life, which apprehend not those things which are eternal. They fear not to sin, who think that it shall have no punishment; and finally, they become slaves to their vices, who expect not the future rewards of virtue, &c. Sixthly, by this daily renewing of our faith, we shall be strengthened against all the temptations of our spiritual enemies, so as they shall not be able to hurt and wound us, whether these darts be cast against us from the right hand, or from the left. For faith, as an impenetrable Shield, enableth us to overcome and beat back temptations arising from worldly prosperity; whilst apprehending heavenly and everlasting excellencies, it maketh us to contemn these base and momentary vanities; and the temptations which arise from crosses and afflictions, by persuading us that they are the straight way that leadeth to happiness, that they are not worthy the glory that shall be revealed; that these light and moment any afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him. Finally, faith thus daily renewed, not only effectually persuades us unto an holy resolution of leading a Christian and godly life, but also powerfully enables us to perform all the duties thereunto required, with alacrity and cheerfulness, joy and delight; for it moves us to consecrate ourselves wholly to the service of him, who hath graciously redeemed us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, and to testify our love and thankfulness unto him, who hath done all this for us, by our new obedience. It unites us unto Christ, and applieth unto us the virtue of his death, by which sin is mortified and crucified in us, and we unto it, and to the world, so that we will no longer serve them in fulfilling worldly and carnal lusts; and the virtue of his resurrection, whereby

we are enabled to rise from the death of sin, to holiness and newness of life. It giveth unto us with spiritual life, spiritual motion; it cleanseth and changeth our hearts, and taking away the old, it worketh in us a new nature, which is active and operative in all holy and righteous duties, and diligent and cheerful in the performance of them. And whereas before we either did them not at all, or but in outward show formally and coldly, and that not without much pains and difficulty; it enableth us now to perform them like natural actions, with much ease and delight; so as we can say with David, that the Law of God is our chief delight, better unto us then thousands of gold and silver, and sweeter than the honey or honeycomb; And with our Savior, that it is our meat and drink to do the will of our heavenly Father. And as unnatural motions are not without outward violence, lasting no longer then it lasteth, but natural are easy and permanent, as the Sun shineth, and the river runneth of their own accord, freely and without compulsion; so by help of this new nature which faith worketh in us, our actions and motions in the ways of godliness are easy and pleasant, which unto corrupt nature were, even in respect of the outward act, harsh and difficult, continuing no longer then some outward cause of fear or reward doth set them on going. And as the heat of a bath continueth always, because it proceedeth from an inward cause, which changeth the nature of the water; whereas the waters of a pond cannot be made warm, but with much labor and difficulty, and continue in their heat no longer then the outward cause worketh it in them: so when as faith hath warmed our hearts with zeal of God's glory, and made them active and operative in performing the duties of his service, this heat and motion continue with ease and cheerfulness, because they are spiritually natural, and proceed from an inward cause; whereas if worldly causes work this heat of zeal (as honor and preferment in the heat of Jehu) it being unnatural and forced, soon returneth to its wonted coldness. Finally, faith thus renewed, will make us to serve God with cheerfulness and delight, because it encourageth us in our labors, by apprehending and putting into our hands, not only the present pay of all God's temporary blessings and benefits, but also the evidences and conveyances of our heavenly

happiness, which God of his free grace hath by his writings in the Word, and his seals the Sacraments, made over unto us. And who would not cheerfully and with joy do him faithful service, who giveth us present pay above the worth of our work; and for our better encouragement assureth us, that all this shall be but a small earnest in respect of the main bargain, and but the first fruits of that full crop and plentiful harvest of heavenly happiness?

CHAPTER IV.

Of our daily exercise in seeking God, and what are the things which are required unto it.

Sect. 1 - That our seeking God daily, is a necessary duty.

The second main duty, which we are daily, and even throughout the day to perform, is, to seek the Lord our God, by consecrating ourselves wholly both in our souls and bodies unto his worship and service. The which duty is required in many places of the Scriptures. So David exhorteth the Princes of Israel, to set their hearts and souls to seek the Lord their God; and the Lord by his Prophet requireth it of all the people; Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near. And again; Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live. For howsoever the Lord, in respect of the infiniteness and immensity of his nature and essence, filleth all places with his presence, and therefore cannot be far (as the Apostle speaketh) from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being, as the heathens saw even by the very light of nature; and though in the state of innocence and integrity man had sweet communion with God, and enjoyed the comfortable and lively influences of his saving graces, and dwelled in God, and God in him: yet through the fall of

our first parents, and the overspreading corruption which did accompany it; man lost God, and was deprived of his presence; was wholly estranged from that happy and holy communion, and had all influence of his grace stopped from: And together with this inestimable loss, he lost also the sense of this loss, and of all the miseries which did accompany it, and therefore never cared or desired to seek and find him, that being again reunited unto him, he might thereby recover his lost happiness; till God, out of his free grace and infinite goodness pitying man's loss and misery, like the good Shepherd, sought us first, who like wandering sheep did stray from him, without any desire of returning, and carrying us home to his sheepfold, caused us to find him before we sought him, yea when we gainsaid and refused to make this search, according to that of the Prophet cited by the Apostle, I was found of them who sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that inquired not after me: All the day long I have stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gain saying people. Yea, but seeing we have now found God, and have him always by his grace present with us, what needeth (may some say) this daily search and disquisition, seeing that labor may seem vain and to little purpose, which is spent in seeking that which is already found? To which I answer, that we may do that act in a higher degree of perfection, which in the first degrees is done already, yea, seeing we can never in this world do it so perfectly as we should, therefore we ought to do it daily and continually, that we may aspire unto more perfection. And this God, who by his preventing grace caused us to seek him for our own good: requireth us to do daily and more and more for our greater good: and because all our happiness doth consist in our finding and enjoying him; not contenting himself that we should be in the first and least degrees happy, by finding and enjoying him in some small measure, he maketh it our daily task to seek him more and more, that finding him more perfectly, we may perfect our happiness in our full finding and fruition. Yea, in truth there is none that hath truly found him, who doth not daily endeavor to find him more and more. For what hungry man that hath once tasted delicate meats, that can content himself with a taste only, and doth not rather desire to feed on them, till he

be satisfied and his hunger allayed? What wise Merchant finding a treasure in a field, which he hath long sought, contenteth himself only to have found it; and doth not rather purchase the field, that he may enjoy the treasure hid in it? Or finding a precious pearl, satisfieth himself with a slight sight of the luster and beauty of it; and doth not rather sell all he hath, to buy it, being never at quiet till he safely possesseth it in his own Cabinet? Or who finding a rich mine of gold or silver, is contented with the first oar which it offereth unto his view; and doth not rather dig deeper and deeper, till he have made himself owner of the whole treasure? And therefore it is impossible for any man, that hath tasted how good God is to those that seek him, to leave off and so content himself; but he will labor still to feed on him more and more, till he (as the Psalmist speaketh) be satisfied with his likeness in the Kingdom of heaven, seeing in his greatest fruition in this life, he knoweth that he wanteth much of him. And to leave off further hungering after God, after that we have tasted of his love, bounty and goodness, and to content ourselves with a taste only, without further feeding on them, is an evident sign that we are in the number of those relapsed hypocrites, who cannot be renewed by repentance. It is impossible, that if ever we truly felt the incomparable pleasure of God's presence, but that we should seek to enjoy it more and more, till we attain unto fullness of joy in our full fruition in God's Kingdom.

Sect. 2 - What it is to seek God.

Let us then make it our daily exercise to seek the Lord our God, whom to find, and to be happy and blessed, is all one, and whom to miss and lose, is to be miserable and accursed, though we should gain and enjoy the whole world, and all the happiness which it can offer unto us. And to this end, let us consider what it is to seek God, so as we may be sure to find him. Secondly, the manner and properties of this seeking. Thirdly, the inestimable benefits which accrue unto them who daily seek and find him. And lastly, the evils,

miseries, and mischiefs, which befall all those that neglect this holy duty. For the first; to seek God, is to labor daily in and through Christ, to recover and make him our own, whom we have lost through the fall of Adam, and our own original corruption and actual transgressions, that being reconciled and reunited unto him, and so becoming one with him, and he with us, we may be happy and blessed in his fruition. For in and through Christ alone, God is to be sought of us; and by him and no other possible means can we ever find him; in him only God's Justice is satisfied, and wrath appeased; in him, as our alone propitiatory sacrifice, he is well-pleased, and being reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, of a severe Judge and terrible enemy, he is become our gracious Father and chiefest friend. And so perfectly hath he made our peace through the blood of his Cross, that he hath left nothing for us to do, but joining with his holy Spirit, to labor that this inestimable benefit may be applied unto us; which is chiefly done by seeking and suing, with earnest desires and hearty endeavors to obtain and make it our own by faith.

Sect. 3 - What is required unto the seeking of God. First, that we daily labor more perfectly to know him, and remember him.

And to this seeking of God and his favor in Christ, there are diverse things required; first, that we labor daily more and more perfectly to know him, not so much what he is in his own nature, essence, and attributes, as what he is in Christ unto us, that is, infinitely wise to govern us, and all-sufficient by his Word and Spirit to make us wise unto salvation; that he is omnipotent to defend us, and give us victory over all our enemies; that he is immutable, not only in his own nature, but in his love, goodness, and gifts unto us; that he is true to perform unto us his gracious promises, and merciful to forgive us our sins, and save our souls; that Christ is an all-sufficient and perfect Redeemer, to deliver us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, and to bring unto us full redemption; that the

Spirit is not only holy in his own nature, but also to work in us sanctification and holiness. In all which, and all other respects, we are not so much to labor to know these things in speculation, as in practice and experience, nor to apprehend them in the brain, as to feel them in our hearts, nor to conceive of their excellency and sufficiency as causes, but experimentally to feel and find their efficacy, in producing their effects, and bringing forth their fruits in us. And this is that excellent knowledge which the Apostle so much and continually labored to attain unto, as a thing which being of most excellent use, was also of great difficulty; and therefore he was content to be taken up wholly of it, and in comparison of it, to neglect all other knowledge, not only to know that Christ died and rose again, and the virtue and sufficiency of them for his justification and salvation, which were but the study of a few days or hours, and is easy to be found and learned in every Catechism; and therefore it is not to be thought that the Apostle, who was of such excellent gifts, and illuminated with such an extraordinary measure of knowledge, did take so much pains, and spend his chiefest time and strength in attaining unto it; but to find and feel the power and efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection in his own heart, for the strengthening of his faith, the inflaming of his love, the mortifying of his corruptions, and his spiritual quickening unto new obedience and holiness of life. And as we are thus daily to seek God, by laboring more perfectly and effectually to know him; so also by endeavoring to have these things thus known in continual remembrance, that thinking and meditating on them, we may take all good occasions to reap the fruit and benefit of them for our own use, to speak of them as opportunity is offered, for the good and edification of others, and to draw this knowledge into continual practice, for the reforming and amending of our lives and conversations. To which purpose, we must daily endeavor to purge our memories, and to cast out of these store-houses the rubbish and trash of sinful vanities, which do but cumber the room, and take up the place of spiritual riches and heavenly provision, and as it were to blot out of these tables all lessons of impiety, which in the days of our ignorance were written in them, with all vain, carnal, and corrupt motions and conceits, which will be

so many distractions to withdraw our minds from God and spiritual meditations; and in place hereof we must strive to write in them all profitable instructions, which we have formerly learned, and those especially which we have observed in our last holy and spiritual exercises. And if we thus like scholars daily say our part, and recall to our remembrance the lessons which we have learned the last Sabbath, or any day of the week besides, they will be so deeply imprinted in our memories, that they will not easily be forgotten, neither will the learning of new lessons, be a means to put out the old, and make us forget what we have formerly learned.

Sect. 4 - The second thing is, that we adhere unto him with our hearts and affections.

Secondly, unto this daily exercise of seeking God, it is required, that we do continually adhere and cleave unto him with our hearts and affections; that we labor and endeavor daily more and more to wean them from the world and worldly vanities, that they may wholly be fixed and fastened upon him, not affecting and doting upon earthly and momentary trifles which profit not, but minding spiritual and heavenly excellencies, and seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; and that we do not carry ourselves as Citizens of the earth, where we have no abiding place, but that we have our conversation in heaven, from whence we expect a Savior and Redeemer. More especially, we must withdraw our affiance and trust from the arm of flesh, and earthly helps and props, which will most fail us when we most rely upon them; and fasten them wholly upon God the immovable Rock of our salvation, and our chief Tower of strength, resting upon him at all times, and for all things; provision in time of want, protection in time of danger, as well in the absence as presence of all inferior means; knowing that he is infinitely gracious, and all-sufficient to preserve and defend us without, as well as with them. We must also fasten our hopes daily upon God, who is the sure anchor-hold that will stay and secure us

against all the storms of troubles and temptations; and daily comfort ourselves in our earthly pilgrimage, and take encouragement in the performance of all good duties, even when we are crossed in them, and persecuted for them of the world, by continual renewing our expectation of the performance of God's gracious promises, especially those that concern a better life, which will make us to purge ourselves, as he also is pure, and not to do anything which may any way hazard our heavenly happiness. Moreover, we must labor daily that the true fear of the Lord may more and more possess our hearts, making us to reverence him as our heavenly Father, and to stand in awe of him as our supreme Lord and King. By which son-like and holy fear, we shall be more powerfully restrained from all sin, because it is displeasing unto our loving Father, then by all human laws, shame of men, or the sharpest and severest punishments; and enticed with more cheerfulness unto all Christian duties, because they are pleasing in his sight, then by all earthly hopes or temporary rewards. By it all other servile fear of men will be expelled, because when they have done their worst, they can but kill the body; and when they have most severely whipped us, put a Passport into our hands, for our more speedy conducting into our heavenly Country: and fearing only God, we shall become bold and courageous in all good duties, and not caring greatly what men can say or do, we will yield absolute obedience unto God's Commandments, and submit ourselves in all things to be ruled by his Word and holy Spirit. And so shall we approve ourselves to be true Israelites, sound members of the Church, and loyal subjects of Christ's Kingdom; of whom it is prophesied, that they shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

Sect. 5 - That we must cleave unto God by fervent love.

Fourthly, unto this daily exercise there is required, that we do adhere unto him by most fervent love, setting our affections upon him, and

loving him above all things with all our minds, with all our souls and with all our strength: And that we daily and continually renew our love, by considering that he is in himself the chief goodness, infinite in all excellency, beauty, mercy and all perfection, and therefore most lovely and amiable; and also towards us most good and gracious, benign and bountiful. In which respects we are to esteem it our chief happiness, to be by his love towards us, and ours towards him, united unto him, and to enjoy him as our chief goodness and blessedness. For if worldly men do place all their happiness in the fruition of those earthly things unto which by love their hearts are firmly united, as the ambitious man, in the enjoining of his desired honors; the covetous man, of his beloved riches; the voluptuous man, of his wished pleasures; the carnal lover, in the obtaining of his love; how much more ought we to esteem it the top and perfection of our felicity, when by fervent love we enjoy God, being inseparably united unto him, and he unto us in the bonds of love? How much more should our hearts be ravished with delight (as the Spouse in the Canticles) with our mutual and sweet embracement's, intercourse of kindness, and tokens and testimonies of love towards one another? In which love if we would be truly happy, our daily care must be to wean our hearts and affections more and more from the love of the world and worldly vanities, that they may be wholly fastened and fixed upon God; and as men, when they would intend the whole strength of their sight to the more perfect beholding of an object, do wink with one eye, that all the visual spirits being collected in the other, they may more vigorously and exactly discern and comprehend it: so if we would have the whole keys and influences of our affections directed unto God, we must shut and avert them from the world, that we may comprehend and embrace him with more perfection, when they are wholly and solely fixed on him. Besides, the Lord is a jealous God, who can endure no corrivals in his love, and much less that we should share and divide our hearts between him and his enemies. He cannot abide, that professing ourselves his chaste Spouse, we should like filthy strumpets have our hearts go a whoring after strange lovers. To which purpose one saith, that that soul cannot be filled with the gracious visitations of the Lord, which

is subject to worldly distractions, and by how much the more it is emptied of them, by so much it shall be the more filled of the other; if much, then much; if little, then little. For if the Apostles adhering to the Lord's bodily presence, which was most holy, could not be filled with the Spirit, till he was taken from them; how canst thou hope, who art glued and fastened to the world and thy filthy flesh, to have the sweet presence of God and comforts of his Spirit, unless thou endeavorest to renounce these carnal comforts?

Sect. 6 - That we must labor daily to have our communion with God increased.

The fifth special duty required unto our daily seeking of God, is, that we labor more and more to have our sweet communion with him increased, and the comfortable fellowship of his holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, sealed and assured unto us. To which end it must be our daily exercise, to purge and purify them by faith from all noisome corruptions and sinful thoughts, that they may be fit temples and habitations for this pure and holy Spirit to dwell in; and to deck and adorn them with sanctifying graces, which will cause him to keep his residence in us with cheerfulness and delight: we must also submit ourselves to be ruled by him, and not quench any good motion which he suggesteth, either by rebellious and flat denials, or by vain excuses and sluggish delays, but presently put the duties in practice unto which he moveth us, and open the door of our hearts at his first knock and call, that he may come in, and supping with us, feast us with a most delicious banquet of Spiritual refection's; lest putting off his kind offers with slothful excuses (like the Spouse in the Canticles) we move him to depart, and hide from us his gracious presence, and so move us by a sorrowful and painful search, before we can recover and find him, to make more precious account of his company when we do again enjoy it. We must be careful to preserve our peace with him, if we would enjoy his company; for as the Prophet speaketh, How can two walk together, except they be agreed? To which end we

must often renew our faith, and after any slip or infirmity, rely upon the mediation of our Savior Christ for our reconciliation and renewing of our peace. Neither must we alone apply Christ unto us for justification, but also for sanctification, endeavoring in all things to please God; and if we desire to have the peace of him, we must bind our souls to our good behavior; laboring with fervent zeal to glorify him in all our cogitations, words, and actions, not passing any of our time unfruitfully and unprofitably: but employing it so, as some glory thereby may redound to God, and some comfort to our own souls, by furthering the assurance of their salvation. Contrariwise our care must be, that we do not vex and grieve the good Spirit of God, by quenching his good motions which he suggesteth, or by defiling our souls with sinful corruptions; especially, that we do not suffer voluntarily and willfully any known sins to dwell in us, which will pollute our souls and bodies, and making them fitter to be cages for unclean Birds, and noisome styes for filthy Swine, then Temples and habitations for him to dwell in, will move him, as weary of his lodging, to depart from us. Moreover, having this sweet communion with God, and comfortable fruition of his presence, by his holy Spirit dwelling in us, we must labor to preserve it inviolable, by carrying ourselves daily, and in all our thoughts, words, and actions, as in his sight, and not to do anything before him, which we would be ashamed to do in the presence of a man that is just and religious. And seeing we have such communion with God, we must endeavor to be holy, as he is holy; for the Lord will be sanctified in all those that come so nigh him, either in his mercy or Judgments; and being a consuming fire, we must take heed that we be not as stubble and chaff, but as pure gold, which will not be consumed, but be made daily more pure by our communion with him. Finally, having this communion with God, we must rejoice in him above all things in the world; and as this communion must not be by fits and starts, like that with our worldly friends, whom we visit only at good times, or when we have got some leisure from our business, but constant, daily, and continual, like the communion of man and wife, who should dwell together in the same house, or of the head with the members, and soul with the body, which whilst life

lasteth, admit of no division or separation: so must our joy and rejoicing in God caused by this communion, be constant and continual; according to that of the Apostle, Rejoice evermore: And again, Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice; not only in worldly prosperity, but also in affliction and tribulation; for if we enjoy this near communion with God, he may much more fitly say unto us, as Elcanah to Anna, Am not I much better unto thee then all worldly comforts, which are vain and worthless, for they last but a while, and leave thee when thou most needest them? And this joy will support us, even when all other forsake us, and make our labor of love light and easy, which we undertake for the Lord's sake; It will wean our hearts for all carnal delights, and make us even with great joy and comfort to finish our tedious pilgrimage, when as we have the joy and delight of so sweet a Companion in all our Travails.

Sect. 7 - That unto the seeking of God is required, that we daily renew our repentance.

Sixthly, to the daily seeking of God, is required, that we daily renew our repentance; for these in the Scriptures are usually joined together, to intimate unto us that we then seek God, when as we do unfeignedly repent us of our sins. Thus the Lord promiseth, that if the people of Israel would in their tribulation seek the Lord, with all their heart, and with all their soul, and turn to the Lord their God, and be obedient unto his voice, then they should find him. And that if they should humble themselves and pray, and seek his face, and turn from their evil ways, then he would hear from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their land. So the Prophet Isaiah joineth these together: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him. Without which unfeigned repentance, we cannot truly be said to seek God, or to have any communion with him; for if we say that we have any fellowship with him, and walk in darkness,

we lie, and do not the truth. More especially we must seek the Lord, by humbling ourselves in true contrition and sorrow for our sins, which have estranged God from us, and made us lose the sense and assurance of his love and favor. And therefore the Lord exhorteth the meek of the earth to seek him, that they might be hid in the day of his anger: And saith, that Israel and Judah should come together, going and weeping, and should go and seek the Lord their God. Secondly, we must seek him, not only by bewailing and forsaking our sins, but also by bringing forth the fruits of new obedience. Whereof it is, that these also are conjoined in the Scriptures; Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord. Thus Judah is commanded to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do after the Law and the Commandment. And Jehoshaphat is commended, because he sought the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments: which duties, if we join together, we shall be blessed; according to that of the Psalmist, Blessed are they that keep his Testimonies, and that seek him with their whole heart.

Sect. 8 - That we must seek to have and hold God's grace and favor in Jesus Christ.

Finally, to this duty of seeking God, is required, that we seek to have and to hold his face and favor in Jesus Christ; desiring nothing more in the world, then to have the bright beams of his countenance continually shining upon us, and to find and feel the sweet and vital influences of his favor, warming our hearts with joy and comfort; for in him we live, and move, and have our being: and if he graciously behold us with the benign aspect of his mercy and love, we live and flourish; but if he do turn away his face, we are troubled; and if he but blow upon us with the breath of his displeasure, our breath will fail, and dying, we shall return to our dust. He is the life-giving Planet, and Sun of all comfort and joy, who by the beams and influences of his favor, both giveth us life, and preserveth us in our well-being. And therefore as the inferior creatures are much

indamaged, when in the eclipses of the Sun they are for a short time deprived of its presence and vital influences; so cannot our souls but receive much hurt and spiritual detriment, if the beams of God's favor be for the shortest moment eclipsed from us. Hereof it is, that we are exhorted to seek the Lord and his face, because in him, our life and strength, virtue and vigor chiefly consisteth. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore: And therefore no sooner was David moved to perform this duty, but presently he undertaketh it, as being above all other things most pleasant and profitable. When thou saidest (saith he) Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee; Thy face, Lord, will I seek. And hence it is, that if the Lord did never so little estrange himself, he doth so earnestly pray that he would not hide his face from him; and crieth out as a man utterly forlorn and forsaken of all hope and comfort, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? And contrariwise, when he enjoyed God's face and favor, he thought himself much more happy, then in the fruition of all earthly blessings. There are many (saith he) that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. Now the means whereby we may preserve and assure unto ourselves, the face, favor, and loving countenance of God, is daily to strive and labor after greater perfection in all spiritual graces, and in the duties of his service; as to know him more perfectly, to believe in him more assuredly, to love him more entirely, to fear him more reverently, to trust in him more firmly, to hope in him more cheerfully and patiently, to call upon him more devoutly and fervently, to hear his Word more attentively, and to perform all the duties of piety, righteousness, and sobriety, more sincerely and diligently then we did the day before. And if we thus labor and endeavor to please God in all things, we shall be sure of his favor, and notwithstanding our manifold infirmities, he will shine upon us with the light of his countenance, and graciously accept, and be well pleased with us in the face of his Beloved, and our only Savior Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

Of the right manner of seeking God, so as we may be sure to find him: and of the benefits which arise from it.

Sect. 1 - That we must seek God first and principally, seasonably and constantly,

AND these are the things which are required to this duty of seeking God daily. The second point propounded, was the manner how he is to be thus sought of us. In which respect, we are to seek him rightly, according to the direction of his Word. Wherein is required, first, that we seek God first and principally, that is, above all things in the world, more highly esteeming him in our judgments, more often thinking on him in our meditations, more fervently cleaving unto him, in our hearts, wills, and affections, more diligently seeking his grace and favor in all our actions, then the greatest excellencies that heaven or earth can afford unto us. Secondly, we must seek him first in time, and before all other things, as men use to seek first things chiefly necessary, profitable, and of greatest value and excellency, and when they have any spare time, things of less use, utility, or worth; as treasures, before lumber; means of life, food, apparel, liberty and peace, before superfluties and such things, as serve only for ornament and delight. Thirdly, we must seek him in the opportune, seasonable, and acceptable time when he may be found, that is, whilst the day of salvation lasteth, and whilst yet God offereth unto us his grace and favor, and still vouchsafeth unto us his holy Ordinances, that seeking, we may find him in them. Yea, whilst God biddeth us seek his face, and even as soon as the word is come out of his mouth, our hearts must answer, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek. So the Lord by his Prophet exhorteth us: Seek ye the Lord while he may

be found, and call upon him while he is near: And the Church and people of God persuade one another; Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts, and I will go also. We must seek the Bridegroom when he is come into his Garden, and inviteth us to feast with him in his spiritual delicacies. And whilst he knocketh at the door of our hearts with the finger of his Spirit, and calleth unto us by the ministry of his Word, saying, Open unto me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: We must not give him a come-again, nor put him off with slight excuses; lest he punish our sloth, by withdrawing himself and the comforts of his Spirit from us; and because we would not open when he knocked, nor answer when he called, he make us to knock, and call and cry, before he will hear us, and to seek him with sorrow, before he will be found of us, that so he may make us afterwards to esteem more of his gracious offers, and to make more precious account of his comfortable presence, when he doth again vouchsafe it unto us; which we did not greatly value, when as we might have enjoyed it with ease and pleasure. Now the most seasonable time of seeking God, are the days of our youth, and when with good Josiah we seek him in our tender age, for he seeketh him best and most acceptably, that seeketh him soonest and with best speed. Which if we have neglected, then the best time of seeking him is the time present, and while yet the sound of his voice in the ministry of his Word ringeth in our ears, calling us to turn from our sins, and return unto him. For whilst God seeketh us in his holy ordinances, it is fit time of seeking him, neither is the acceptable time and day of salvation past, whilst yet the light of the Gospel shineth unto us, and therefore today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. But if we neglect this time, and let Christ go away, through our profaneness or slothful negligence, he will say unto us as he did unto the Jews; Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. And finally, as in respect of the time, we must seek him seasonably, so also constantly, that is, continually, and to the end of our lives, when as having full fruition of him, we shall be secure in his presence, and without fear of losing him. We must seek him, not only in the day of adversity and affliction, when we most sensibly apprehend our need of him: for

this may be performed by the greatest hypocrites, and the most despisers of his grace at other times; but also in the time of our prosperity, when carnal reason would persuade us, that having all things at our hearts desire, we have less need to sue and seek unto him. Not only when he showeth his glory and greatness upon extraordinary occasions, as by terrible thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and such like; which caused the rebellious Israelites to seek him, when they had formerly rejected him; but we must continue this duty at all times, according to that wish of the Lord, in the behalf of the Israelites; O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, &c.

Sect. 2 - That we must seek God in Jesus Christ, sincerely, zealously, and with all diligence.

And after this manner we ought to seek God, in respect of the time; in respect of the person in whom we must seek him, it must be in the face of his Anointed, and the alone mediation of Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, in whom only he will be found of us. For if we seek him in our own merits, works, and worthiness, we shall, in regard of their imperfections and corruptions, be more estranged from him. In respect of ourselves who are the seekers, we must seek him, if we mean to find him, after a right manner; first, sincerely and uprightly, with all our hearts and souls, wills and affections. So David exhorteth the Princes of Israel, to set their hearts and souls to seek the Lord their God. And herein propoundeth himself, as an example for our imitation, professing that with his whole heart he had sought the Lord. Thus Asa and the people of Judah entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul. Which sincere seeking only hath the promise of finding him; according to that in Deuteronomy, If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; if thou seek him with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. And so the Lord promiseth the people of Judah, that if in the land of their captivity they would seek

the Lord, they should find him, if they should search for him with all their heart. Secondly, we must seek the Lord, not coldly and formally, as though we were careless whether we found him or not, but zealously, and with all earnestness, as being the chief thing which we desire. And as the covetous man neglecteth his meat, that he may get money; and the famished man money, that he may get meat to satisfy his hunger: so must we covet and hunger after God's presence, and labor to enjoy his face and favor, more then to enjoy all our earthly desires. And this fervency of affection in seeking God, is in most lively manner expressed in the example of the Spouse in the Canticles, seeking her Bridegroom, who like a woman ravished with the excellencies of her Lover, and even mad with love, hath her heart so fixed on him, that she can rest neither night nor day; but even in her bed where she should sleep, her mind runneth on him, and between sleeping and waking, up she starteth to let him in whom her soul loveth; of which hope, when she findeth herself frustrate, by his withdrawing himself, she calleth unto him, and seeketh for him; and having neither answer, nor desired success, she runneth about the streets of the City, even in the night, and inquireth of the Watchmen, and everyone she met (as though the heat of love, had made her to cast off the Vail of modesty) if they could tell her no tidings of her Beloved; being never at rest till she had found him, and had again gotten him within her embracement's. Finally, unto this fervency in affection, we must join diligence in action, endeavoring and laboring in the use of all good means, whereby we may find God, and be more and more assured of his grace and favor. For unto this sedulity in seeking God, are the promises made; and the Apostle telleth us, that he is a bountiful rewarder of them that diligently seek him. As therefore they who have lost some precious jewel wherein their chief wealth consisteth, do not content themselves with a slight search, but set all other business aside to seek it, and are so intent and wholly taken up with their employment, that they can scarce find any time to sit down and rest them, yea to eat, drink or sleep, till they have found it; and have all their thoughts so intent upon this one thing which they have in hand, that they mind not what is spoken or done in other matters; so must we use the like or greater diligence in

seeking God, who is of infinite more value than all the Jewels of the world. And if David was so wholly intent in preparing a visible place of God's presence, that he protesteth to neglect all other things in comparison of it; as that he would not come into the tabernacle of his house, nor go up into his bed; nor give sleep unto his eyes, nor slumber unto his eyelids, until he might find a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob: then how much more should we be diligent and earnest above all things in seeking God, that we may have him to reside and dwell with us in the temple of our hearts?

Sect. 3 - Of the fruits and benefits which we enjoy by our daily seeking of God.

The third point to be considered, is the manifold fruits and benefits which they receive and enjoy who thus daily seek God. For first, they shall not be confounded by any shame, nor with the malice and might of all their enemies, according to that of the Psalmist, Let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Their infirmities shall not be laid to their charge, nor their imperfections, corruptions and failings in performing the duties of God's service; as appeareth by the prayer of Hezekiah for them, who had prepared their hearts to seek God, whom God pardoned, though they were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. They shall not lose their labor, nor spend their strength in vain; for the Lord hath promised that those who thus seek him, shall surely find him. If thou seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thine heart. So Azariah telleth Asa and the people, that the Lord would be with them, while they were with him: and if they sought him, he would be found of them; the which he confirmeth by the experience which their fathers had hereof in former times, even as afterwards they found the Word of God in his mouth confirmed in their own experience; for no sooner did they set themselves to seek the Lord with their whole desire, but he was

found of them, and the Lord gave them rest round about. And as we shall by seeking God be freed from all evil, so shall we have the fruition of all good; for we shall enjoy God himself, and he will dwell in us as in his Temple, and communicate himself unto us as unto his love and Spouse. Neither will he come empty-handed, but bring with him his rich rewards: and as he is infinitely good in himself, so will he be good unto them that wait for him, and to the soul that seeketh him. He will not let any good thing be wanting unto them. They shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of their salvation. They shall prosper in all their works, be preserved from all dangers, and delivered from all evil; for the hand of the Lord is upon them for good that seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. He will not forsake them; but will hide them in the day of his anger. They shall receive spiritual growth in all graces, through the beams of his brightness, and the sweet influences of his favor, as the herbs and trees receive growth and become fruitful, by the virtue of the Sun that shineth upon them. Yea, themselves shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day; and in his light they shall see light, and be admitted to the sight and contemplation of his secret counsels. They shall have their faith and affiance in God more and more confirmed, through that familiarity and communion which they have with him; and having peace with God, they shall have also peace of conscience, and peace with all the creatures. They shall have safety and Christian security in God's presence, favor, and protection, and he will give them rest on all sides, because they have sought the Lord their God. So as they may say with David; I will not be afraid of ten thousand of people that have set themselves against me round about. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou, Lord, art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, &c. And in the greatest garboils of worldly troubles, they may say with him, I will both lay me down and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. They shall have their hearts filled with joy and gladness in the fruition of his favor,

and shall, above all others, have continual cause of rejoicing; according to that of the Psalmist, Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee, and let all such as love thy salvation, say continually, Let God be magnified. And again: Glory ye in his holy name, let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. They shall lead a holy and unblameable life, when as they are always taken up in these pious exercises, and attain daily unto more and more perfection in all saving graces, and in the performance of all Christian duties. Yea, they shall have not only abundance of grace and all Spiritual good in this life, but also of glory in the life to come. For they that seek God now, shall then perfectly find him, and with him eternal blessedness in the fruition of the chief goodness, according to that of the Prophet David: They that seek the Lord with their whole heart, are blessed; for they shall live the life of Grace here, and the life of glory in the world to come.

Sect. 4 - Of the evils which follow our neglect of seeking God.

Finally, the evils and mischiefs are manifold which follow the neglect of this duty of seeking God: for God's power and wrath is against them, to bring upon them the punishment of their neglect. He will withdraw from such his comfortable presence; and by grievous afflictions enforce upon them this duty, which they will not do cheerfully and of their own accord, according to that in Hosea: I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face; in their afflictions they will seek me early. They shall not prosper in anything which they do or take in hand, as the Lord threateneth the brutish pastors of Judah. And as the flowers and plants cannot thrive and flourish, which enjoy not the light and warmth of the Sun: so much less shall they prosper and grow in grace or goodness, who neglect to seek God, and so deprive themselves of the comfortable beams of his gracious presence. Finally, the Lord hath threatened to stretch out his hand, and take vengeance on them that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for him; yea, that he will

laugh at their destruction, and delight himself in their punishments, as he intimateth, by comparing the day of vengeance to a day of solemn sacrifice, unto which he inviteth his guests, that they may be spectators of these fearful examples, and glorify his Justice in the deserved punishments of those who had not fought him.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Christian Armor which we must put on daily, and of the benefits which we shall reap thereby.

Sect. 1 - Of the several parts of the Christian armor.

We have entreated the more largely of that main duty of seeking God, as being not only the chief and principal of all that are to be performed in the daily exercise, but even the root and fountain, sum and substance of all the rest from which they spring, and in which they are comprised. In which respect the other that remain to be spoken of, may be passed over with greater brevity, as being all but special branches of the former duty, and streams that will readily and naturally flow from that fountain. The third main duty then in this daily exercise, is, that we put on the whole armor of God, which is, that we look continually unto ourselves, that we be thoroughly furnished, and as it were, armed at all points with the main, fundamental, sanctifying and saving graces of God's holy Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to stand in the day of trial, and to resist those daily temptations wherewith we are assaulted by our spiritual enemies. The chief and principal whereof, the Apostle hath in the Epistle to the Ephesians prescribed unto us. The first is, the girdle of verity; whereby is meant, that we should not only embrace the truth of Religion, and frame our judgments, affections and actions

according to the sincere and pure Word of God; but also that our knowledge, profession and practice, be in truth and sincerity of heart, carrying ourselves in all things uprightly, and in the integrity of a good conscience. The second is, the breastplate of righteousness, whereby we understand true sanctification and godliness, consisting in an earnest desire, a firm resolution, and constant endeavor of conforming our whole lives according to God's revealed will, that we may please him in all things, and have both our persons and actions accepted in his sight. The third is, that our feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: that is, as soldiers that have good shoes and leg-harness, are thereby enabled to hold on their march in stony and rough ways, and thorough the midst of briers and thorns; whereas if they were barefooted, or ill shod, they would be pricked and galled, and soon tire and faint in the way: So must we daily arm our affections, the feet of our souls, with all the sweet comforts and gracious promises of the Gospel, made unto those who hold out unto the end, and fight until they overcome, without which we shall soon be wearied, and faint in the way, seeing it is rough and unpleasant to flesh and blood, and full of the thorns and briers of afflictions and persecutions. The fourth piece of the Christian armor is, the shield of faith, which also we must daily put on, applying afresh unto ourselves God's mercies in the merits of Christ, the gracious promises of the Gospel, and the satisfaction and obedience of our Savior and Redeemer, whereby, though we be never so weak in our own strength, we shall be enabled to resist all Satan's temptations, and to quench and beat back all the fiery darts of the wicked one, so as they shall not be able to wound or do us any harm. The fifth piece which we must daily put on, is, the helmet of salvation, that is, we must continually renew and revive our hopes, and expect and wait for with patience, the accomplishment of all God's gracious promises, which by faith we believe and apprehend. And this will notably encourage us in all Christian duties of a godly life, seem they never so irksome and tedious unto us, when as we have daily an eye to the recompense of reward; and to endure any hard measure at the hands of the world, and to drink the deepest draught in the cup of affliction and persecution for God's sake and the Gospels which we

profess, when as we assuredly hope, that the greatest crosses and calamities are not worthy the glory which shall be revealed, because they are light and momentary; but the crown of happiness which they help to set upon our heads, most excellent and eternal. The sixth and last piece, is, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which being rightly managed, is sufficient to defend ourselves, and offend and drive back the Enemy, as we see in the example of our Savior Christ, who used no other weapon to vanquish Satan and all his tenons. We must therefore daily exercise ourselves in reading and meditating in the holy Scriptures, which will serve as a light to guide us in all our ways, as a goad in our sides, if we be sluggish; as cordial water, if we be ready to faint with feebleness; and as a two-handed sword, to defend us against all enemies who assault us in the way, and labor to hinder and discourage us in our Christian course and conversation. And this armor we must put on, not piecemeal, but complete and in all the parts. We must not put on some parts only, and let other pieces of it lie by, but, as the Apostle speaketh, we must put on the whole armor of God; for if any part be wanting, we shall lie open to the wounds of our spiritual enemies. Neither must we put it one day on, and leave it off another, but we must put it on daily, seeing we are continually assaulted, and have no one day of truce, till by death we have gotten a full and final victory. It must not like armor in the time of peace lie by, or hang rusting upon the walls; but we must always keep it bright and furbished, fit for daily use, and fast buckled unto us both day and night, sleeping and waking, seeing we are continually in the battle, encountered at all times, and even every hour, with the temptations of our spiritual enemies. And to this end we must continually keep the Christian watch, as the Apostle exhorteth, that we be not through our sloth and sluggishness surprised at unawares. And because it is not armor of our own making and providing, but of God's own workmanship, and of his free gift, whereof it is called, The Armor of God: and seeing when we have it, it is not in our power to put it on, but it is God alone, that both bestoweth and buckleth it unto us; therefore unto our watchfulness, we must add fervent and daily prayer unto God, both to give it unto us, and to assist us so with his holy Spirit, that we may

be enabled, not only to put it on, but also to keep it continually fast buckled unto us. Neither let us fear that the daily and continual wearing of it will be tedious and troublesome; for though at the first it may seem so, when like fresh water Soldiers we enter into the Christian warfare; yet by daily use, it will become so easy and familiar, that it will trouble us no more than our ordinary apparel.

Sect. 2 - That the putting on the Christian Armor is very necessary.

Now that we may be moved with cheerfulness to exercise ourselves in this daily duty, let us consider that the continual putting on and wearing of this Armor, is both exceeding necessary and profitable. It is most necessary, because the spiritual enemies of our salvation are always in readiness, watching their opportunity, when by their fiery assaults they may vanquish us, and bring us to destruction. And therefore it is as necessary that we should use like or greater diligence, and be always in readiness to withstand their encounters. Secondly, this daily use of the Christian Armor is so necessary, that all other helps are in vain, if this be neglected. For though we should be continually exercised in religious duties, as prayer, hearing the Word, reading, conference and meditation; and in the works of justice and charity, and the ordinary duties of our callings; yet if this Armor be not put on, they will do us no good, seeing they will not be done in truth and sincerity, faith and a good conscience: and therefore even in them our spiritual enemies will set snares to catch us, and finding us naked of our Christian Armor, will lay secret ambushments, even in these religious and charitable exercises, and assaulting us at unawares, will give us the foil, and lead us captive unto sin.

Sect. 3 - Of the manifold benefits which arise from being thus daily armed.

Secondly, it is most profitable to be thus daily armed, as may appear by the manifold fruits and benefits which will accrue unto us by it. For hereby we shall be strengthened against all the assaults of all our spiritual enemies, so as they shall never be able to prevail against us, but at last be vanquished and overcome. And therefore hath God made for us, and given unto us this spiritual Armor, and to this end he exhorteth us to put it daily on, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand against the wiles of the devil, and all encounters and attempts of the enemies of our salvation. Therefore hath he put into our hands, not carnal weapons, which are far unfitting this spiritual warfare, but such as are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And therefore we may be assured that God will not be disgraced with the weakness of his workmanship, nor fail of his end for which he hath made it, and so spend his labor in vain: but seeing he hath made it, and put it into our hands for Armor of high proof, let us assure ourselves that it will never fail, but will at all times be sufficient to beat back the bullets of Satan's temptations, and to defend us against the assaults of all our spiritual enemies. Again, if we daily put on this Armor, it will make us valiant and courageous, seeing before the fight it assureth us of victory. Whereas, though we have never so much valor and fortitude, yet if we be but naked men, and so lie open to be wounded continually with the fiery darts of the devil, our courage will be soon cooled, and like cowards, we shall betake ourselves to a shameful flight. It will make us cheerful in our pilgrimage, and to go on in the ways of godliness and righteousness with much joy and comfort; when as being armed, we shall not need to fear any spiritual thieves that lie lurking in the way to rob us of God's graces, nor to go out of the right way, either to the right hand or to the left, for any worldly terror or discouragement which shall affront us in our course of Christianity. It will preserve us from falling into such sins as will wound our souls and consciences, and strengthen us also against our frailties and infirmities, so as they shall not prevail against us. It will be a notable means to continue us

in peace; for as nothing more preserveth our worldly peace, then to be continually prepared for war; so nothing bringeth unto us a more sound and secure peace, even peace with God, peace, of conscience, and peace also in respect of the malicious attempts of our spiritual enemies, then to keep daily this Armor fast buckled unto us. Finally, it will bring with it much Christian security, when as we are assured that we are free from all danger, and that none of our enemies shall be able to hurt us; so as we may lie down in peace and take our rest, because the Lord only maketh us (hereby) to dwell in safety.

Sect. 4 - That every several part of this Armor bringeth special profit.

And as the whole Armor in general bringeth unto us singular profit; so every several piece and part of it is for special use and benefit. For by the girdle of verity, we shall be preserved against all errors and heresies, and keep a right course in the way of truth; and our hearts being upright and sincere in the sight of God, we shall carry ourselves as in his sight and presence, in all our thoughts, words, and actions, and be kept safe from being soured with the leaven of hypocrisy; from lameness, which causeth us to halt between God and the world, and from guile and dissimulation, the poison of the soul, which tainteth and infecteth all virtuous actions. By the breastplate of righteousness, whereby we desire, resolve, and endeavor to do God's will, and please him in all things, our vital parts will be preserved from being wounded with the poisonous darts of the devil; and howsoever with his temptations he may make us slip through frailty and infirmity, and with his hellish darts, inflict some little scratches in the more remote and ignoble parts, yet he shall not be able to pierce our hearts and vital parts, with any mortal wounds of sin, because they are strongly armed with this breast-plate of righteousness. By having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, we shall be enabled to continue our march in the Christian warfare, and so prepared against all afflictions and troubles, which like thorns and briers molest us in our journey, that

we shall not be discouraged, nor faint in the way; but by that inward peace which the Gospel bringeth unto us, we shall be confirmed and comforted in the midst of all worldly garboils and troubles. By the shield of faith we shall repel the fiery darts of Satan's temptations, and resist and beat him back when he assaulteth us with greatest fury; we shall also thereby overcome the world, on the one side tempting us with the wages of earthly vanities, by contemning it in comparison of heavenly happiness, of which faith assureth us; and on the other side, threatening and terrifying us with crosses and afflictions, whilst it receiveth them as tokens of God's love, and signs of our adoption, and persuadeth us that they shall work together for the best, and serve as means to further our salvation. By the helmet of salvation, we are also notably strengthened in the spiritual conflict, so as though Satan the old Serpent may bite and bruize our heel, yet he shall not be able to hurt our Head; we are also thereby encouraged to labor diligently after sanctification, and having hope of enjoining with Christ heavenly happiness, it is a notable means to move us to purge and purify ourselves, as he also is pure. Finally, we are encouraged to fight valiantly the Lord's battles, by assured hope of victory; and to pass with patience and comfort throughout all worldly discouragements, because we expect, that after we have travailed thorough a little spot of foul way, we shall come safely to a Palace of pleasure, and to all the joys of our heavenly Country. Lastly, by the sword of the Spirit, if we can skillfully use it, we shall be fitted for all purposes, strengthened against all enemies, overcome all difficulties, answer all objections, repel all temptations: Yea, such a glorious light cometh from this glittering weapon, that it is sufficient, not only to defend us, and beat down (like that light which appeared to Saul and his company) with fear and astonishment all our enemies, but to guide and direct us in all our ways, and to make us perfect and wise for attaining unto salvation.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the fourth main daily duty, which is to arm ourselves against all sin, and to devote ourselves wholly to God's service.

Sect. 1 - That we must necessarily arm ourselves against all sin, and the reasons of it.

The fourth main duty, daily to be performed, is to arm and strengthen ourselves daily against sin; and devote our souls and bodies wholly to God's service, in the performance of all Christian duties which may be pleasing in his sight. Concerning the former: It is most necessary that we continually arm ourselves against sin, and gather daily new strength, to withstand and mortify our corruptions. First, because Satan like a roaring Lyon, walketh continually about, seeking to devour us, laying at all times and in all places, his nets and snares of perdition, and many baits of worldly vanities, and seals of evil examples, to allure us to stoop and give over our heavenly flight, that so he may catch and ensnare us to our destruction. Secondly, because the world, as a strong enemy, daily joineth with him, laboring one while with her smiles and favors; her allurements and proffers of prosperity, to entice us to follow those patterns and precedents of evil, which she setteth before us; and another while with frowns and threats, afflictions and persecutions, to thrust us by main force into sin. Thirdly, because we nourish continually a secret traitor in our bosoms, which is daily ready to betray us into their hands, even our own flesh and corrupt nature, which is prone to all evil, and taketh delight in nothing more than in glutting itself with the pleasures of sin. So that no sooner do we give over fighting, but we are presently foiled; no sooner do we desist rowing and tugging against the stream of our natural corruptions, but they presently carry us down with a swift course, into someone or other sinful action. Fourthly, because many are the wiles and deceits of sin, which will easily circumvent us, if we do not daily observe and labor to defeat them. One while they will pretend friendship, and that they

will do us good; or at least, that they are innocent, and will not hurt us; and at another time necessity, that we cannot live without them, or if we do, a life no better than death, uncheerful and uncomfortable. Sometime they will plead custom and prescription, which entereth them into possession (as it were) by course of Law. And if we can answer this, they will offer themselves like guests, craving but one nights lodging, with promise then to be gone: but afterwards when they are admitted, either by force take possession, or else upon further acquaintance and better liking, desire to make longer abode. Lastly, because the occasions of sin daily are many, as the objects of unlawful pleasures, which bewitch us with their alluring tunes, and of sinful gain and profit, which like golden chains, draw us into wicked courses; and of pride and vain-glory, which easily persuade us, who are naturally ambitious, to use any means which may further our advancement. Unto which, we may add the daily occasions of unjust anger, thrusting us on to revenge; of envy or disdain; of wantonness and uncleanness; of vain, unsavory, and rotten communication, through sinful society and wicked company, and innumerable such others; all which will powerfully draw us to sin, if we be not daily armed against it. In all which respects, it is most necessary that we arm ourselves, and make daily war against all our sins, especially against those which clean fastest to our corrupt natures, and unto which we are most prone and apt to fall. Of which we may take the better and surer notice, if we consider what they were, which before our conversion did most reign and rule in us, seeing these in the state of regeneration, though they be deposed from their regency, yet will, of all others be most hardly expelled; or being in some measure driven out, yet out of their experience of their former victories, will conceive hope of repossessing their wonted hold, and to this end will lurk and hover about us, that they may spy opportunity of re-entering, like Crowes and other birds of prey, which are beaten off a field, where they have long used to feed. As also if we observe what are those sins which our corruption most liketh and longeth after, and is most ready to extenuate and excuse, when we are touched and reprov'd for them, making them light and venial, by gilding them over with vain, frivolous, or false pretenses.

And finally, we may know them by our own lamentable experience, when as we carefully observe what sins most distract us in all good exercises, and hinder our growth in godliness; and what they be, into which, through frailty we most often fall, and whereby we have been most overtaken. And when we have by these means taken notice of them, we must with most diligence and resolution arm ourselves against them; seeing by them we have most dishonored God, and wounded our own consciences, and are in greatest danger to be overcome, and led captive to hell and destruction, being like bordering enemies, which have a strong party in ourselves, and have best opportunity to take all advantages against us.

Sect. 2 - Of the means to work in our hearts a true hatred of sin.

Now the means whereby we may be armed against all sins in general, and these in particular, are many. The first and principal, is to work our hearts to a deadly and irreconcilable hatred against them, by meditating of the infinite Majesty and goodness of God, against whom they are committed, how great and glorious he is in himself, and how good and gracious unto us, who hath given us all the good things which we enjoy or hope for, yea his chiefest Jewel, his best beloved Son to die for us: By considering that it is above all things most hateful and displeasing unto God, and maketh all creatures in whom it is most odious, though never so much beloved of him; As we see in the example of the rejected Jews; Adam cast out of Paradise, the Son of God himself, who bearing our sins, did bear all his Fathers wrath, and could not be reconciled, till by his sufferings he had made full satisfaction to his Justice. That it is most heinous and capital, being committed against so infinite a Majesty, as appeareth by those dreadful and eternal punishments, which God's righteous judgment inflicteth on those that commit it, in this world and the world to come, that it is the greatest folly in the world, hazarding the eternal salvation of our most precious souls, which are of more worth then many Monarchies, and plunging them into hell and everlasting

destruction, for the momentary and uncertain fruition of earthly vanities. That it pierced the Lord of life, and nailed him to the Cross, causing him to be condemned that came to save us, and to be put to a shameful death, who came to give unto us everlasting life. That the deep die of it so stained our souls, that nothing could wash away the filthy spots that it left behind it, but the precious blood of Christ. That it vexeth and grieveth the good Spirit of God dwelling in us, and by defiling our bodies and souls which are his Temples, doth make him weary of his lodging. That above all things it delighteth the devil, as being the child and darling of this hellish parent; and maketh us to become fit rooms for him to revel in, and to pass his time with most delight. Let us consider of the manifold evils which it causeth unto us, both privative and positive, in this life and in the life to come. For it depriveth us of all good, and bringeth with it all evil. It separateth between our God and us, and turneth the greatest love into the most dangerous enmity. It defaceth his Image in us, and stampeth upon us the image of the devil. It frustrateth the end of our creation, which was, to glorify God, by our worshipping and serving him, yea of our Redemption by Christ, if we live and die in it without repentance. It casteth us (like out-laws) out of God's protection, and maketh us (like slaves) subject to the tyranny of Satan. It is the cause of all the evils of punishment, which are inflicted upon the creatures in this life and the life to come. It blindeth the mind, and hardeneth the heart, debarreth us of all sweet communion with God, and depriveth us of the inestimable comforts of his holy Spirit. It weakeneth our faith, and woundeth our conscience, taketh away all inward peace, and filleth our hearts with shame and sorrow, and our faces with blushing, or (which is worse) with impudency. It depriveth us of God's eternal and most comfortable presence, and of the joys of his heavenly Kingdom, and plungeth us headlong into hell and destruction. Finally, let us add unto these, whatsoever other evils we can imagine, and then conclude, that sin, as the cursed mother of them all, hath bred them in her hellish womb.

Sect. 3 - Of the means whereby we may be strengthened against sin.

And when by these meditations we have wrought our hearts unto a true hatred of all sin; there are other means to be used of us, that we may be strongly armed against it. As first, that we do throughout the whole day entertain and nourish good and holy desires, and firm and constant resolutions, that we will resist and withstand it, in what manner or form so ever it shall set upon us. For nothing will bring more easy and assured victory, then Christian courage and resolution, to fight and strive against it, grounded not on our own strength, but upon the power and promises of God, and that we will let pass no good means unassayed whereby we may overcome. Secondly, we must keep a daily and continual watch over ourselves, and especially over our hearts, that we be not surprised on a sudden, nor hardened or heartened in any wicked course, through the deceitfulness of sin; of which, we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter. Thirdly, we must be no less careful in flying all occasions, inducements, and provocations unto sin, then the sinful acts themselves; for if we willfully cast ourselves into these temptations, it is just with God to deliver us unto evil. Fourthly, we must make conscience of committing of the least sins, which being admitted, will make room for the greatest; and withstand sins in the first degrees, as soon as they are suggested by the devil, the world, or our own flesh; casting out this hellish wild-fire, before it hath by the least abode inflamed our concupiscence, or before this seed of impiety hath gotten any warmth or growth. Fifthly, we must be so bold and valorous in God's assistance, as that in the mean time we be suspicious and fearful, in respect of our own weakness and frailty, and the might and malice of our innumerable enemies, taking good heed, whilst we stand, of falling, and working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Sixthly, we must daily walk with God, and carry ourselves continually as in his sight and presence, who not only taketh notice of all our actions, but also will cause us one day to give a strict account of them, either to reward them graciously, if they be good; or to punish them severely, if they be evil. Lastly, let us daily and continually resign ourselves over into the hands of God, who is

alone able to deliver us from all evil, and crave instantly his protection from all enemies, and the direction of his holy Spirit, that by the good guide thereof, we may throughout the whole day be preserved and kept in the way of righteousness and holiness, and from erring and going astray in the by-paths of sin.

Sect. 4 - That we must embrace all virtues and Christian duties.

And as we are thus daily to arm ourselves against sin; so are we constantly and continually to desire and resolve in our hearts, that we will embrace all virtue, and perform all Christian duties, both unto God, our neighbors and ourselves, throughout the whole day, not thinking any grace or good duty so small, that it may be neglected, or so difficult and of such a high nature, that it may not be attempted and sought after. Neither must we content ourselves to take the occasions of well-doing, when they are offered and thrust upon us, but we must exercise our minds, by studying and advising how we may get and gain the best opportunities of doing most good, both for the advancement of God's glory, and our own and our neighbors good. But especially we must set ourselves with most earnest study, and serious diligence to attain unto, and adorn our souls with those graces, wherein they are most defective, and to perform those duties which our consciences tell us that we have in time past most neglected, not because they were in their own nature less excellent, profitable, or necessary (for so when time and opportunity will not suffer us to perform all, we may omit lawfully those duties which are of least use and importance) but because our corrupt natures being most averse unto them, we find them most difficult and unpleasant unto us. For so shall we receive a double benefit, not only doing that which is good, but also in doing it, profit daily in the denying of ourselves and our own wills, in the mortifying of our corrupt nature, in that wherein it is most strong and rebellious, and in strengthening our regenerate part and new man, in that wherein it is most weak and defective. And if we would thus

daily enlarge our desires, and strengthen our resolutions, to the embracing and practicing of all virtuous actions and good duties, we should receive singular profit by it. For we should not so easily as we do, let slip the occasions of well doing, but take hold of the opportunity when it is offered; we should not be so faint-hearted, and weak-handed in good duties, nor so easily daunted and discouraged in them, but should become strong and valorous, if we would thus daily confirm and strengthen our hearts and hands, by these good resolutions, that we will let pass no opportunity of performing those Christian duties which God requireth of us. Finally, notwithstanding our many frailties and infirmities in our best actions, and slips and falls into sin, we should be accepted of God through Christ, in this Evangelical obedience, as though it were free from all imperfection; seeing he respecteth more our hearts than our hands, and our resolutions and endeavors, more than our abilities and performances.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the fifth and sixth daily duties, which are to conform ourselves to God's Law, and to submit ourselves to his good pleasure.

Sect. 1 - That we must conform our thoughts, words, and actions, according to God's Law.

The fifth main duty wherein we are daily to exercise ourselves, is, that we rightly dispose of all our thoughts, words, and actions, so as they may in all things be conformable to the Law of God. In respect of our thoughts, our care must be, that we be not earthly minded, like Citizens of the world, nor suffer them to be fixed and fastened upon earthly and momentary vanities, which profit not; as how we may get

or keep the honors, riches, and pleasures of the world, by carnal and unlawful means, which are too base objects for them which are of so high and divine a nature; but that they be chiefly taken up, and exercised about spiritual, holy, and heavenly things: as of their excellency, profit, and necessity, by what means we may obtain, or having them in some measure, may be more enriched with them; how we may safely keep them and be secured from fear of losing them. How we may be more and more united unto Christ, and assured that both he and all his benefits do belong unto us. How we are so to carry ourselves, that we may more sensibly and feelingly apprehend the power and efficacy of his death and resurrection working in us, and replenishing our hearts with sweet consolations, and joy in the holy Ghost. How we may be daily more assured of God's grace and favor, and feel and discern the light and warmth of his loving countenance shining upon us, and inflaming our hearts with his love. How we may withstand temptations, and get mastery over our strongest corruptions; and how we may daily be more renewed and strengthened in all grace and goodness, that we may increase in bringing forth more fruits of holiness and righteousness. And with these and such like holy and heavenly meditations, our minds must chiefly be taken up; and when we exercise them about earthly things, and the duties of our callings, it must be, as upon means which tend to these ends, and (like birds) we must use the earth as a help to raise up ourselves, and to gather wing, that we may soar aloft in heavenly meditations. The which we shall do, if we perform the works of our callings, in faith and a good conscience, in love and obedience unto God, as duties of his service which he hath required at our hands, with prayer for good success and thanksgiving, when by God's blessing we have obtained it; and when we use them as means to further our main ends, namely, the advancement of God's glory, and the eternal salvation of our souls.

Sect. 2 - Of the right ordering of our tongues, and the means of it.

The like care and endeavor we must daily use in the right ordering of our tongues and speeches, either by seasonable silence, when wisdom, discretion, and gravity requireth it; of which, the general rule is, that it is better to forbear and say nothing, then to vent that which is vain, unprofitable, or worse then silence: or else by speaking that which is useful and necessary for the advancement of our main ends, which are God's glory, the profit of our brethren, and the comfort and salvation of our own souls. God is glorified by our speech, when as we do not presume to speak of him, his attributes and persons, his name, Word or works, upon any light or slight occasion, vainly or in jest; but when the cause is weighty and important, and then gravely and seriously, with all humility and due reverence. Our neighbor is profited, when as our speech is gracious, powdered with the salt of wisdom, and either tending to spiritual edification, by instruction, admonition, exhortation, reprehension, counsel or comfort; or to his temporal good in his worldly affairs. And our own comfort and salvation is furthered, when unto these former we add such speeches as more properly tend to our own good, as to the increasing of our wisdom and knowledge, the strengthening of our faith, the increasing of any other saving grace; as when we mutually inform one another, and stir up the graces of God in us by holy conferences; or else such as are profitable in respect of our temporal estate, as about the ordinary businesses of our callings and earthly affairs, in which we are daily conversant. Now that we may thus rule our tongues, and order our speeches in this holy manner, abstaining from all light and vain words, frivolous and unprofitable discourses, and rotten and unsavory communication; let us consider, that God hath given us this excellent gift of speech that we might thereby glorify him, and benefit one another, especially in the best things: and therefore they who neglect these, and direct their speech to contrary ends, do most fearfully abuse this excellent gift, and thereby justly deserve to be deprived of it. Secondly let us consider, that God is always present with us, and is an ear-witness of all our speeches; and therefore let us blush for shame, to speak anything in his hearing, which we would not utter in the presence of a grave, wise and religious superior. Thirdly, let us continually remember that

fearful saying of our Savior, that we shall give an account of every idle word at the day of Judgment, and that by our words we shall either be justified or condemned. And therefore let us not vainly and causelessly increase our accounts, not only by idle and unprofitable, but rotten and unsavory speeches, nor use this wind of words, as bellows to kindle against ourselves the flame of God's wrath here, and the fire of hell in the life to come. And to this purpose let us with the Prophet David, take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our tongue, and considering that it is an unruly evil, and as the Apostle James compareth it, like a headstrong Horse, that will stand on no ground, let us break it with the terrors of God's Judgments, and curb it in with the bridle of his fear, that it may not rush into any unprofitable and wicked speeches. And because we cannot by all our force and skill, care and watchfulness, tame this wild and unruly beast, but that it will break out and utter such things as are either vain and useless, or hurtful and sinful, let us often desire the Lord who gave us our tongues, that he will by his grace and holy spirit, rule and order them, and that he will set a watch before our mouths, and keep the door of our lips, that we may speak only those things which may tend to God's glory and the mutual good of one another.

Sect. 3 - Of the right ordering of our works and actions.

Finally, our daily care and endeavor must be, rightly to order and dispose of all our works and actions, that they may be conformable to the Law of God, both in doing the duties which he hath commanded, and in leaving undone the vices and sins which he hath forbidden and condemned, and that whether they respect God or our neighbors and ourselves. For our time and strength must be spent either in the religious duties of God's service, or in the works of justice, charity and mercy towards our neighbors, or of temperance, sobriety and Holiness towards ourselves; either in the general duties of Christianity, or the special duties of our callings, or in using the means and helps whereby we may be the better fitted and enabled

unto all and every of them: That so we may glorify our heavenly Father, by having the light of our godly lives shining before men, edify our brethren by our good example, make our own calling and election sure, walk worthy of our high calling, adorn our profession, gain others to the profession and practice of the true Religion, and by our fruitfulness of obedience obtain a plentiful harvest of joy and happiness, when Christ shall come to Judgment, and render unto everyone according to their works. Neither must we only take care, that our minds and hearts be taken up and furnished with good thoughts and holy affections, and our tongues exercised in Christian communication, and speeches savoring of grace and godliness; but also that we bring them to good effect, by practicing what we think and speak, in all our works and actions. Nor that we mortify sin in our souls and affections, but also in our earthly members, and outward man; and if through frailty we have entertained into our minds and hearts sinful thoughts and desires, or broken out into rash and inconsiderate speeches; yet at least, let us stay here, and not produce it into act, which is to give this cursed birth full growth and strength, and to consummate and bring it to full maturity and perfection.

Sect. 4 - Of the sixth main duty, which is, to submit ourselves to God's good pleasure in all things.

The sixth main duty which we are daily to perform, is, to submit ourselves in all things to God's good will and pleasure, and to resign our souls, bodies and states to be governed and guided by his providence, without murmuring or repining, being contented with whatsoever he sendeth, and to endure what he inflicteth, not only with meekness and patience, but also with cheerfulness and spiritual joy, of which we have the Apostle Paul an example for our imitation, who had learned in all estates to be content, so that he could be abased and abound, full and hungry, yea was able to do all things, through the help of Christ that strengthened him. To the attaining of

which contentation, we are to consider, that the Lord is infinitely wise, and knoweth what is better for us then we ourselves, infinite in power, and able to do that which in his wisdom he knoweth to be best, and infinite in goodness, mercy and compassion towards us, and therefore that he will do that unto us and for us, which in his wisdom he knoweth most profitable, especially for the eternal salvation of our souls. That by his providence he ruleth all things in heaven and earth, and most wisely and powerfully directeth them to the good of all that depend upon him, that in an especial manner he doth thereby watch over them that fear and trust in him, and will not suffer them to want anything that is good. Finally, we are to remember his gracious promises, whereby he hath assured us, that he will turn all things, even our troubles and afflictions, unto our good; that he will be a Sun and a Shield, and will give grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly; that if we first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, he will give us all other things as advantages to the bargain. Unto which, if we add the consideration of God's infallible Truth in making good all his gracious promises, we may well be contented in all estates, seeing he will never fail nor forsake us, as the Apostle speaketh. And lastly, if we would have this contentation in all estates, we must cast our eye as well upon that which we have, as upon that which we want; and think upon those innumerable blessings which we enjoy, the least whereof we have not deserved, as well as upon those things wherein we are defective: we must not so much look upon those few that are preferred before us, as upon those multitudes that come far behind us, who want many of those good things which we possess, though it may be, they have deserved them better then we. And if by these and the like means we nourish this contentation, then shall we have a salve in readiness fit for all sores, a medicine against all maladies; and cordial water which will revive and comfort us against all those qualms of earthly discouragements, that hinder our proceedings in the ways of godliness, and make the service of God displeasent and irksome unto us. We shall go on cheerfully and joyfully in our Christian course, without murmuring and repining, when we find a foul passage or stumbling blocks in our way; and the

better please God in all things, when as in all things we are well pleased with him.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the last main duty of the daily exercise, which is Prayer.

Sect. 1 - That we must pray daily and continually.

The last daily duty to be performed of us, is, effectual and fervent prayer, from which not any day, nor any part of the day is to be exempted; for we must, as the Apostle speaketh, pray without ceasing, always watching thereunto with all perseverance. To which end tendeth the parable of the unrighteous Judge, propounded by our Savior Christ. In which regard, that may be said of prayer, which the Apostle requireth in preaching, namely, that it must be done in season and out of season; if at least any time may be said unseasonable for this holy duty; whereby we are not to understand with those ancient Heretics, that we must spend our whole time in prayer and do nothing else; for the Apostle Paul himself spent much of his time in preaching, writing, disputing, and in other duties of his calling, and yet as he exhorted others, so he often professeth, that it was his own practice to pray continually and without ceasing. And our Savior Christ also, who requireth this at our hands, and propounded himself as a pattern of his own precept, spent much of his time in other exercises, as preaching, conferring, doing miracles, and such like: But that we always be ready, and have a disposition to prayer at all times; that we think no time exempted, when any fit and good occasion is offered, whether it be night or day, or any part of either of them, nor any place excluded, if there be cause and opportunity: for we must pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands

without wrath or doubting, at home and abroad, in our businesses and vacancy from labor. And thus he expoundeth himself, interpreting these words, without ceasing and always, of every opportunity and seasonable time, when God either ordinarily or extraordinarily giveth unto us any fit occasion.

Sect. 2 - Of ordinary prayers at set times, and how often to be performed.

Concerning our ordinary prayers, they are for the most part limited to set and ordinary times, although we are not to be so strictly tied to our hours, but that they may be changed from one to another upon necessary occasions. And they ought to be performed in a solemn manner, with due preparation, conjoining together the parts of prayer, confession, petition and thanksgiving, with due respect both of place and time. Neither are these prayers to be continued throughout the whole day, but in the several parts thereof, as shall best fit with our occasions, and also with our zeal and devotion. Notwithstanding we are to pray even after this manner, not once only, but often; according to the examples of the Saints in former times. So David professeth, that he prayed unto God in the morning, at noon and in the evening; and Daniel so stinteth himself to solemn prayer upon his knees three times a day, that he would not neglect it upon any occasion. And howsoever no man can stint these set times of prayer unto a certain number, but it must be left to be measured out according to several occasions, leisure, opportunity and the proportion of every ones gift of grace, faith, zeal and devotion which they have received; which being so various, diverse and different, it is no more possible to appoint a certain measure unto them, then a size of apparel to fit everyone's body, or a proportion of meat which should satisfy every ones appetite. Or if we should; what were it, but (like the Tyrant, that would have one bed to serve for men of all statures) to rack out and torture the over-short devotion of those that are children in Christ; and to maim and cut theirs shorter, who are

men grown and come to a perfect age? Yet seeing all Scriptures are written for our learning, me thinks these examples should not be in vain, but well-befitting, for the most of God's children to follow and imitate, especially in this light of the Gospel, and when the gifts of the Spirit do so abound. And therefore I would persuade all good Christians, that besides their prayers and thanksgivings before and after meals, whereby God's blessing is obtained, and the creatures sanctified to their use; they would at least thrice a day make their solemn and set prayers unto almighty God; that is, first, betimes in the morning privately by themselves, before they go about their ordinary affairs and works of their calling. And then in the family, some time in the forenoon, when as the household may with most conveniency meet all together, and either before or after Supper, when as we are to go unto our rest, or if we be under government, and in such families wherein these duties are neglected, then must we perform them privately by ourselves, wherein we are to pray in especial manner for all those who dwell with us, and principally for our governors; among other blessings, craving this above others, that God will be pleased to give them hearts to erect the exercises of Religion in their families, to the advancement of his own glory, and the salvation of themselves, and those who are committed to their charge. But yet let neither governors nor inferiors content themselves with these family-duties, which they perform with others; but set some time and place apart for their private devotions, that they may have secret conference with God, confessing and bewailing their particular sins and corruptions, which being known only to him and their own consciences, they would not have men to take notice of them by any open acknowledgments; laying open their special wants, and desiring earnestly a supply of those gifts and graces wherein they find themselves most defective; and rendering thanks unto God for those peculiar benefits and blessings, which in a special manner he hath conferred upon them.

Sect. 3 - Of the extraordinary prayers upon every good occasion.

But it is not enough that we use daily these set, solemn, and ordinary prayers, but we must, as our Savior enjoineth us, Pray always, and as the Apostle speaketh, continually, and without ceasing. That is, we must be ready to pray, so often as God shall give us any occasion, or as the Apostle speaketh, in everything; that is, craving God's blessing when we undertake any business, and praising his name for his gracious assistance, whereby we have been enabled to achieve it; craving his protection at the approaching of any danger, and his help and strength for the overcoming of any difficulty which affronteth us in our way. In a word, we must pray in season, that is, at our ordinary times, and upon common occasions; and out of season, that is, extraordinarily, when any special and new occasion offereth itself unto us. Unto which prayers, there is not required that we should use our voice, or gestures of the body, which are used in set prayers; or that we should in any continued or long speech of the soul unto God, express ourselves in all the parts of prayer: but only that we use sudden and short exclamations, lifting up our hearts unto God, and as it were darting unto the Throne of grace our fervent desires, which we may do, without being discerned in the midst of a crowd, and without any distraction from our ordinary affairs. And thus Nehemiah prayed unto God in the presence of an heathenish King, for good success in his suite. Moses in the midst of the Army for help and deliverance, when as they were pursued by the Egyptians: And our Savior Christ himself, at the grave of Lazarus. And thus are we to pray continually and without ceasing, either in our set and solemn prayers, or these short expressions of our hearts desires in all companies, upon all occasions, and at all times; not only in the day time, but even in the night also, either rising with David to praise God, when our hearts are ravished with the joyful apprehension of some extraordinary benefits; according to that, At midnight will I rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous Judgments; or with the Church in the Lamentations, to crave help and deliverance when we lie under the weight of some grievous afflictions. Arise (saith she) cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches, pour out thine heart, like water, before the face of the Lord, &c. And this if we do, our prayer will be more fervent and effectual, our senses and

souls being sequestered from worldly affairs, and not encumbered and interrupted in these holy exercises, with any earthly distractions. Or at ordinary times, and upon usual occasions, lifting and raising up our hearts and minds unto God, when we wake out of our sleep, praising him for all his mercies and goodness, and namely, for the rest which he hath given us, and desiring the continuance of his love and favor, with all the signs and testimonies of it. But here our chief care must be, that by this continual custom and daily practice, we do not grow to a less esteem of this high and holy duty, that our hearts be not negligent and careless in the performance of it, and so our prayers become cold and formal, and performed more for custom than for conscience, but that we pray with our whole hearts, in zeal and fervency of Spirit, accounting it the highest privilege in the world, that we have daily and continually such sweet intercourse and communion with God, and such free access unto the Throne of grace, at all times, and upon all occasions, to make our suites and requests known unto our Sovereign King and gracious Father, with assurance to have them heard and granted. The which must inflame our devotion and zeal, and cause us to pour forth our hearts unto God; without which, the prayer of the lips, wanting the fire of zeal and devotion, will become (as the Wise man speaketh) the sacrifice of fools. And therefore we must with David, pour out our souls unto God; and with the afflicted Church, lift up our hearts with our hands unto the Lord of heaven; or else we can have no assurance to be heard, seeing these only who thus do have the promise; according to that of the Psalmist; The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. And if we would have the sacrifice of our prayers accepted of God, we must not only offer unto him our outward members and parts, but wash also our inwards, our hearts and affections, and so offer ourselves as a whole burnt offering unto God. And whilst we stretch out our hands, our hearts also must be enlarged with thirsting desires, after the living waters and springs of God's gifts and graces, like unto the thirsty land.

Sect. 4 - Divers motives unto the daily exercise of prayer.

Unto which daily and continual prayers, with this zeal and fervency of Spirit, we may be moved; first, if we consider, that we stand in such need of God's continual help and assistance, that we cannot subsist without it the least minute, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. Secondly, that we stand daily and continually in want of some gift and grace of God, and of all of them in some measure and degree; and also of someone or other of God's temporal benefits, or at least, of the right and holy use of them. And therefore seeing our wants are continual, and God hath appointed prayer as the hand of the soul, to be thrust into his rich Treasury of all grace and goodness for a continual supply, without which we can have no assurance, that we shall receive anything at the hands of God; hereby it manifestly appeareth that our prayers also ought to be daily and continual. Thirdly, we are daily and continually subject to innumerable dangers, in respect of the evils that may befall us in our souls, bodies, and estates, and it is God only watching over us with his providence, that can both preserve us from them, and deliver us out of them: the which, we cannot expect, unless we serve his providence, by using this means of prayer, whereby only his gracious help and assistance is obtained; and therefore our continual dangers, needing continual preservation from them, commendeth unto us the necessary use of our daily and continual prayers. Finally, the many and mighty enemies of our salvation do continually assault us with their temptations, that overcoming, they may bring us to destruction. And prayer is the chief means, both of buckling unto us the whole Armor of God, whereby we are enabled to stand in the evil day; and of obtaining the help and assistance of his holy Spirit, whereby alone we are enabled to overcome. And therefore as we are continually tempted to one sin or other, so must we continually pray for grace to withstand the temptation; and as the Apostle speaketh, Pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance, &c.

CHAPTER X.

Of the daily exercise of Thanksgiving; and how it ought to be performed.

Sect. 1 - What things are required in the duty of thanksgiving.

And as we are thus to pray daily and continually, by making our suites and petitions unto God, so also by thanksgiving, returning thanks and praise for all the benefits and blessings which we receive at his hands. Unto which duty, diverse things are required; first, that it be done in the name of Christ, according to that of the Apostle, By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. Secondly, that it be done in a right manner; unto which is required, that it be done, first, not only in outward profession with the lips, but also inwardly with the soul, with all the powers and faculties of it, according to that of the Psalmist, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. First, in our understanding we are to take notice, and rightly to conceive of God's benefits, not only in some generality, but also of those particular blessings, which we daily and continually receive from him; that we may not be ungrateful, through ignorance and heedlessness, but have thankful minds, and so, as the Psalmist speaketh, sing praises with understanding. Neither must we only know God's benefits and blessings, but also acknowledge them to be his free gifts, and that he is the principal Author and fountain of all the good which we either presently enjoy, or hope for in time to come; giving him the whole glory of his gifts, and not attributing them to secondary causes and inferior means; which are only his instruments by which he conferreth these gifts upon us. In our judgments, we must rightly value, and highly esteem of God's benefits, as well when we enjoy them, as before we had them, or when they are taken from us; not extenuating, but rather amplifying

his gifts to the advancing of his glory, and increasing of our thankfulness. In our memories we must thankfully retain the remembrance of God's manifold mercies and inestimable benefits, that we may continually take occasion thereby to praise him for them; esteeming it one of the worst kinds of ingratitude, to forget our benefactor, or the gifts and blessings which we have received from him. And this God often imposeth upon his people, that they should not forget him nor his blessings; and David upon his own soul, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. But above all, we must be thankful unto the Lord with all our hearts; according to that of David; I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart. Or if we fail herein of that perfection which the Law requireth, yet at least let us do it in uprightness and integrity, which will be accepted of God in Jesus Christ. Unto which thankfulness of the heart is required, first, that it be done in humility, giving God the whole praise of his own works, and acknowledging his glory and greatness, his goodness and graciousness, who dayneth and vouchsafeth of his free grace to respect us who are dust and ashes, base and contemptible, sinful and miserable, and are so far off from deserving the least of his mercies and benefits, that we have justly merited the greatest of his judgments and punishments. Secondly, we must show our thankfulness, with all due reverence, in respect of God's glorious Majesty, acknowledging it to be a singular privilege, that so mighty a King, and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth will receive anything at our hands. Thirdly, we must perform it with all alacrity and cheerfulness, rejoicing much, in that he giveth us not only the occasions of this duty, but hearts also to do it in some poor and weak measure.

Sect. 2 - That we must give thanks in all things.

And after this manner must we show our thankfulness unto God: The object of our thanksgiving, or the cause and occasion of giving thanks, is, all things, according to that of the Apostle, In everything

give thanks; And again, giving thanks always, for all things, unto God the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, we must give thanks for all good things, which are so in their own nature, or which through God's wisdom, power, and goodness are made so unto us; for positive good things, as all God's blessings and benefits, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal; or privative, when God in his love and mercy freeth us from those evils of punishment which our sins have deserved, or at least, doth not inflict them in that measure and degree which he might justly impose upon us: in which respect, the Church in her greatest afflictions took occasion of praising God, and acknowledging his mercies, in that they were not utterly consumed: And doth also turn these light and momentary afflictions to our good, as the mortification of our sins, the enriching of us with spiritual graces, the furthering of our salvation, and the increasing of our heavenly joy and happiness.

Sect. 3 - That we must give thanks at all times.

And this thankfulness in all things we must show at all times, that is, daily and continually, privately and publicly, secretly in our hearts, and outwardly in our words and works, so often as we have any occasion and opportunity offered unto us, either ordinary or extraordinary: by consideration, either of positive or privative benefits; both at set times of prayer, and throughout the whole day, by lifting up our hearts with thanksgiving unto God, for the continual benefits, which in every part of the day he conferreth upon us: As our deliverance from evils, with which we see others overtaken, our preservation from many dangers, to which we are daily subject: for the assistance of his grace and holy Spirit, against the temptations of our spiritual enemies; for keeping our hearts in his fear, and from wandering with the world, in the by-ways of sin and wickedness. For giving us hearts to seek and serve him, and for accepting of us and our imperfect actions, in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. For multiplying and continual renewing of all his blessings and benefits

upon us, and those that are near and dear unto us, both in temporal and spiritual things, and for those assured hopes which he hath given us of heavenly and everlasting happiness in the world to come. For those which he bestoweth publicly upon the Church and Commonwealth, and privately upon our families and our own persons. And this daily and continual thankfulness and thanksgiving unto God, is required of us in the Scriptures. The Apostle exhorteth us, to speak to ourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, &c. And that we should by Christ, offer the sacrifices of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. And this was David's daily practice, as he often professeth; I will bless the Lord (saith he) at all times his praise shall continually be in my mouth. And again, Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name forever and ever. Which resolutions, because he could not achieve by his own abilities, he craveth help and assistance from God: Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thine honor all the day; and then he promiseth to perform it; I will (saith he) praise thee more and more. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.

Sect. 4 - Reasons which may move us unto daily thanksgiving.

Besides which testimonies and examples of holy Scriptures, there are many reasons which may move us to the daily and continual practice of this holy duty. As first the excellency of it, seeing it is the continual exercise of the holy Angels and Saints in heaven, in which a great part of their happiness consisteth, and we see in the Revelation, where great multitudes of the Saints cry allowed, and say, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might, be unto our God forever and ever, Amen. And this exercise they continue day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Secondly, it is most

comely and decent, in respect of God, who being the chief goodness all glory and praise of due belongeth to him, as being the end of all things, and the Author and fountain of all our good. And therefore David often repeateth it, and maketh it the foot of his song, that we must give thanks to the Lord and praise him, because he is good, and his mercy endureth forever. In respect of us also, who daily receive benefits at his hands: for seeing he reneweth his mercies upon us every morning, as the Church confesseth, and followeth us with his favors, throughout the whole day, what better beseemeth us, then to be thankful to such a gracious Benefactor, and to have our hearts filled with thankfulness, and our mouths with his praises? Again, we are spiritual Priests unto God, to offer unto him daily sacrifices: and what better beseemeth our office, then to offer unto him praises and thanksgiving, which are the sacrifices wherein his soul doth chiefly delight? For it is a principal part of his service, which most redoundeth to his glory, according to that of the Psalmist, Whosoever offereth praise, glorifieth me; and is daily therefore to be performed by us, as our Savior teacheth us in his perfect form of prayer, the first petition whereof, is, that God's name may be hallowed and glorified; and the conclusion, an acknowledgement that the Kingdom, power, and glory, do belong unto him alone. Thirdly, it is the main end for which God bestoweth all his blessings upon us, that we should yield unto him the praise and glory of his own gifts; The which we will perform, if we be not too ungrateful, seeing they are so inestimable and manifold, and yet he in love of them all requireth nothing of us, but that we daily show ourselves thankful debtors. Yea, in truth we have nothing else to return unto him, seeing all we have is his already; as we see in the example of David, who, though he were a King, yet confesseth after long deliberation, his nullity and insufficiency in this kind, and therefore concludeth, that he would render unto him thanks and praise. Yea, it is the end why God hath given us our tongues, that with them we should glorify him; whereof it is, that the Psalmist calleth his tongue his glory, because it was the instrument of glorifying God; and therefore they are utterly unworthy this excellent gift of speech, wherein we excel all the

creatures, who do not in the use of it, aim chiefly at this end for which it was given them.

Sect. 5 - Of the means whereby we may be stirred up to thankfulness.

Now the means of yielding unto God this daily and continual thankfulness, is partly to remove the causes and occasions of ingratitude, and partly to use all helps whereby we may be furthered in this duty. Concerning the former, we must take heed of pride, and all opinion of our own merits, which will make us to think that all which we receive, is less then we deserve; and contrariwise embrace humility, and wholly deny ourselves with our own works and worthiness, and so we shall be thankful for the least benefits, when we consider that they are more then we deserve. Secondly, we must not attribute the good things which we receive, unto secondary causes and inferior means; as to our own wisdom, power, and industry, but ascribe them wholly unto God, whose gifts they are, for otherwise we shall not give God the praise, but sacrifice to our own nets. Thirdly, we must not think how much we want, but what we have; not how many are preferred before us, but how many better than we come behind us, and want the good things which we enjoy. The helps whereby we may be furthered in this duty of thanksgiving, are first, to take notice of those manifold blessings which the Lord heapeth upon us, and even of his particular gifts, at the very time they are received; for whilst they are new, they more affect us, and stir us up to greater thankfulness. Secondly, we must highly value them in our judgments, if not in their own worth, yet as they are love-tokens sent from God, pledges and pawns of his favor, and earnest-pennies of everlasting life and happiness; for the better we conceive of God's benefits, the more thankful will we be unto him for them. Thirdly, we must keep blessings received in former times, in faithful memories, that we may often recount them, and adding them to the new, we may become more fervent and cheerful in performing of this duty; especially those main benefits of God's love, our

election, creation, redemption, vocation, justification, sanctification, continual preservation, and assured hope of our glorification. The which we shall the more readily do, if we consider, that it is an especial means to move the Lord to confer upon us new benefits, when as we are truly thankful unto him for the old, which is the main end for which he gave them, and to cast upon us the seeds of his blessings with a liberal hand, when as we are not barren grounds, but yield unto him the fruits of thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the duties of the daily exercise, in every several part of the day.
And first of waking with God, by Prayer and Meditation.

Sect. 1 - Of lifting up our hearts unto God, as soon as we awake, that we may offer unto him our first service.

Having spoken of those Christian duties which are necessarily to be performed throughout the whole day; we are now come to show how the day is to be spent in the particular parts of it, and what special duties are to be performed in them severally, as God shall give us conveniency and opportunity. The which we will divide, as the natural day consisting of four and twenty hours is divided, into such duties as respect either the day or night. The duties of the day, are either those which ordinarily and constantly are to be done in certain parts of the day, without omission or alteration, unless upon some urgent cause; or those which respect circumstances, persons, states, occurrence, not limited unto any certain time of the day, but waiting upon the most opportune and fit occasions. Of the former sort are duties merely religious, and belonging to all Christians generally and indifferently; or civil duties, which notwithstanding ought to be

performed of all the faithful, after a holy and religious manner. The first religious duty wherewith we are to begin the day, is, that as soon as we awake out of our sleep, we offer unto God a morning sacrifice, and (as it were) the first fruits of all our thoughts, affections, and endeavors, sequestering them from the world and earthly vanities, that they may be fixed upon God, and things heavenly and spiritual. And even whilst our bodies lie still on our beds, and before we have unbarred the door of our lips, to give passage unto our words, in this still silence, we must lift up our hearts unto God to commune with him, and (as it were) to salute him, by consecrating unto him their first and best service. Of which duty we have David an example for our imitation, who no sooner awaked, but he was presently with God, as he professeth, and sought him early, thirsting in his soul after him, like a dry and thirsty land. Yea, so diligent and fervent was he in doing this duty, that he prevented the dawning of the morning; and before he was thoroughly awakened, and had all his senses set fully at liberty from the bands of sleep, his heart is rowzed up, and fixed upon God to give him praise; and then that being awaked, doth also awaken his tongue, and instruments of music, and his whole man to join together in glorifying God. So the Church in Esaias song saith, that she longed after God in the night, and resolveth, that with her Spirit within her, she would seek him early. Which that we may likewise practice, let us consider that the Lord our God is our chief treasure, and our souls sole delight, and therefore let our hearts be first there where our treasure is, and seeing he is the only true cause of all comfort and rejoicing; let us solace ourselves in our fruition of him by this sweet communion. For if worldly men who have fixed their hearts on earthly vanities, do meditate on them in the night without weariness, and no sooner awake in the morning, but presently they consecrate unto them their first thoughts and desires, as the covetous man, to his riches; the ambitious man, his honors; the voluptuous man, his pleasures; let us be ashamed if we cannot be as fervent and diligent in dedicating unto God the first service of our hearts, who is infinitely more worthy of our love. Again, there is no business in the world of like weight and worth unto this, as bringing singular comfort to our hearts, and salvation to our souls, and

therefore let us give it the priority, and precedence, and not suffer every peddling and pelting trifle take up our hearts first, and make it to watch at the doors, and sometimes to depart away for want of admittance. And seeing God is the most worthy person, and offereth to confer with us about the weightiest occasions, let us not after an unmannerly and foolish fashion, suffer him to attend our leisure, till we have done conferring with the contemptible and worthless world, about earthly occasions, which are slight and of no value. Finally, the morning is the best and fittest time for the undertaking and achieving of any employment, because of the freeness of our minds from all incumbrances, the vivacity and cheerfulness of the spirits, and the vigor and abilities of all our parts, by reason of our late rest, and therefore let us consecrate the very prime of it unto our gracious God, who best deserveth our best service.

Sect. 2 - Of lifting up our hearts by some short prayer.

Now this first service which we are to offer unto God, consisteth in prayer and meditation, which are the two wings of our souls, whereby they soar aloft into heaven, and there enjoy the presence of God. The first duty is prayer, whereby lifting up our hearts unto God with more fervency then prolixity, we do in some short manner, render unto God praise and thanksgiving for our quiet rest, whereby our bodies are refreshed; for preserving us from all dangers of the night, both in our souls and bodies, especially from sinful dreams, and the temptations and assaults of Satan, who would easily have overcome and utterly destroyed us, had not God watched over and defended us by his power and providence. For letting us again enjoy the light, and granting us another day wherein we may do him further service, and so make our own calling and election sure. Unto which, with like brevity we are to adjoin the confession of our sins, especially of that night, if any such come to our knowledge and remembrance, and by reason of them, our great unworthiness of these favors and testimonies of God's love, desiring the pardon of

them, and the sanctification of the Spirit, whereby we may be more and more freed from them. And finally, we are to cast ourselves into the arms of his providence, commending our souls and bodies unto his protection and direction, and desiring to be so assisted with his grace and holy Spirit, that all the thoughts of our hearts, and words of our mouths, and the works of our hands, may the day following, and forever be acceptable in his sight. And especially that he will so enlighten, rule, and assist us in our following meditations, that they may tend to his glory, and to our own comfort and salvation.

Sect. 3 - Of the subject matter of our Morning meditations.

And so we must from prayer proceed to meditation, the which may be longer or shorter, according to our opportunity, occasions, and leisure; and the measure and fervency of our zeal and devotion. In which, our main scope must be to glorify God, to increase our communion with him, by these familiar conferences of our souls; to strengthen our faith, enlarge our hearts with love and thankfulness, and to replenish them with joy and comfort in the sweet fruition of God, and tokens of his love. To which purpose we must fit the subject matter of our meditations; and because present occasions are ready at hand, and not only more familiar and easy to be remembered, but fit to affect our hearts, which are more apprehensive of present than past benefits, we are to make use of such by meditating on them. But yet principally we must begin with the fountain, and raise our thoughts from the ground and foundation of all blessings, which is God's infinite love, testified chiefly, in giving unto us that singular pledge thereof, his only Son to die for us, that we might be freed from everlasting death, and attain unto eternal life and happiness. For whose sake he hath freely forgiven us all our sins, and bestowed upon us, together with him, all things needful for our souls and bodies, and whatsoever is necessary to life and godliness. From which, we may descend to the particular testimonies of God's love lately received, as that he hath by his power and providence watching

over us the night past, preserved us from all dangers, and out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, who otherwise wanted neither will nor power to have brought us to destruction. That he hath kept us from all terrors of the night, with which others have been affrighted, and hath graciously preserved our lives from sudden death, with which others lying down in health and security, have been attached before the morning; adding unto our days, and giving us still time of repentance, with ability to serve him, and to be instruments of his glory. After which meditation on God's mercies, we may take such occasions as are presently offered, to furnish our minds with holy thoughts, and to work in our hearts good affections and desires. As our awakening out of sleep may put us in mind, of our awakening out of the sleep, or rather death, of sin, to the life of righteousness, by the quickening power of God's holy Spirit in our regeneration, and of the daily renewing of this our quickening and awakening by continual sanctification. The light of the Sun may put us in mind of the Sun of righteousness; who first in his Kingdom of grace hath shined unto us by the light of the Gospel, who before sat in darkness and the shadow of death, guiding our feet into the way of peace. With which light we are to desire our minds may be more and more enlightened, and freed powerfully and effectually from their natural ignorance, without which spiritual illighting, the outward light of the Sun and sight of our eyes will bring unto our hearts no sound comfort. Secondly, of the light of glory, which shall infinitely exceed the light of the Sun, and much more then it exceedeth a Glowworm or the smallest spark of fire. For if every one of the innumerable numbers of the glorified Saints, shall be more glorious then the Sun in his chiefest brightness, then how infinite is the glory of the (now) unaccessable light, which we shall then see face to face, who giveth both unto the Sun and them their beauty and brightness? our rising out of our beds may put us in mind of the rising of our bodies out of our graves, when as at the last day, by the sound of the Trumpet we shall be summoned before God's Tribunal seat, to give an account of all that we have done in the flesh; the which should make us to resolve of preparing ourselves daily to meet our Judge, because the time is uncertain when he will call us to Judgment. When we see our

nakedness, let it put us in mind of our sin, which caused us first to see and be ashamed of it, whereas when we were covered with innocence, and had the Image of God shining in us, we no more needed garments to cover us, then the Sun a cloud. And let this make us to long after the garment of Christ's righteousness, with which, when we are perfectly clothed, we shall be without sin or shame, and appear glorious in the sight of God; yea, let us earnestly desire to put on Christ, not only for justification, but also for sanctification, whereby that clothing of innocence before the fall, will be presently in part renewed and repaired, till at last it come to more perfection then it had in our first creation. When we put on our apparel, let us remember that they were first given us to cover our shame, not as ornaments to be proud of, but as coverings to hide our nakedness, and to preserve us from the injuries of the weather. And as we are careful, not only to provide fit clothes for those ends, but also to put them on, and apply them to our use, so let us be no less careful to provide fit clothing for our souls, whereby their spiritual deformities may be covered, and they beautified in the eyes of God with his Saints and Angels, as the perfect garment of Christ's righteousness, already thoroughly finished by his death and resurrection, and those rich ornaments of his spiritual graces, which are now inchoate and begun, and shall be perfected in the life to come; and not stay here, but also as carefully apply and put them on by the hand of faith, as we do our apparel with the hands of our bodies, which otherwise will do us no more good, then the best garments lying in our chests, and never applied to the use of our bodies. And finally, seeing we content not ourselves to clothe some parts of our bodies that need clothing, and leave others naked, but to have them all covered with fit ornaments for every several part; so let us not rest contented to have our souls in part clothed, and in part left naked, in their natural deformities; but to have all ornaments of sanctifying and saving graces put on, taking daily most care to supply that, wherein we find ourselves most defective.

Sect. 4 - That in our first meditations, we must renew our faith and repentance.

Now as we are thus to take these, and all other such like good occasions of holy and heavenly meditations; so our chief care must be, that we do daily renew our repentance and faith in Christ, using to this purpose all those helps and means which I have formerly prescribed. For the better performance of which duty, we must set a sure watch before the doors of our hearts, to keep out all wandering thoughts and earthly desires from entering into them, which would distract us in this holy exercise; or if any through heedlessness have crept in at unawares, our second care must be to strangle and choke them as soon as they are entered, and to check ourselves, in that we have been so negligent in keeping our watch. But above all things we must take heed, that we do not countenance and defend our infirmities and slips in this kind, by objecting against this exercise, that it will take up too much time, and our leisure will not serve in respect of the works of our callings which we must not neglect, and our many and weighty occasions and affairs, which are sufficient to take up our whole time, and exercise all our thoughts for the right ordering and managing of them. For there is no man so much employed in worldly business, who doth not waste more time idly, and upon unnecessary things which bring no profit to his soul, body nor state, then is required for these spiritual meditations, which being short in themselves, may yet be more contracted into such a narrow room, that less than one quarter of an hour may be sufficient for them. The which we may reasonably think will be no hindrance to our profitable proceedings in our worldly affairs and duties of our callings, seeing a good beginning is a great furtherance to a good ending, and an ill conclusion in matters that concern our earthly estate, cannot arise from such holy and heavenly premises. Yea rather we may with faith and a good conscience assure ourselves, that seeing the Lord only buildeth the house, and without his blessing all our labors and endeavors are spent in vain, he will so order all our affairs with his providence, that the harvest which we are to reap of our labors in the whole day following, will not be the

worse, because we have offered unto him the first fruits of the morning; nor that he will abate us of our wages, because we have been careful to do him better service. Or though hereby we should be somewhat scanted in earthly things, yet is there no reason why we should be discouraged from performing these religious duties, seeing they are as much more excellent, weighty, and necessary, then all earthly affairs, and the profits and pleasures that do accompany them, as the soul excelleth the body; spiritual graces, worldly trifles; and heavenly happiness the momentary and mutable vanities of the earth.

Sect. 5 - The manifold benefits which will arise from these religious morning exercises.

Neither can our time be more profitably employed then in these holy exercises, as will appear, if we consider the manifold fruits and benefits which we shall reap by them. For we shall hereby preserve and increase the sincerity and uprightness of our hearts, and strengthen our resolutions in going on cheerfully and faithfully in the duties of God's service the day following, with greater care and vigilancy then we did the day before; we shall keep our hearts well seasoned with the love and fear of God throughout the whole day when as we fill them with this precious liquor betimes in the morning, before they be taken up and tainted with carnal lusts and worldly vanities. We shall move the Lord to sow in our hearts the seeds of his graces, when as like good grounds they are thus well prepared to receive them; and when they spring up in us, they will grow the better and faster, being well watered in the morning, and endure without withering when the sun of persecution ariseth, and even scorseth with the heat of afflictions. We shall preserve our souls from the poisonous contagion of the sinful times, when as before we go abroad into the infectious air, we have betimes in the morning taken our spiritual cordials and antidotes. We shall keep the fort of our hearts from any danger of sacking and surprising by

Satan's temptations, when as betimes in the morning we have strengthened all our fortifications, and stopped the chief passages which lead unto them. Our lives will be the better ordered throughout the whole day, when we have thus well begun to order them in the morning, and we shall perform all duties of holiness and righteousness with much more ease and facility, pleasure and delight, when as by these meditations we have acquainted our hearts with them, and have made them familiar with us by this sweet society. We shall not need to fear the encounters of our spiritual enemies, when as we have betimes betaken us to our weapons, and put on our Christian armor, before we have put on our clothes. Our hearts will be filled with joy and comfort in God, when as we do thus often reassure ourselves of his love; and we shall be safe under his gracious protection, seeing if we thus wake with God; and seek him betimes, he will awake for us, and make the habitation of our righteousness prosperous, as Bildad speaketh. Finally, if our hearts be thus timely taken up with these holy meditations, they will keep the room for such as are of their own nature and quality, not suffering those which are sinful, carnal, and merely worldly to enter; and so shall we be fitted for the next following duty of prayer, when our hearts are prepared, and lifted up from the earth in these religious thoughts, and are not distracted with worldly incumbrances. Whereas contrariwise, if in the morning we keep no watch over ourselves, but suffer our hearts to take their liberty, and to give entertainment unto wicked and worldly thoughts, and the carnal and sensual lusts of our corrupt flesh; they will so wholly seize upon them and hold their possession, that we shall hardly admit, or at least retain any good meditations the whole day following; and if we set ourselves to prayer or other religious duties, we shall be so distracted with worldly cogitations and fleshly lusts, that they will become cold and formal, and quite without any vigor and efficacy.

CHAPTER XII.

Of Prayer in the Morning, how profitable it is and necessary, and of our preparation unto it.

Sect. 1 - Of the fruit and profit of prayer.

And so much concerning the duty of meditation, wherein we are to be exercised every morning. The next religious duty which is in the morning to be performed of us, is, that we pour out our souls unto God by fervent and effectual prayer, which is a duty above all others to be daily put in practice. For it is a principal part of God's service, whereby he will be honored of us, whereof it is, that in the Scriptures it is put for the whole worship of God. It is required of us by special commandment in many places; unto which God hath encouraged us to yield obedience by many sweet and gracious promises, whereby he hath assured us, that he will hear us, and grant our requests. It is the badge of true Religion, and the neglect thereof, of an utter Atheist. And therefore the Psalmist describing such an one, setteth him forth by these two properties, that he hath said in his heart, There is no God; and he hath not called upon the Lord. It is a duty most excellent, seeing thereby we glorify God, and he also glorifieth us, vouchsafing unto us, who are but dust and ashes, yea wretched sinners, this high and honorable privilege to have free access unto him, and to have the ear of our great King and Sovereign, that we may make all our suites known unto him, with undoubted hope to have them heard and granted. It is most profitable also unto us, as being the chief means whereby we attain at the hands of God, all the good things which we need, and are freed from all the evils which we fear; and the key whereby we open the treasury of all God's graces and rich gifts, and out of it furnish ourselves with all blessings which are needful for us. It is most effectual to prevail with God for the obtaining of all the good things which we desire, as we see in innumerable places and examples of holy Scriptures. It is a notable

means for the strengthening of our faith and affiance in God, when as we have experience that he heareth us, and granteth our requests; and for the inflaming of our hearts with most fervent love, when we taste of his bounty and goodness, in giving unto us the good things which we desire. It increaseth our communion and fellowship with God, and bringeth us into familiar acquaintance with him. It maketh our minds to soar aloft in heavenly meditations; and being on earth, it causeth us to have our conversation in heaven. It assureth us that we are the children of God, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, seeing the same Spirit, which is the spirit of supplication, sealeth also unto us our Adoption. Finally, let us consider that it is a duty most necessary, if either we will avoid God's curse, or will, with Jacob, so wrestle with him, as we mean to prevail and obtain the blessing; that if we neglect it, it is a strong evidence unto us, that we have cast off all fear of God, as Eliphaz reasoneth against Job; and that we are utterly destitute of all saving grace, seeing the same Spirit is the spirit of grace and supplication.

Sect. 2 - Their objection answered, who pretend want of leisure to pray.

Neither let any man pretend his small leisure, by reason of his weighty business and manifold employments, as an excuse to warrant him for the neglect of a duty so high and holy, so excellent, profitable and necessary: unless he will say, that he hath no leisure to be saved, to glorify God, or enrich himself with his graces and blessings, or to get the evidences of everlasting glory and happiness into his own keeping: and that he is so taken up with worldly employments, that he hath no leisure to seek any acquaintance with God, to avoid his curse, or obtain his blessing; to go to heaven, or escape hell. For shame therefore let us cast away these no less profane than frivolous excuses: and to this end further consider, that the greater and more important our business is, the more need we have to implore by hearty prayer, the blessing of God upon our

labors and endeavors, before we undertake them, without which, all our policy, labor and endeavor, will be spent in vain, either because we shall not achieve the thing which we attempt; or if we do, yet in God's just judgment it shall become unto us a curse, rather than a blessing. Consider further, how much time thou daily spendest in doing nothing, or that which is ill, and worse than nothing: How much time in needless curiosity about thy body, in dressing and feeding it, and in vain discourses about things that profit not, yea corrupt rather than edify thee: How much in unlawful or superfluous sports and recreations: in carding, dicing, masking, reveling, hunting, hawking, beholding vain sights and wanton interludes: and blush for shame, that thou canst find time enough, in thy greatest employments, for the satisfying of thy fleshly lusts, and only wantest leisure to serve thy God, and save thine own soul. Finally, let us consider the unwearied watchfulness of all the Saints of God in all ages, in attending upon this duty, that they might frequently and fervently perform it day and night; and set before us the example of our Savior Christ himself, who spent mornings and evenings, yea whole nights in praying for us. Which if we neglect to do for ourselves, what do we but disclaim that holy communion, and show plainly that we are not in that number? What do we else but debar ourselves of the benefit of his intercession, when as we take no care by our prayers to have it applied unto us? Neither let any say that his purpose is not to neglect this duty altogether, but though he hath no leisure to pray every day, yet he will find some time for it, though not every morning, yet in the evening before he go to bed. For though this something be better than nothing, yet consider that the morning sacrifice was no less required of God then the evening; that the servants of God have risen betimes to call upon him; that we cannot look to prosper in any of our labors, if we have not first craved God's blessing upon them; that we are daily subject to many dangers, to fall into many snares of the devil, to be overcome of his temptations, to be attached with God's Judgments, and to be plunged into many perils which are daily incident unto the life of man: yea, that before night we may be stricken with sudden death, as many others have been whom we have known and heard of, and so be arrested and

called to the bar of God's Judgment, to plead guilty or not guilty, before we have presented ourselves at the Throne of grace, to sue forth our pardon: and then how fearful is our condition, if we are thus taken away in our sins? From all which dangers we shall be secured, if we conscionably perform this daily duty of morning prayer, and never go about our worldly business, till we have gotten our pardon to carry with us.

Sect. 3 - That before we pray, we must use preparation, and what is required unto it.

Now being by these reasons persuaded to the daily practice of this duty; let us in the next place consider how we may so perform it, as that it may be acceptable unto God, and profitable for our own salvation. And unto this many things are required, before, in, and after our prayers. Before, is required preparation: for as David speaketh of praising God, so may we of prayer in all kinds, our hearts must be prepared, and so must our tongues, before we can pray. And as they that mean to make any good music, do first set their instruments in tune; so must we, before we can make any sweet melody in God's hearing, tune our hearts, that they may be fit for this action. And if we will not speak unto our Prince rashly and unadvisedly, but prepare ourselves by due meditation, both in respect of the matter, and manner of our speech; how much more should we avoid rashness of mouth, and hastiness of speech, when as we speak to the sovereign King of heaven and earth? Now in this preparation we must examine our sins, that we may afterwards humbly confess them and crave pardon; especially we are to search out those, whereby we have most displeased God, and wounded our own consciences, and whereunto our corrupt nature is most inclined; and also labor to find out our special wants, and those gifts and graces in which we are most defective, or of which, in respect of our present occasion, we most stand in need; that accordingly we may frame out suits, and press them unto God with more efficacy and

fervency of desire. Secondly, we must look to our feet, that is, to our affections, as the Wiseman exhorteth, and examine with what disposition we come unto prayer, whether as earnest suitors that will have no denial, or after a cold, careless, and formal manner, for custom, rather than conscience sake: especially we must be careful to banish out of our minds and hearts, all worldly and wandering thoughts, carnal lusts, wrath, doubting, maliciousness, &c: and that we be heavenly-minded, and have our hearts fraughted with holy desires, hungering and thirsting after the gifts and graces which we intend to beg at God's hands. Finally, we must take heed, that we do not present ourselves before God in our impenitency; but if we be guilty of any sin, we must bewail it, and promise amendment. For our sins unrepented of, stand as a wall of separation between God and us, hindering his blessings from descending, and our prayers from ascending; especially we must bewail our want of charity, and purposes of revenge: for as we forgive men their trespasses, so will God forgive us. And because we are so dull and averse to this holy duty, that by all our meditations we cannot, as we ought, prepare ourselves unto it: therefore let us entreat the Lord, before we make any other suit unto him, that he will prepare our minds and hearts aright, and so assist us with his grace and holy Spirit, that we may perform this high and holy duty, in some such manner as may be acceptable in his sight. In our prayers diverse things are required: As first, in respect of the object, that we pray only to God our Father in heaven, as our Savior hath taught us. Secondly, in the alone mediation of Jesus Christ: For as there is but one God, so there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Thirdly, seeing through our ignorance and corruption we cannot pray as we ought; therefore we must crave the assistance of God the holy Ghost, which helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us, with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed. In respect of the subject or party that prayeth, diverse things are required, first, in respect of his person: secondly, in respect of his action. In respect of his person, 1. that he be a faithful and righteous man. For they that draw near unto God, must be holy, as he is holy; not in the perfect holiness and righteousness which the Law, but which the Gospel requireth: that is,

in respect of sincerity and integrity, desire, resolution and endeavor. For the prayer of the righteous man only is effectual; and the Lord satisfieth their desires alone that fear him. Neither can our suites be acceptable unto God, before our persons are accepted: according to that of Solomon, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the righteous is acceptable unto him. And so David saith, that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry: But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. And therefore our care must be, if we would pray with hope to be heard, to lift up pure hearts and hands unto God, not in their own natural purity, but as they are washed with the blood of Christ. Besides which washing of Justification, we must labor after the spiritual washing of Regeneration, that we may be cleansed by the water of the Spirit, applying unto us the virtue of Christ's death and Resurrection, and the washing of repentance, bathing ourselves in the tears of hearty sorrow and contrition, because by our sins we have displeased our gracious God. And if we prepare our hearts, and stretch out our hands towards him; If iniquity be in our hand, we must put it away, and not let wickedness dwell in our tabernacles. For if we do not wash and make us clean, and put away the evil of our doings, but come before him defiled in our sins; then though we spread forth our hands, God will hide his eyes from us, and when we make many prayers, he will not hear.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of such things as are required as essential unto prayer.

Sect. 1 - That we must pray in truth, with attention, and not with wandering thoughts.

In respect of the action, many things are required, both in regard of the substance, and circumstances. Of the former sort are the essentials of prayer: as 1. in general, that it be according to God's revealed will; for if we frame not our prayers according to this rule, we shall go awry, and asking amiss, obtain nothing. More especially, there is required, that we worship God internally with our hearts, as well as externally with our bodies, and that we pour forth our souls unto him in our prayers as Hannah did, so as we may say with David, Unto thee, (O Lord) I lift up my soul; and with the afflicted Church, Let us lift up our heart, with our hands unto God in the heavens. For God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth; and above all other service, he requireth the service of the heart; seeing all other without it, is but mere hypocrisy. Neither can we hope to obtain anything at God's hands, unless our prayers proceed from sincere and upright hearts, seeing he hath limited his promise of hearing only to such, according to that of the Psalmist; The Lord is near unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Let us therefore take heed, when we call upon God, that our prayer be in truth, and not only the words of the mouth, but the prayer of the soul. And to this end, that we do with like care avoid praying with a lying tongue, and deceitful lips, when as we ask those things with our mouths, which we desire not in our hearts; like those hypocritical Israelites of whom the Lord complaineth, that they had spoken lies against him, not crying unto him with their heart, when they howled upon their beds. Secondly, praying with wandering thoughts, having, when we direct our speech in prayer unto God, our minds and hearts roving about worldly vanities, and our earthly affairs, without either respect to God's presence, or the suits that we have in hand. For this is a gross abuse of God's Majesty, which we are ashamed to offer to our superiors, yea even to our equals, speaking unto them, and yet not minding what we say. It discovereth great irreverence and neglect of God's glorious presence, who beholding the secrets of our hearts, seeth how far they and our tongues are one from another. It argueth great security and hardness of heart, when as we thus approach into his presence, and offer unto him such heartless sacrifices, not fearing that dreadful speech, sealed and confirmed by

such a terrible example, that the Lord will be sanctified and glorified in them that come nigh him, either in his mercies, or in his judgments. It makes prayer to be no prayer, but lip-labor, and the wind of words, which is, not the language of the mouth, but the speech of the heart. It causeth us to spend our labor in vain, when as we mind not what we say. For how shall God vouchsafe to understand our suits, when as we ourselves will take no notice of them? Or how shall he give us his rich graces of greatest value, when as we so meanly esteem them, that we can coldly and carelessly ask them at his hands, and not think them worthy the minding and affecting in our souls and hearts?

Sect. 2 - That we must with all diligence banish out of our minds all wandering thoughts, and the means hereof.

And yet seeing through the malice of the devil and our own corruption we are, even at our best, apt to fall into this foul infirmity, let us with all care and diligence look to our hearts when we perform this duty, and earnestly desire the Lord to tie them fast unto himself in the bonds of his fear, that they may not, in this holy exercise, slip aside and depart from him. And if we find our sinful flesh so sluggish and secure, so worldly and earthly-minded, that it dulleth our devotion, and stealeth and carrieth, every hand while, our hearts away after things impertinent, if not worldly and carnal: I think it a good course, in our private prayer, to repeat that again in which we were distracted, laboring in our repetition to call our hearts back to join with our voice; seeing hereof cometh a double benefit: first, that we shall have our suites more powerfully offered unto God, when as they are propounded in this hearty manner. And secondly, hereby we shall tame the flesh, and make it not so eager to interrupt us in these holy duties, when as the spiritual part imposeth upon it this punishment by way of revenge, for its sloth and worldliness, to make it to continue so much the longer at this exercise, unto which naturally it is so backward and averse; and not to feed itself upon any

worldly thoughts, wherein it wholly delighteth, till it have first waited on the Spirit, and suffered it, without interruption, to refresh itself with this heavenly breakfast. Let us meditate also on that glorious presence before whom we stand, who looketh not so much to the phrase of our words, and the well-running style of our speech, as to the discourse of our souls and hearts; which being so full of distractions and senseless ravings and roving's from the matter; one while speaking to God, and (as it were) with the same breath, and in the midst of a sentence breaking off, and speaking to the world; jumbling, and confusedly mingling things spiritual and carnal, heavenly and earthly, holy and profane; how can it be but ugly and misshapen in his sight? Being like Antic-work, consisting of monstrous compositions, wherein the body of a bird, and the tail of a serpent; the face and fore-part of a man, and the hind-part and legs of a beast, or the tail of a fish are joined together? Let us think upon the excellency, profit, and necessity of those gifts and graces, which in our prayers we desire of God, and how infinitely they excel those worldly vanities, which Satan and our own flesh do cast into our minds to distract us in our suites. Unto whose suggestions it is no less folly to listen, then for a malefactor who is suing unto his Prince for a pardon that concerns his life, to turn from him in the midst of his speech, and to hearken unto the motions of his lewd companions, soliciting him to return to his former courses; or for a child, who being suing unto his father for his inheritance, and by him employed about writing and sealing his Evidences; doth leave all this weighty business, and runneth away with his play-fellows, to hunt after Butterflies. Finally, let us meditate on that grief and discontentment which followeth those prayers which are made with these distractions, and how with sorrow and late repentance we wish, that what we have done, had been done otherwise; and contrariwise, of the joy and comfort which accompanieth and waiteth upon the well-performance of these holy duties, out of the assurance that they give us of God's love, of the dwelling of his Spirit in our hearts, which hath thus helped our infirmities, and that our prayers being acceptable unto God, are surely granted; and then think with ourselves, that it will not stand with our wisdom to gain all this grief,

and lose all this comfort and joy, because we would not repel these worldly thoughts and distractions; nor so much as force them to a short absence, when as within less than the lesser part of an hour, our hearts and they might lawfully meet together.

Sect. 3 - That we must pray with our understandings.

And these are the things generally required, that our prayers unto God may be the speech of the soul; now we are to speak more specially of those things which are required hereunto, both in our minds and hearts. In our minds it is required, that we pray with understanding: unto which, knowledge is necessary, both of the true God, unto whom we pray; and of his will revealed in his Word, according unto which we are to frame our prayers. We must know God in his own nature and persons, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, in whom only we can know him aright. We must know him in himself, and in his saving attributes towards us, as that he is a God all-sufficient, most merciful, bountiful, and gracious, and our most loving Father in Jesus Christ, who listeneth unto our suites before we make them; a God that heareth prayers, and is more ready to give, then we to ask. Secondly, we must have knowledge of God's revealed will, which ought to be the rule of all our suites; from which if we swerve, we shall err in our own inventions, and ask we know not what. We shall not pray in the Spirit, which teacheth us to pray according to the will of God; and wanting this guide, and not knowing of ourselves how to pray as we ought, we shall ask things hurtful as well as profitable, and such as tend rather to the satisfying our carnal lusts, then the furthering of our eternal salvation. We shall ask amiss, and so obtain nothing at God's hands, seeing though we like foolish children ask things evil and hurtful, yet our heavenly Father, only wise, knoweth to give good things alone unto his children that ask him; neither hath he made any promise at large, that he will grant whatsoever we ask (which, because through our ignorance, we are apt to ask that which is evil as well as that which is

good, would be in this case a threatening rather than a promise) but that our suites shall be heard, if we pray according to his will.

Sect. 4 - That we must pray in faith.

Secondly, it is required that we pray in faith; for we cannot come unto God, before we believe that God is; and as the Apostle speaketh, How shall we call upon God, in whom we have not believed? Seeing no man is willing to pray, unless it be for form and fashion sake, but he who is persuaded that God will be gracious unto him and give ear unto his requests. Secondly, without faith our persons are not accepted of God, and they can no otherwise be accepted but in Christ, nor we be in Christ but by faith: and consequently our actions cannot please him, when our persons do not, yea being tainted with our corruptions, they are turned into sin. Thirdly, we can have no access unto God, but through Christ our Mediator, being naturally dead in sin, and the children of wrath as well as others; neither have we any interest in Christ, till by a lively faith we be engrafted into him. Fourthly, without faith we have no hope to be heard, seeing the prayer of the faithful man only availeth with God, as the Apostle speaketh, and as we believe, so it shall be unto us. For we have no assurance but from God's promises, which are always made upon the condition of faith, bringing forth the fruits of unfeigned repentance. In all which respects, it is most necessary that we join faith with our prayers, and first a justifying faith, which applieth unto us in general, the promises of the Gospel, Christ Jesus and all his benefits, and assureth us of the remission of our sins, of reconciliation with God, and that both our prayers and persons are accepted of him; whereby we are emboldened to approach unto the Throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. And secondly, some more special acts and branches of this faith, which persuade in particular, 1. That our prayers in their several parts are agreeable unto God's will and Word; that the things we pray for be good and lawful, tending to the advancement of God's glory and our

own salvation, and such as the Lord hath promised to bestow upon us. Secondly, that thus praying according to God's will, he will hear us graciously, and grant unto us even those particular blessings and benefits which we have craved, and God hath promised to bestow upon us; namely, in that manner which he hath promised to give them: that is, when we beg spiritual graces and heavenly glory, which God hath absolutely promised without any condition, in some degree, as in his wisdom he seeth fitting for us, we must accordingly absolutely believe that we shall receive them; but when we crave temporal benefits which God hath promised conditionally, so far forth, as they will stand with his glory, and our spiritual good and everlasting salvation, we must believe that we shall obtain them so far forth as they will stand with these conditions. And thus in both kinds we must pray in faith, and as much as in us lieth, banish wavering and doubting; for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed to and fro: neither let that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Now the best means to strengthen this our faith, when we come to pray, is utterly to deny ourselves and our own righteousness, and casting away all opinion of our own works and worthiness, to ground our faith wholly upon God's power and all-sufficiency, his truth in his promises, his infinite mercies, love and goodness towards us, and the perfect merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. Neither must we look to the measure of our repentance, and other graces necessarily required in those that pray with hope to be heard, but to their sincerity and truth, nor upon faith itself, in respect of the excellency and degree of it, as thinking thereby that we shall be accepted of God, but as it is the condition, upon which all the promises are made, and the alone instrument whereby Christ and all his benefits are applied unto us. But of the means of faith we have spoken before, and therefore refer the Reader to that which hath been said.

Sect. 5 - That we must pray in humility, and with reverence and fervency.

In respect of our hearts there are diverse things required. First, humility, whereby we abase ourselves in the sight and sense of our own vileness and unworthiness, unfeignedly acknowledging, that we are not worthy to tread upon the earth, or to look up unto heaven, much less to appear in God's glorious presence, or to make any suites and supplications unto him. And therefore rejecting all Pharisaical conceit of our own works and worthiness, we are to confess with Abraham, that we are but dust and ashes; with Jacob, that we are less than the least of God's mercies, with David, that we are worms, and no men; with Isaiah, that we are men of polluted lips; with the prodigal Son, that we are not worthy to be called God's children; with the Publican, that we are miserable sinners; yea with the Apostle Paul, that of all sinners we are the chief. And this humility will be a notable means to confirm our faith in this assurance, that we shall be received into grace and favor with God, and that he will hear and grant all our Petitions. For he will look unto him that is poor and of a contrite spirit; he is near unto him, and will dwell with him; with this sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, wherein he chiefly delighteth, he is made propitious, and will be ready to hear his suites; for he forgetteth not the cry of the humble, but he heareth their prayer, and will prepare their heart, and will cause his ear to hear, as the Psalmist speaketh. The second thing required in our hearts, is reverence, unto which David exhorteth: Serve the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling; and performed in his own practice; In thy fear (saith he) will I worship towards thy holy Temple. The which reverence may be wrought in us, by the consideration of God's glorious presence before whom we stand, who being present with us, seeth all our actions, and how we behave ourselves in his service, and is infinite both in Justice and power, to punish us, if we take his name in vain, and abuse his holy Ordinances, in performing unto him a formal, cold, and careless service: and also in mercy, goodness, and bounty, if we worship him aright. And secondly, if we consider withal, our own baseness and vileness, unto whom notwithstanding, God, of his infinite grace and mercy vouchsafeth this high honor and inestimable prerogative, to come into his glorious presence, and to make our suites known unto

him. The third thing required, is fervency of affection, and zealous devotion, whereby we do with all earnestness desire to have all our sins pardoned, and our wants supplied, and with all hearty cheerfulness, without dullness and drowsiness, coldness and weariness, continue in this exercise: Unto which we attain, by coming unto a true sight and sense of our sins and wants, which infer an urgent necessity to have them pardoned and these supplied, and by considering the excellency, necessity, and profit of this action, and the fruits that come of it, which are far to be preferred before all things in the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the circumstances of Prayer, and of their quantity and quality.

Sect. 1 - Of our gesture and voice in prayer.

And these are the essential duties belonging unto prayer, besides which, there are others which are circumstantial and accidental, of which, there cannot for the most part be given any general and certain rules, but that they be done in order, after a decent and comely manner, and so as shall be most fit and convenient for the stirring up of our devotion, and the furthering of those internal duties before spoken of, which are essential and always necessary. The first, is the gesture of the body, which ought to be such as may further our inward humility, reverence, and fervency of devotion; wherein we are to imitate the example of God's Saints in former times, and the custom of the Church and Country where we live, using those gestures which are used in them, to express external worship, humility, and reverence. As among us, standing, kneeling, uncovering of the head, lifting up of the eyes and hands; and in

extraordinary and greater humiliation, prostrating ourselves upon the ground, casting down our eyes, as being ashamed to look towards heaven, and knocking of the breast, as bewailing the sinful corruption therein contained. In all which, our chiefest endeavor must be, that the inward affection and disposition of the heart, do answer unto the outward gestures of the body, without which they are but hypocritical shows. The second, is the voice which is to be used in prayer, so often as conveniently we may, seeing it is one special end, for which God hath given it unto us, that we might by it glorify him, both in our prayers, and our praises and thanksgivings. Not that he himself needeth it, for he searcheth the secrets of the heart and reins, but for the example and edification of others, as in public prayer, and for the intention of our own affections, the attention of our minds, and stirring up of our devotions in our private prayers; which notwithstanding must be done with this caution, that seeing private prayer must be made in secret, we must not speak aloud in our Closet or Chamber, so as others may hear and understand us, or at least, we must not do it to this end, seeing it is but gross hypocrisy, which we must not only avoid, but even the very show and appearance of it, so far forth as it doth not cross Christian apology and profession, nor that rule of piety and charity given by our Savior Christ; Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For we may easily fall (as diverse do) into the contrary extreme, who so shun the show of hypocrisy, that they avoid all profession of Religion, and are as much ashamed to be taken in the exercise of prayer, or such like pious duties, though it be at unawares, especially by those who are not as forward in profession as themselves, as if they were doing something which is faulty and unlawful. But this use of voice is necessary only in such private prayers as are set and solemn, ordinary, and in a private place; for as for those short prayers and exclamations which are to be used upon all occasions, and in all companies, it is sufficient that we lift up our hearts unto God, without using the voice, especially in the presence of others, when the thing we pray for concerneth not them, but ourselves; and least of all, when as they do not join with us in the

sincere profession of the same truth, as before we showed when we spoke of these short prayers and exclamations.

Sect. 2 - That we must not affect prolixity and superfluity of words in our prayers.

And these are the things to be observed in prayer, in respect of our gesture and voice. In respect of the speech itself, or words whereby our prayers are expressed, diverse things are to be considered. First, in respect of the quantity and continuance of them: we must avoid affectation of prolixity, superfluity of words, vain babbling and idle repetitions, which proceed not from any fervency of affection, and earnestness of desire to obtain the things we pray for, arising from the sight and sense of our wants, (for in this case it may be lawful and requisite to repeat often the same things, as pressing our suits with such importunity as will admit of no denial: according to the example of Daniel, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant; O my God, incline thine ear and hear, O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do, &c. And of our Savior Christ himself, praying often in the same words, that if it were possible, the bitter cup of his Passion might pass from him;) but out of an opinion that we shall be the rather heard for the length of our prayers, or out of an ostentation of our holiness and devotion, or our extraordinary gift above others, enabling us to continue long in this exercise. For this our Savior straitly forbiddeth: When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking; prescribeth the contrary practice, in propounding that short and most pithy form for our imitation: and condemneth as hypocritical in the Pharisees, who under pretense of long prayers, devoured widows houses. And Solomon likewise: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth, therefore let thy words be few: Of which our Savior giveth this reason; Because our Father knoweth what things we have need of,

before we ask him: that is, being infinite in wisdom, he needeth not that we should express our minds in multitude of words, for he understandeth the desires of our hearts, and being our gracious Father, our wants serve as a loud cry, and eloquent oration to move him to supply them; and therefore he needeth not that we should use multitude of words to give him notice of those wants which he already knoweth before we ask, nor to persuade him to grant our suits, being more ready to give, then we to crave. And Solomon rendereth another; Because in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: which as it is generally true, so especially in the exercise of prayer: seeing, through our natural corruption, we are so averse unto this duty, and in the performance of it, subject to such coldness, dullness and weariness, that long prayers are often performed with much negligence, and subject to the interruptions and distractions of worldly cogitations and wandering thoughts. And yet we are not so to understand Solomon, and our Savior, as though they simply commended short prayers, and condemned those that are long: for the Wiseman himself, at the consecrating of the Temple, made one of the longest prayers that we read of in the Scriptures: and our Savior is said to have continued whole nights in prayer. And the Apostle exhorteth us to pray continually, and with all manner of prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance. But they only forbid and condemn hypocritical ostentation, and superfluity of words, vain repetitions, and opinion of meriting to be heard for them: or when our words exceed our matter, in their multiplicity and much babbling, or both our words and matter, our zeal, devotion, and attention. Neither are such prayers to be condemned for their prolixity, but rather much to be commended, when as there is no superfluity in our words, to express our matter and minds, nor any negligence or want of zeal and attention in pouring them forth before God: for if we have with the length of our prayers, variety of good matter, attention, and fervency of affection, we cannot be too long in this holy exercise. And therefore the best rule of direction in this behalf is, that we fit and proportion our words to our matter, and both matter and words to our minds and hearts, our faith and fervency, devotion and attention. For if there be

store of this divine fire to kindle it, the more fuel we cast on, the greater the blaze and heat will be; whereas if there be but some little fire and small sparks, too much of this fuel cast on at once, will not help to kindle it, but rather extinguish and put it clean out. In which regard we are not always to stint ourselves to the same proportion and length of prayer, but to watch the best opportunities, and to dive ourselves deepest in this Poole, when the Spirit of God hath descended and moved the waters. More specially we are ordinarily most fit for long prayers, when our souls are prepared thereunto, either by extraordinary afflictions, when as our hearts are full of sorrows, and need a large vent to let them out, and pour out our complaints into God's bosom; and replenished with fervent desires for help and deliverance; or by extraordinary benefits, when as they are full of joy and thankfulness, and so make us to become earnest and unwearied, in rendering unto God praise and thanksgiving: when as we observe a solemn fast, and keep unto God a day of humiliation, consecrating it wholly to the exercises of religion and charity, especially prayer and meditation. And finally, at all other times, when we are fitted thereunto by God's Spirit, and sufficiently qualified with the former graces. The which notwithstanding is to be understood of private prayer by ourselves, and not when we pray in the company of others; for then we are by the rule of charity to have respect unto them, and not to tire their zeal and devotion, and cause them to sin (through our tedious prolixity) by weariness and wandering thoughts, although we ourselves have a good appetite to this exercise; for this were to force them to sit long at the table who have quickly dined, to cloy the weak of digestion, with variety of dishes, because we who bear them company have good stomachs; and to constrain young beginners and children in Christ, to hold out with us in our pace, who are come to a ripe age, and so to tire for weariness, before they come half way to their journeys end. Which if it deserveth to be judged unequal, how much is our practice worthy to be condemned, if in our meetings we contend to outvie one another, striving who shall exceed in length of prayers, and variety of choice words, for the apt expressing of our minds; hereby making

prayer like unto a mastery or race, wherein we contend for the prize of praise, which they are to win who are swiftest and best at length?

Sect. 3 - Of the quality of our prayers.

The second thing to be considered, is the quality of our speech, which ought to be such in our prayers, as is fittest both to stir up and express our zeal and devotion. Wherein we are to avoid two extremes; the first is, curious affectation of words, seeing the Lord respecteth not the eloquence of our speech, but the sincerity of our hearts, and the fervency of our desires, which are as loud cries, and most persuasive orations in his ears, when we are most barren in words. The second is, rudeness of speech, without any fit words, or good sense, order or coherence, which is caused through negligence, want of preparation, and of due reverence and respect of God's glorious Majesty, before whom we stand, and unto whom we speak, not caring what, nor how we babble in his presence, though for our credit sake, we would be more careful in speaking to mortal man not much superior unto us. For otherwise, if it proceed not from carelessness, but from natural infirmity and want of utterance (which we may judge of, if we be so in other discourses, and upon other occasions) our prayers notwithstanding proceeding from upright hearts, and being joined with zeal and devotion, will be acceptable unto God; yea even our imperfect speeches, sighs and groans, will as effectually move him to hear us, and grant our suits, as the most eloquent speeches which have all the helps and ornaments both of nature and art.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the form and method which are to be used and observed in our prayers, &c.

Sect. 1 - Of forms of prayer set down by others.

The last thing to be considered, respecteth the form and manner of pouring forth our souls in prayer unto God, which is either by using set forms, or contriving of prayers according to present occasions, as we are enabled thereunto by the Spirit of God. The former sort are either such as are invented by others, and learned by hearing, or reading their books and writings: or else by ourselves upon due study and meditation. Both which may be lawfully and commendably used of Christians according to their several states and gifts. Written and printed forms by those who want ability to pray in their own words, or to frame their suits and petitions, and express their minds in any good manner and order. The which was one end of penning David's Psalms, that they might by skillful Musicians be sung in the Congregation, and used also in private, both in families, and by ourselves alone. And our Savior prescribed that perfect form of the Lord's Prayer, not only as a rule according to which we are to frame our prayers, but also as a prayer to be used itself; and therefore as it is said in one Evangelist, After this manner pray ye; so in another, When ye pray, say, Our Father. And therefore as children, before they can go, are not suffered to sit still, but are trained and taught by others that hold them by the hand: so though we want spiritual strength and skill to perform this exercise by ourselves, yet we must not neglect it altogether, but yield ourselves to be trained by others (as the Disciples did desire of our Savior Christ) and (as it were holding them by the hand) to use the help of their meditations. But we are not to rest in this as sufficient, without any further proceedings; for though it be fit for a child in Christ, that he may be thus trained to go alone, yet when we come to a riper age, and in respect of our means should be able to teach others, it is a shame for us, and argueth either great impotency and lameness in Religion, or else negligence, sloth, and want of exercise, if we cannot go alone, but still like children, need leading by others. Besides, we cannot by

others meditations unburden ourselves of our own particular sins, of which God and our own consciences only are witnesses, nor express those special wants which most pinch us, and which we most desire should be supplied, nor fit our occasions to their prayers, nor their prayers to our occasions; but we must, as God requireth by the Prophet, when we come unto him as suitors, take words unto ourselves, and frame our petitions and thanksgivings according to our own wants and occasions. Neither let any that hath been long trained in the school of Christ, object his want of gifts and abilities, seeing if he speak true, he proclaimeth his own shame and non-proficiency. For if we had any sense of our wants and sins, we might find some words to express them, that we might crave a supply of the one, and pardon for the other; especially to our heavenly Father, who is so gracious and willing to bear with our infirmities, and who better accepteth of such imperfect prayers as are indicted by ourselves, and uttered with zealous devotion of honest hearts, then of such as are in the best manner penned for us by others. Even as every wise father better accepteth of an Epistle invented and written by his own son himself, though full of imperfections, because it is the means to train him up to more perfection, then that which is done to his hand by one of his fellows of an higher form, though much more exact for matter and manner, because it is the trick of a truant, and argueth not only inability and want of skill, but also sloth and extreme negligence.

Sect. 2 - Of forms of prayers invented by ourselves.

Forms of prayer invented by ourselves, are such, as upon due meditation and sound deliberation we have composed, out of the sight and sense of our sins and wants, and God's mercies multiplied upon us, not only general, but also special and particular, framing confessions, petitions and thanksgivings, so as they may be most fitting for our own peculiar use. The which are necessary for such as are not thoroughly grounded in knowledge, nor perfected in this duty

by much experience and practice; and for such also as being well qualified in these respects, are notwithstanding defective in memory and utterance, having no liberty of speech to express their minds without much meditation, and for such also as are defective in courage and boldness, when they are to pray in the presence of others: And very profitable for all, if we tie not ourselves too strictly to words, but have variety of forms for ordinary use, and by help of meditation, do upon extraordinary occasions, conceive new words for new matter, as the necessity and profit of ourselves, our brethren, or the Church shall require; making particular confessions of sins which are lately committed, and do most burden the conscience, and special petitions for those special graces wherein we find ourselves most defective, and whereof we have presently most use, and special thanksgivings, for God's special mercies and favors renewed upon us. The which variety of forms will take away that satiety and weariness, which always accompanieth the daily and continual use of anything, though never so excellent; and help much to keep our minds and hearts close to this holy exercise, which are apt to be carried away with wandering thoughts, if, without any variety, we tie ourselves to one only form; like a man that goeth on in a way which he is accustomed to travail, and never thinketh on the passages and turnings that are in his journey; or that singeth a tune familiar unto him by much use, and never thinketh of that he singeth.

Sect. 3 - Of conceived prayers, and how far forth they are commendable.

Prayers conceived, are such as upon meditation we fit to all present occasions, not using any ordinary form of words, but expressing ourselves with such as come to our minds; of which, we have many examples in the Scriptures, both in the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and our Savior Christ himself. The which, I acknowledge above all other kinds to be most excellent, if God have thoroughly furnished us with gifts fit for it, both because it is most free from

distractions and wandering thoughts, and from satiety and weariness, this variety bringing with it much delight, and also because it is most opportune and seasonable, being fitted to the time, persons, and occasions. But here the Proverb is verified, that things excellent are most hardly attained, there being few that have this gift and ability, and those few not always in like measure, although there are many that are willing to make show of it. For there are diverse things which ought to concur in him that is to conceive a prayer, which if any be wanting, it cannot be done without much weakness and imperfection. First, he must be diligent in meditation, before he thus speak unto God, calling to memory the sins which he is to confess, the wants which he desireth should be supplied, and the blessings for which he intendeth to give thanks; that so he may with David call his prayer a meditation, humble his soul in the sight of his unworthiness, inflame his heart with fervent desires, and not speak anything rashly with his mouth unto his God, as the Wise man adviseth. In which respect, I cannot commend extemporal prayers, which are performed without any meditation going before, and am so far from extolling them as most excellent, that I think them scarce tolerable or lawful, unless some unexpected occasion and present necessity, do thrust us into extraordinary straights, so as we may not defer our prayer, nor have for the present, opportunity to meditate, nor yet have any former meditations fit for the present occasion, and the circumstances that attend upon it. Secondly, he that thus prayeth must be grounded in knowledge, that he may frame his prayers according to God's will. And therefore they who being children in knowledge, do take upon them this task, they must needs fail much in this holy duty, asking according to their ungrounded conceits, and not God's will, of which they are ignorant. And as children who will venture to run alone, before they can go in another's hand, must needs catch many falls; and they also who will speak much, before they have knowledge and wisdom to rule their tongues, must needs speak many things vain and impertinent: so must it of necessity befall them in this case who are children in knowledge, and not well acquainted with God's will and ways. Thirdly, he must be well experienced and practiced in this duty; neither can we without much

use attain to this perfection. Fourthly, besides a great measure of sanctifying grace, he must have diverse common gifts of the Spirit, which are necessary to the well-performing of this duty, as a good memory, utterance and liberty of speech, and boldness also when others join with him: which will enable him to express readily what his mind conceiveth, and rather intend and inflame, then quench or cool the fervency of his desires. But if we want these, though our knowledge, and faith, and zeal, and all other sanctifying graces be never so great, yet shall we fail much in prayer in this kind, because the powers of the soul will be so wholly occupied about memory, and invention of fit matter, and words to express it, that there will little place be left to zeal, devotion, and fervency of affection. Lastly, it is necessary that he who prayeth on this manner do carefully avoid spiritual pride, and ostentation of his gifts, to which the greatest excellencies, through the malice of Satan and our own corruption are most subject; and also curious affectation of variety of words to express the same matter, as though it were a note of barrenness to use twice the same phrases to express the same things. But the main thing which we are to aim at, is to be fervent and devout in our prayers, and to this end to use such words and phrases as may most conveniently lay open unto God the sincere desires of an upright heart, whether it be in new variety, or in such words as we have often used to express the same things.

Sect. 4 - What method is best to be observed in disposing the parts of our prayers.

Unto the form of prayer, we may add something of the method and right disposing of the parts. The parts of prayer to be used ordinarily of us are three: confession, petition, and thanksgiving. In our private confessions of our sins, we are (having first a true sense and feeling, hatred and detestation of them) to acknowledge them, and bewail them, not only generally, but also specially and particularly, and those above the rest which we have last committed, and with which

we have most often and grievously displeased and dishonored God, and wounded our own consciences, according to the example of David, in the one and fiftieth Psalm; and withal aggravate them by their several circumstances, especially the consideration of the person against whom they were committed, our glorious God and gracious Father in Jesus Christ; adjudging and condemning ourselves in regard of them, to be less than the least of God's mercies, and worthy of his greatest plagues and punishments. Unto which we are to adjoin petition, and first, that God for his mercies sake, his promise sake, and his Christ's sake, will forgive us all our sins, and never lay them to our charge, seeing our Savior hath fully satisfied his Justice for them; and so, that being justified and freed from the guilt and punishment of our sins, he will be reconciled unto us, and receive us into his love and favor. Secondly, that God will be pleased to seal up the assurance hereof in our hearts and consciences, by the gracious testimony of his holy Spirit, and give unto us the spirit of Adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba Father, and witnessing to our spirits, that we are his children by adoption and grace. Thirdly, that he will sanctify us by the same Spirit, mortifying and crucifying in us more and more our sinful corruptions, so as they may not rule and reign in us, as at former times, and that he will also quicken us unto holiness and newness of life, and enable us to yield obedience to his holy and heavenly will. Fourthly, that he will to these ends graciously vouchsafe unto us the means which may enable us unto them, and make them effectual by his good blessing upon them. Especially, that he will indue us with the sanctifying gifts and graces of his holy Spirit; as saving knowledge, a lively faith, unfeigned repentance, firm affiance, fervent love, and ardent zeal, hope, patience, humility, the true fear of God, and the rest. Fifthly, that God will daily increase his graces in us, and our strength and ability to serve him, that we may grow from one measure to another, until we come to a perfect age in Christ. Sixthly, that he will establish us with his free Spirit, that we may constantly persevere in the profession and practice of true godliness, unto the end, and in the end; and that he will thereby so assist and strengthen us against all the assaults of our spiritual enemies, that we may have victory over

them, and not be hindered by their temptations, from proceeding in our course of godliness, or from finishing the great work of our salvation. Seventhly, we must hereunto add petitions for special benefits, whereof we stand in need, concerning things either temporal, or spiritual and eternal; and particularly such as are necessary and profitable for the well passing of the day following, especially preservation from all dangers, direction in all our courses, our thoughts, words, and actions, and the blessing of God upon all our labors, with a right use of all God's benefits and chastisements. Finally, we must pray for the good estate of the whole Church, of that in which we live, and for all the principal members of it; for our friends and benefactors, for the afflicted, for those of the same family, and such unto whom we are bound by any special bond of duty. And lastly, we must from petition descend to thanksgiving, praising God for all his blessings, both corporal, spiritual, and eternal; and especially for those peculiar benefits which he hath vouchsafed unto us in the whole course of our lives; for those of late received; and namely, the night past in our preservation and quiet rest. And this I hold to be the best method and order to be observed in our prayers ordinarily, although I would tie no man unto it, but that he may herein use his discretion, beginning with confession, thanksgiving, or petition, as his heart leadeth him, and fit occasion shall be offered.

Sect. 5 - What duties are to be performed after we have prayed.

And these are the duties which are to be daily performed in this holy exercise of prayer. Now after we have thus prayed, there are certain other things required of us. First, a lively faith, whereby we do not only give our unfeigned assent unto our prayer made, but also rest persuaded, that the Lord hath heard us in the things for which we have prayed, and will assuredly accept of our humiliation and thanksgiving, and grant all our suites and requests, as it will best stand with his own glory, our spiritual good, and eternal happiness.

And this our Savior requireth, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them. Secondly, hope, patience, and humility, whereby we make no haste, nor prescribe unto God any time of doing the things which we have desired, but meekly acknowledging his infinite wisdom in himself, and goodness towards us, do resign wholly ourselves and suites unto his good pleasure, expecting with all patience his leisure, when as he shall think it fittest to bestow upon us those gifts and graces which we have begged at his hands. Thirdly, there is required of us after prayer, an earnest endeavor in the use of all good means, whereby we may obtain those things which we have prayed for: whereby we shall serve God's providence, and be his instruments to further the accomplishment of his promises, and also make it manifest, that in our hearts we sincerely desired those things which we begged with our mouths. For example, after we have prayed for the pardon of our sins, we must use carefully all good means whereby we may be further assured that God hath forgiven them; after we have craved sanctification, we must labor and endeavor that we may be sanctified, and exercise ourselves in the duties of holiness; after we have desired spiritual and saving graces, we must use all the helps and means whereby we may attain unto them. For otherwise we shall discover ourselves to be but mere hypocrites, who with our lips have prayed for those things which we have neither esteemed in our judgments, nor affected in our hearts; and therefore receive nothing at God's hands, who giveth his gifts not to idle loiterers, but unto such as pursue them with thirsting desires, and earnestly labor and endeavor in the use of all good means whereby they may obtain them.

Sect. 6 - Of the time in the morning when we are to use private prayer.

The last direction which I will set down for our private prayer in the morning, respecteth the time when it is to be performed; of which,

though I can give no necessary rule, because all men's occasions and opportunities are not alike, yet for the greatest part it is most convenient that we do it betimes, as soon as we are ready, before we undertake any worldly business, and have our minds taken up with any earthly thoughts: Because we shall then be most free from all incumbrances which may distract us in this holy exercise, and make us less fit to perform it as we ought; as also, because if we offer unto God the first fruits of our thoughts and affections, they will sanctify all our following endeavors, and season them so with holiness, that they will become more acceptable unto God. Or if some extraordinary occasion and weighty business have caused us to defer it, our second care must be, that we do not neglect it altogether, but sequestering our minds and affections from all earthly thoughts and worldly employments, we must take the next and best opportunity which shall be offered unto us; and think no excuse or business so important, as may make us utterly to omit it.

Sect. 7 - Of prayer with the rest of the family.

The next duty of piety after our private prayer, is prayer with the rest of the family; which is to be performed ordinarily by the master and governor, who is to be the mouth of the rest to commend them and their suits unto God. For, according to the example of the Patriarchs and holy men in times past, he ought to be not only a governor to rule them, and a Prophet to teach and instruct them, but also a Priest to offer the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, not only for himself, but also for all those that are committed to his charge: neither ought any man to think that he may be exempted from this duty, or that in respect of his honor and greatness, he may be privileged from this holy service unto God, and as an inferior duty, delegate it to his deputy, if he himself be able to perform it; but rather with the holy Patriarchs to esteem it an honorable prerogative, which he will no more put off from himself to another, then he will the regiment and government of his house and family. Much less must we think it

sufficient, that we have prayed alone, or content ourselves with our private devotions, if we have others under our government, and committed to our charge: seeing we are to take no less care of their souls than of their bodies; nor that they serve us in the duties of their callings, then that they serve God in the duties of piety and Christianity, without which we can expect no blessing upon their labors. For if Joshua, though a great Captain and Commander, and so greatly employed both in wars and government, would not hereby excuse himself, but undertaketh for all in his family, that he and his household would serve the Lord: if David, though a King, would not content himself with his integrity in the government of the State, but voweth also that he would perform all domestical duties with a perfect heart: And if Solomon, though a mighty Monarch in the height of his honor, thought himself more honored in being the mouth of the whole people to commend their suits unto God; let not any man think himself so great, that he is too good to perform this duty. But alas, the neglect hereof is grown so ancient among honorable personages, that it now pleadeth prescription; so that these family duties are wholly neglected, or else put off from themselves to be performed by a deputy. And little hope I have that my writings and reasons should be so powerful as to infringe this custom, which hath in it almost the strength of a law, and revoke the practice of family duties unto ancient perfection; and yet I thought it fit to speak the truth, and leave the success to the author of it: neither thought I it convenient in setting down the rules of piety, that I should fit the straight square to the general crookedness of the work, but to leave it in its perfection, that the work in God's good time may be reduced unto it. Let therefore all masters of families know, that it is their duty which God will require of them, not only to pray by themselves, but also to call together all their family, and to join with them in this holy exercise: unto which they may be encouraged by God's gracious promise, that where two or three be gathered together in Christ's name, there he will be in the midst of them. Secondly, because by making their house a house of prayer, they shall make it a little temple, which God will fill with his presence, and replenish with his blessings, both temporal and

spiritual. Thirdly, because nurturing their children and servants in the fear of the Lord, and exercising them in this duty of God's service, they shall make them more faithful and conscionable in performing all duty and service unto themselves, not only formally and in outward appearance, but cheerfully and from the heart. Fourthly, because it is the chief means of the preservation of the whole house and family from sin and from danger, and of deriving God's manifold blessings upon the whole society. Lastly, because they can no otherwise expect that God will prosper their labors, to the good of the master, and the whole house and family, unless they use the means which he hath ordained, and obtain his blessing by their daily prayers; without which they shall not thrive in their labors, but spend their endeavors and strength in vain. Now for the time of the morning when this duty is to be performed, no certain rule can be prescribed; only this in general, that it be then done, when as all, or the most of the family may, in respect of their common occasions, most conveniently assemble together. And although it were to be wished, that it may be betimes in the morning, before they go about their worldly business, that they may be free from distraction, and sanctify all their following labors by these good beginnings: yet because the employments are diverse in almost all the members of the family, and require that some should go about them sooner, and some later; and because it often falleth out that the governors, by reason of age, weakness, or other infirmities, cannot rise so soon as others, because they must have regard to their health; therefore if in these respects this time cannot be allotted to this service, some other which is most convenient may be chosen: which if it can be no sooner, in regard of the common meeting together of the whole household, it will be fit that it be done before dinner. Of which, the less inconvenience will follow, if everyone in the family, and the governors for all the rest, have betimes performed this duty privately by themselves.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of singing Psalms, and reading the Scriptures in the family.

Sect. 1 - That singing of Psalms is enjoined in the Scriptures, and practiced by the faithful.

Unto prayer we adjoin that holy exercise of singing Psalms in the family, which though it be not in practice next in order, according to ordinary use, yet I would not sever it from the former, seeing it is a religious duty, and like unto it, being a notable means whereby we praise God, and render unto him thanks for all his benefits. And though it be not tied unto any part of the day; nor yet every day to be necessarily performed; and though in no family it be always alike seasonable, as in the time of mourning for some private or public calamity, but in the time of rejoicing, when we have occasion to praise God's holy name for his gifts and blessings conferred on us, according to the Apostles rule, Is any man among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms. And though in some families it can seldom be done for want of leisure and opportunity, unless it be on the Sabbath, and in some places not then, for want of convenient company to join together; yet where it may conveniently be performed in respect of company, leisure, and other occasions, it is an excellent duty, which is no ways to be neglected. For first it is enjoined in the Scriptures. The Prophet David in many places exhorteth to it, O come (saith he) let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing. Sing aloud unto God our strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob, &c. Sing unto him a new song, play skillfully with a loud noise. So the Prophet Isaiah, Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth. And Jeremiah, Sing ye unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord, for he hath delivered the soul of the poor out of

the hands of evil doers. The Apostle Paul likewise exhorteth us, to speak unto the Lord in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. Of which, we have the Saints of God in all ages examples for our imitation, in the time both of the Law and the Gospel, and in the purest ages of the primitive Church, who were complained on to the persecuting Emperors, for their diligent performance of this duty day and night. Yea, our Savior Christ himself at the celebration of his last Supper, is said with his Disciples to have concluded that holy action, with singing of a Psalm. Which examples, that we may imitate, let us further consider in the next place, that it is a notable means to rouse up our drowsy and dead hearts, and by the sweet melody affecting our outward sense, to ravish them with joyful delight, and make them cheerful in God's service, which was the cause why Elisha being to prophecy, and finding his Spirit dulled with the displeasing presence of the idolatrous King, who together with Jehoshaphat was to have the benefit of his good endeavors, desireth a Musician to play before him, to stir up his heart unto the more cheerful performance of this duty. Secondly, it is an acceptable service unto God, as being a singular means to glorify him, when as our hearts are filled with thankfulness, and our mouths with his praises; according to that of the Psalmist, Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; the which, in the same Psalm he preferreth before oblations and burnt sacrifices. Finally, it is a heavenly exercise of the glorified Saints, which we shall perform with them in that place of joy and happiness, if we take delight in it whilst we live in the earth.

Sect. 2 - How we may sing Psalms in a right manner.

Now if we would perform this in an acceptable manner, our care must be that it be done with our souls as well as our tongue and lips. And first with our minds, both understanding what we sing, so as we may say with the Apostle; I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also; and applying our minds unto it with

due attention, and not suffering them to be carried with wandering thoughts. Secondly, we must sing with our hearts also, according to that of the Apostle; Speak to yourselves in Psalms, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord; which elsewhere he calleth, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; the which David practiced; I will praise thee (saith he) with my whole heart. And this we shall do, if we do apply and fit them to the matter of the Psalm, and put on the same affection which David had in penning them; as humility in the confession of sin, fervency of desire in petitions and suites; alacrity and cheerfulness in praises and thanksgivings; assent and belief in prophecies and predictions; teachableness and willingness to learn in doctrines and instructions; readiness to obey in commandments and exhortations, &c. and at all times and in all things, reverence of God's majesty, in whose presence we perform this duty. In the mean time we must take heed, that we do not apply his imprecations, which were uttered by a prophetic spirit against those who were desperate enemies to God as well as David, against our private enemies, with a revengeful desire, that those evils may befall them, seeing our Savior hath taught us to pray for them. But we must either make use of them for doctrine and instruction, or if we apply them, it must not be against particular persons, but against all those whatsoever whom the Lord in his wisdom knoweth to be desperate enemies unto him and his Church. Secondly, our care must be that we do not make it a bodily exercise, singing Psalms for recreation only, and as we do other songs, for mere pleasure and sensual delight, but we must perform it as a religious duty of God's service, and strive in it to please him rather than ourselves. We must not seek to delight the ear, and affect the heart with the air, music and sweetness of the tune, but that there being a harmony between it and the voice, we make sweet melody in God's ears; which if it be wanting, our best music (as one saith) is no more acceptable to God, then the barking of Dogs, the lowing of Oxen, or the grunting of Hogs. Yea, as the same Author saith, If I be delighted more with the music then with the matter, instead of serving God, I fearfully sin. And therefore division and fraction of voice, broken repetitions and reports, which take away the sense, hinder the understanding, both

of the singer and hearer, and tend only to affect the ear with the melody, and not the heart with the matter, are not to be used in this holy exercise. For this is to sing, not like men endued with reason, but rather like birds, which are sensible only of the tune, but have no understanding of the matter and ditty.

Sect. 3 - That we must diligently read the Scriptures, and the great profit of this exercise.

Unto prayer and praising of God by singing of Psalms, we are to adjoin another religious exercise, which is reading of the Scriptures and other holy writings; of which we will only here speak, as it is a daily duty to be performed of us, referring the more full handling of it unto another place, when we are to entreat of the means whereby we may be enabled to lead a godly life. Here let it suffice to show, that it is a duty no day to be neglected, if we can borrow any time from other necessary employments, and find any convenient leisure and fit opportunity to perform it. For whereas we should labor after a daily increase in spiritual graces, there is scarce any means more effectual for this purpose; seeing it is a notable help for the enlightening of our minds in the knowledge of God and his will, according unto which we are to frame our lives; for the Word of God is a lamp unto our eyes, and a light unto our paths; it enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth understanding unto the simple. It giveth wisdom to the ignorant, and to the young man knowledge and discretion. It is a singular help for the strengthening of our faith, when as we have daily before our eyes the covenant of grace, and the sweet promises of the Gospel made unto us in Jesus Christ; and observe the infinite mercies of God extended to all, without respect of persons who have believed and trusted in him. It much inflameth our love towards God, when in reading of them we observe his love towards us; and maketh us zealous of his glory, when we take notice of the infinite bounty of our Lord and Master, and what a rich rewarder he is of our poor and imperfect service. It will serve for a looking-glass, wherein

we may see our spots and spiritual deformities, and be directed also by it to reform and amend them. It is a fit guide in the time of prosperity, which will teach us to use God's blessings aright, so as they may be, not only truly comfortable in themselves, but also as they are pledges of God's love, and earnest pennies of our salvation. It will be our comforter in our adversity, whilst it teacheth us so to profit by them, as that they may be signs of our adoption, and notable means to assure us of God's love and our own salvation. It containeth in it the evidences of our heavenly inheritance, and teacheth us how to get them into our own keeping without fear of losing them; and who cannot daily with much comfort spend some time in perusing these assurances, wherein so rich and glorious a Kingdom is ratified unto him? It is a divine treasury of all spiritual and heavenly riches; and who is so unwisely moderate in his spiritual desires, as not once in a day to please his eye with the sight of these treasures? Finally, it is our spiritual armory, in which is munition of all kinds, and all sorts of weapons, fit to defend ourselves, and offend our enemies; and therefore seeing we are daily in the Christian warfare, and continually assaulted by the enemies of our salvation, why should we not also daily go into this armory to fit ourselves with spiritual armor, and to take out of it the most prevailing weapons? Now for the time of the day when this duty must be performed; in respect of private reading it cannot be limited, but must be left to be prescribed by men's leisure and opportunity. And for that which is used as a family-exercise, it is most seasonable, as I take it, before prayer, either morning or evening, because then they are assembled together, and multitudes of occasions will hardly admit of often meetings.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of our daily exercise in the duties of our callings, and of diverse virtues required in them.

Sect. 1 - That we must make choice of lawful callings.

Having thus begun the day by the performance of these religious duties, we must in the next place betake ourselves to the duties of our lawful callings. Neither can we sufficiently approve ourselves unto God, if we do not join these with the other, for he will be served, not only in the general duties of Christianity, but also in those special duties which are peculiar unto those places and callings in which he hath set us, either in the Church or Common-wealth. Neither is it sufficient for him who is called to be a Magistrate, Minister, Master of a family, or servant, that he perform those duties which are common unto him with all Christians, unless he also with like care and endeavor, perform those special duties which belong to his own place and calling. And here first is required, that our calling be lawful, and agreeable to God's will and Word; that is, such an one, as our labors in it may tend to God's glory, the good of the Church and Common wealth, and the furthering not only of our temporal, but also our spiritual good, and the eternal salvation of our souls; and not such as being unlawful hindereth these ends; as those that live by unlawful Arts and Trades, Players, Gamesters, and such like; for then the greater pains we take in such callings, the greater is our sin, the more we dishonor God, hurt our neighbors, and hinder our own salvation. Secondly, that we be in some measure qualified with such gifts as are fit for our callings; for those whom God calleth unto any place, he furnisheth them with such competency of gifts, as that they may profitably perform the duties required unto it. And if our calling be lawful, and we thus fitted for it, then may we say with the Apostle Paul, that we are called by the will of God, and may with cheerfulness and comfort go on in it, expecting his blessing upon our labors, and in the end of our lives, a rich reward for doing him therein faithful service. Thirdly, our minds and hearts must be settled in our callings, so as we neither shift and change, unless it be upon weighty and necessary causes, nor intrude and busy ourselves in the callings of

others; for this were to overthrow all order, and bring confusion into Church and Common wealth; and to cross God's wise providence in the government of the world, who hath given variety of gifts, which he hath appointed to be exercised in variety of callings, that being helpful and serviceable mutually unto one another, human societies might be preserved, and peace and love nourished in them. And therefore as in a well-governed Army, everyone keepeth his place and station unto which his General hath designed him, and not only serveth him generally as a Soldier, but in that place and office unto which he is appointed and chosen: So must we demean ourselves towards our great Commander, and not think it enough to perform good duties, unless we do those which belong to our callings; not out of fancy and fickle inconstancy, leaving our station; but as the Apostle requireth, abide in the same calling wherein God hath placed us.

Sect. 2 - That we must be regenerate, before we can serve God acceptably in our callings.

But it is not sufficient that we be settled in a lawful calling, and that we painfully perform the duties that are required in it (for this a mere worldling may do out of carnal and earthly respects, either for his own pleasure, credit, or profit) but that we so carry and demean ourselves in it, as that we may by our labors and endeavors glorify God, further our own salvation, and advance the good of the Church and Common wealth. Unto which, diverse things are required, some whereof respect our persons, and some the actions and duties which we perform. Unto our persons there is required, that we be regenerate and sanctified. For our persons must be accepted, before any of our works can please God, and be holy and righteous, before we can bring forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness. For as unto the pure all things are pure: so unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. And if the sacrifices of the wicked are abominable, and their

very prayers are turned into sin; how much more are the ordinary works of their callings sinful and odious in God's sight? Neither can such as are unsanctified expect any blessing of God upon their labor, or that they should prosper in anything which they do or take in hand, seeing by God's promise, this privilege is limited unto the righteous and such as fear him.

Sect. 3 - That we must perform the duties of our callings in faith.

Unto the actions also and duties of our callings, that they may be acceptable unto God, diverse things are required. And these are either such virtues and graces which go before, as being the causes of all our good actions and proceedings, or such as do accompany and attend upon them. Of the former sort, the first and principal is a true and lively faith, whereby I understand not only a justifying faith which assureth us of the remission of our sins, and of the love and favor of God, and which by uniting us unto the true vine Christ, doth enable us in him to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, without which we cannot please God, nor do any good thing, seeing all we do is sin; but also a particular act of this faith, whereby we are persuaded that our callings and the duties which we perform in them being pleasing unto God, the Lord will give a blessing upon all our labors and endeavors. For which purpose our faith must have a warrant and ground out of God's Word, both enjoining these duties, and promising a blessing unto the performance of them. And thus shall we live the life of faith, which is so often commended unto us in the Scriptures, when as therein we do not only the religious duties of God's service, but also the duties of our callings, whereby we shall be encouraged to go forward in them with all alacrity and cheerfulness, when as we are assured that God will bless those labors which himself hath required; and not be dismayed with those crosses and troubles which befall us in them, seeing we are sure, that by God's blessing and gracious assistance, we shall overcome them, and have a good end and issue of all our labors.

Sect. 4 - That the duties of our callings must proceed from Love.

Secondly, the duties of our callings must proceed out of unfeigned love towards God and our neighbors, which is the fountain of all true obedience, and not principally from self-love or love of the world, which being poisonous roots of all sin, will taint all our works and actions which spring from them. They must arise from the love of God, which moveth those in whom it is, to consecrate wholly unto him their lives and labors, in all things desiring to serve him, who so loveth us, and whom we so love, both in the immediate duties of his worship, and also in the ordinary duties of our callings. And this is done, when as we labor in them, not first and chiefly for worldly gain and advantage, thereby to please ourselves; but in obedience to God's Commandment, who requireth these duties of us, studying in all things to please him, and that our actions both for the matter and manner may be approved and accepted in his sight. Secondly, we must perform the duties of our callings out of love towards our neighbors, seeking in them their good as well as our own, seeing true charity seeketh not her own, but is also serviceable unto others: which if we do, then will we not wrong them, to benefit ourselves, nor gain by their loss; we will not deprive them of some great good, to get unto ourselves some small advantage; neither will we be so wholly intent and greedily gripple in following our own business, but that we will spare them some of our time, and afford them our best help, when their necessity shall require our assistance, and reason, charity and conscience shall bind us to afford it.

Sect. 5 - That they must be directed to right ends.

Thirdly, as our labors must arise from these causes, so they must be directed to right ends. As first and principally to God's glory, which in all we do, we must labor to advance. Neither is God only glorified

when we profess and practice religious duties, but also when we walk conscionably in our callings, and with all diligence perform the duties required in them in obedience to his Commandments. Secondly, we must propound unto ourselves in them the good of the Church and Common wealth, which we are to prefer before our own private, and so carry ourselves in all things, as that we may be profitable members in these societies. In which regard we must not seek to gain by the common loss, but neglect our own particular, when as it will not stand with the public and general good. Thirdly, we must in all our labors aim so at our own profit, as that we join therewith the welfare and benefit of our neighbors, whom by the Law of charity we are to love as we love ourselves; and not raise our gain out of their loss and disadvantage, as it is the common custom of the world. But as we profess ourselves members of the same body, so must we, as becometh members, aim chiefly at the preservation of the whole, and then at the joint good one of another, not thinking those goods well gotten, which are raised and gained out of our neighbors loss.

Sect. 6 - That the duties of our callings must be performed after a right manner, and first, with heavenly minds.

And these things are to be observed in the labors of our callings, in respect of their causes both efficient and final. In the next place our care must be, that we perform them after a right manner; unto which is required that we be exercised in our earthly business, with heavenly minds and affections, and not suffer our worldly employments so wholly to take us up both in soul and body, as that thereby we should be hindered from having our conversation in heaven. But like Citizens of heaven, and pilgrims on earth, whilst our bodies are travailing in worldly employments, we must have our minds, hearts and affections lifted up in spiritual and heavenly meditations and desires, contemplating and longing after the joys of our own country, and not so much minding the things beneath, as

the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Especially, we must not neglect in the midst of our ordinary business, to lift up our hearts often unto God, either craving his blessing in the beginning of our work, or giving him thanks and praise in the end; and not suffer our thoughts to be so wholly set upon our bodily employments, and earthly objects, as not sometimes to fix them upon spiritual and heavenly things. For if worldlings and citizens of the earth, are seldom or never so intent upon their works and present employments, but that their minds and hearts will take liberty of wandering after those carnal pleasures wherein they most delight; let it be a shame for us, who profess ourselves Citizens of heaven, so wholly to mind earthly objects, as never to find leisure to think of the joys of our own Country, or of the spiritual means whereby we may be enabled to attain unto them. As therefore we are to avoid Monkish sloth and idleness, giving over the painful labors of our callings, under pretense of contemplation; so are we with no less care to avoid the contrary extreme, of turning worldlings, and being earthly-minded; having our minds and hearts so wholly fixed upon worldly things, as that we can find no leisure to think upon those which are spiritual and heavenly. But we must be so employed in the duties of our callings, as that we neglect not the general duties of Christianity, and the exercises of Religion in their due time; nor be so intent and earnest in pursuing momentary gain and worldly profit, as that in the meantime, through spiritual sloth, we suffer any of God's saving graces, heavenly thoughts, or holy affections and desires, to be cooled and quenched in us. We must so play the good husbands, as that we do not forget Christ's counsel; First seek the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and not be so taken up with our Oxen, farms, and earthly matches and marriages, as to neglect the means whereby we may be fitted to come as worthy guests to the marriage of the Kings son. We must choose with the Philosopher, rather to neglect our farms than our souls; and suffer some weeds to grow in our fields, rather than to have our minds overgrown with vices, or to lose any good opportunity of weeding them out, or of sowing in them the seeds of God's graces.

Sect. 7 - That the duties of our callings must be sanctified by the Word and prayer.

Secondly, unto the performing of the duties of our callings after a right manner, there is required that we sanctify them by the Word and prayer. The former is done, when as we do nothing but that for which we have our warrant out of the holy Scriptures, and use them as the rule and squire, according to which we frame all our actions, doing that which the Word of God requireth, and leaving that undone which it forbiddeth and condemneth. The which is to be observed, both in respect of the matter and works themselves, and also the manner and circumstances, doing all things both in substance and form, as it requireth and directeth. The latter is performed, when as by prayer we desire God's blessing upon all our labors, and render unto him praise and thanksgiving, when we have obtained it, and have succeeded and prospered in the works of our hands. And this the Apostle requireth in all our affairs; Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him. The necessity whereof will plainly appear, if we consider, that it is God's blessing only which maketh rich, and causeth us to thrive and prosper in all the works of our hands. That it alone enableth us to build goodly houses, and causeth our herds and our flocks, our silver and gold, and all that we have to multiply: and that he only giveth us power to get wealth. That it is he, who at his pleasure giveth and taketh away, maketh poor and rich, bringeth low, and lifteth up, raising the poor out of the dust, and lifting up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and to make them inherit the Throne of glory; As we see in the example of Abraham and Lot, who by the blessing of God upon their labors, waxed so rich, that the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together; and of Isaac, who being a sojourner and stranger in the land, prospered in all his labors, and sowing the ground, received in the same year an hundred fold, because the Lord blessed him. And in Jacob, who passing over Jordan like a poor

Pilgrim, with his staff in his hand, at his return back again was multiplied in wealth. Whereas contrariwise, if God's blessing be wanting (as we are not likely to have it unless we crave it) all our labors and endeavors will be spent in vain; For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain; It is in vain for us to rise early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows, not affording ourselves a good meals meat, out of our earnest desire to become rich. For if we neglect God's service, the Lord will blow upon our labors, and then though we sow much, we shall bring in little; we shall eat, but not have enough; we shall drink, but not be satisfied; clothe ourselves, and not be warm; and earning wages for our work, we shall not be the richer, but put it all into a bag with holes. Or if our labors prosper for the increasing of worldly wealth; yet God's blessing being wanting, it shall do us more hurt then good, bringing with it no sound comfort and contentment, but carking care, fear, and grief; whereas the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it, as the Wiseman speaketh. And if we thus perform the duties of our callings, in love towards God, and in obedience to his commandment, and desire by prayer his blessing upon our labors, and yield him praise when he hath vouchsafed to give it, then shall we therein do service unto God, though our condition and the works of our vocation be never so mean and base, as well as in hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacrament, or in performing the most excellent duty which he hath commanded, seeing though they differ in the matter, yet not in respect of our mind, and manner of doing them. And so we may be assured, not only that the Lord will prosper us in them, and give them such good success in this world, as shall be most fitting for his glory and our spiritual good, but also will richly reward them, among other duties of his service, with everlasting joy and happiness in the life to come. The which argument the Apostle useth to persuade servants to walk faithfully in their calling, obeying their masters, according to the flesh, and herein performing their duty, with all cheerfulness and singleness of heart, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing

that of the Lord they should receive the reward of the inheritance, because in serving their masters, they served him.

Sect. 8 - Of the virtues which must accompany us in the duties of our callings.

The next thing to be considered, is the virtues which ought to accompany us in the right and religious performance of the duties of our callings. For howsoever all virtues and graces are necessary unto the person that must thus walk acceptably before God, and scarce any can be wanting to the well-performing of any good action; yet there are some which more specially and properly belong to these duties of our callings, and do so immediately concern them, that they can in no good sort be done of us, unless in some measure we be qualified with them. As first, knowledge and judgment, whereby we must be enabled to discern between good and evil, right and wrong, which must be our light to guide us in all our ways, and our load-star to direct us in all our courses, which if it be wanting, we shall walk in darkness, and be apt to fall into many errors. Secondly, affiance in God, whereby we cast ourselves upon his promises and providence in the use of lawful means; the which the Psalmist requireth of us; Commit thy way (saith he) unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The which we may more easily do, if we rightly consider our Saviors argument which he useth to the same purpose; for if the Lord take care to feed the fowls of the air, which take no care for themselves; and clotheth the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin, how much more will he provide for us all things necessary, who rest upon him in the use of all lawful courses, and take moderate care, and convenient pains to serve his providence? Which affiance, if it be wanting, we shall be subject to innumerable discouragements, macerate ourselves with carking care, and rush, upon all occasions, into the use of unlawful means, when lawful are wanting; thereby shifting for ourselves, because we have no assurance that God will provide for us. Thirdly, we must be

accompanied with a good conscience both towards God and towards men, and willing with the Apostle, to live honestly, we must with him keep it in all things. For having always in our company this Monitor and Judge, it will notably preserve us from all secret sins, and crafty conveyances, whereby we are naturally apt to wrong our neighbors, that we may benefit ourselves; from all halting, dissembling, and double dealing, when as it may be so cunningly and closely carried, that respect of our credit, worldly shame, nor legal punishment are no sufficient bonds to restrain us from them; and from sloth and unfaithfulness in performing our duties; when no eye of man can take notice of it. Fourthly, we must have contentation for our companion, whereby we are in all things contented with God's good pleasure, and think that estate and condition best for us in which he hath placed us, giving indifferent welcome to prosperity or adversity, poverty or riches, gain or loss, because they are messengers alike of his sending; and though some more than others do in rougher terms deliver his message, yet when we do entertain them aright, they all assure us of his love, as being means to further our salvation. And of this we have an example in the Apostle Paul; Who had learned both, how to be abased and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry, to exceed and suffer want. Unto which if we attain; then shall we not be discontented with the baseness of our callings, nor envy others their greater preferments, their less labors and more gains; we shall not be set upon the rack of ambition, aspiring daily after higher dignity, seeing the place in which we are, being of God's appointing, is most fitting for us. Neither can any calling be thought too base for us, wherein acceptable service may be offered unto God, yea wherein he joineth with us as our helper and assistant, and rewards the pains which we take in them, with no less wages then a heavenly inheritance. We shall be preserved from that deadly dropsy of insatiable avarice; for our conversation may be without covetousness, if we come to think godliness the greatest gain, and can be content with such things as we have. And consequently, we shall walk honestly in our callings, when being contented with our estate and condition, we will use no indirect and unlawful means, nor fraudulent, violent, or unjust courses, to enrich ourselves with

other men's goods. And go on in our duty with much comfort and inward peace, when our heads are not vexed with carking cares; nor our hearts affrighted with the terrors, nor gnawed on with the worm of an evil conscience. But of this I have spoken largely in another place. Fifthly, we must possess our souls with patience, if we will, as we ought, walk in the duties of our callings; for besides that our labors in themselves are tedious and troublesome; we are daily subject to many crosses and mis-carriages in them, which will discourage us from going on; or if we do, being constrained by necessity, yet with much discontentment and disquietness of mind, murmuring and repining, if we be not armed with patience, and resolution to suffer with meekness, whatsoever God shall be pleased to send. Sixthly, we must have our hearts replenished with thankfulness unto God, and be ready at all times when we observe his love in blessing our labors, to lift them up, rendering unto him praise and thanksgiving. And acknowledging that we are less than the least of God's mercies, we must give him the whole glory of them, and not sacrifice unto our own nets, nor attribute our well-proceeding and good success to our own policy and skill, industry and abilities, but knowing that whatsoever we have, we have received it from God, we must take all occasions of rendering unto him the praise which is due unto him. Seventhly, we must perform the duties of our callings with alacrity and cheerfulness, and whatsoever we do, we must do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, who will richly reward our labors with a heavenly inheritance. For as he loveth a cheerful giver, so also a cheerful laborer, in all things more respecting our inward affections than our outward actions. And as it is acceptable to God; so will it be most comfortable unto us, making all our labors easy; when our hearts and hands are conjoined in doing them. Eighthly, we must observe Justice in all the duties of our callings, doing nothing in them, but that which may advance our neighbors good as well as our own. And this will make us avoid all unjust and unlawful courses, which are commonly used to gather wealth; all fraud and deceit, extortion and oppression; all unprofitable labors, which tend to the hurt, rather than the good of the Common-wealth; and deceitful dealing, in those that are lawful.

Finally, by this Justice we shall be moved to give every man his due, and to do no man wrong in the carriage of our callings; but so deal in them with others, as we would have others in their callings to deal with us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Divers reasons which may persuade us to be faithful and diligent in duties of our callings.

Sect. 1 - That God hath ordained man to labor; and hath in many places of the Scriptures strictly enjoined it.

Now when we are thus qualified with these virtues and graces, the last thing required in the duties of our callings, is, that we walk in them with all painfulness and diligence, which because it is tedious to flesh and blood, and men are naturally given to ease and liberty, desiring no calling at all, or, if any be put upon them by necessity rather than choice, to walk in them with as much sloth and negligence, as desire of their gain and advantage will permit; and few of many that are painful, are diligent in their callings in obedience unto God, or out of conscience of their duty, or any other religious consideration; laboring no otherwise in them then Infidels and Pagans, only for worldly benefit and earthly respects. Therefore it will be profitable to propound some reasons out of the Scriptures, both to incite us to honest labor in the works of our callings; and to make us avoid sloth and idleness. First then let us consider, that God hath ordained man as naturally to labor, as the sparks to flee upwards, and in the state of innocence would not endure that man should be idle, but made his labor easy and comfortable, that he might labor with delight. And therefore much less will he now suffer

man unpunished to live at his ease, seeing he hath imposed it upon him as a penalty for his transgression, that in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread; and hath purposely cursed the earth with barrenness without tilling and manuring; being content that it should want its natural fruitfulness, rather than that man should want necessary cause and occasion of labor. And though he would have his Saints in heaven to keep unto him a perpetual Sabbath (not that they should be idle, but wholly intent to his praises) yet prescribing a Law unto sinners on earth, he appointeth but one day for rest, and six for labor, to show unto us, that in this world he will be served, not only with religious duties, but in the greatest part of our time, by walking faithfully and conscionably before him in the duties of our callings, expressing and exercising our inward graces and religious virtues, in our vocations, and the outward duties required in them. And this Law he hath backed with many special commandments and testimonies of holy Scripture, requiring at our hands that we should daily exercise ourselves in the duties of our callings. Thus Solomon sendeth the sluggard to learn of the silly Ant diligence and industry in his labors, that at least, shame might drive him to the performance of his duty, when he seeth himself a reasonable man, who hath so many motives to induce him, and ability to propound so many good ends unto his pains, to be exceeded herein by a silly creature, who hath no other help nor inducement but the instinct of nature. So the Apostle Paul requireth of all men, that they study to be quiet, and to do their own business, and condemneth them who work not in their own callings, but busy themselves in other men's matters, as inordinate persons, adjudging them to this punishment, that if they would not work, neither should they eat; because they have no right unto it before they have labored for it, but are thieves, who live by the sweat of other men's brows, and like idle drones, unjustly devour the fruit of their labors. And this the Apostle implieth, where he first requireth them to work with quietness, and then to eat their own bread: for if earning it by our labors make it our own, then it is not our own before we have earned it; neither will free gift of friends or inheritance give just title unto it, unless we strengthen it, by performing obedience to that first Law

after the fall, In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread. And therefore the Apostle seemeth to make stealing and not laboring to be all one; Let him (saith he) that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good. Unto which precepts of holy Scriptures, prescribing labor in the duties of our callings, we may add the examples of all the Saints of God in all ages, as fit patterns for our imitation; who have always lived in lawful callings, and have faithfully labored in the duties of them, as of Abel and Noah before the flood, the one a Shepherd, the other an Husbandman; and after the flood, of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all their posterity that descended of them; of Moses, David, the Kings and Prophets; of the Disciples of our Savior Christ; and especially of the Apostle Paul, who, as he professeth, labored more abundantly then they all, not only employing himself in his painful Ministry and Apostleship, but laboring also with his hands, that he might not be offensive, but be a good example for others to imitate. Yea, our Savior Christ himself, who though he were free born, and the only begotten and dearly beloved Son of his Father, submitted himself as a servant to the common Law of mankind, tying himself by a voluntary necessity to labor in his calling, and to do the works of him that sent him. The which he did with such cheerfulness and delight, that he professeth it to be his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. And therefore if the Son and heir could not be free from labor, how should any of his servants be exempted? If the Lord of the Vineyard could not be privileged from taking pains, with what face can any of the hired laborers excuse their idleness?

Sect. 2 - That it is God's ordinance that we should labor in our callings.

Again, let us consider that the Lord himself is the Author of our callings, and that it is his ordinance that we should labor in them. It is he that created, and redeemed, and continually preserveth us, who

hath called and set us in our places, and hath appointed unto everyone their work and task; and hath not only promised his help and assistance in all our labors, but also hath encouraged us to take pains, by assuring us, that he will richly reward them when we have finished our work. And therefore, if after all this, we will detract our labor, and spend our time in sloth and idleness, what is it but to leave our standings, and to withdraw ourselves from under his government? To neglect God's work, and to do service unto Satan, and the sinful lusts of our own flesh? What is it but to deprive our souls of that comfort which we might have in his company and assistance; and by pretending difficulty in the achieving our labors, to argue and accuse him of insufficiency, who hath undertaken to assist us, and by his help to give good success unto all our just endeavors? What is it, but for the enjoining of short and carnal ease to our flesh, to forfeit all hope of obtaining those rich, heavenly, and everlasting rewards, which he hath promised unto us, as the free and gracious wages of our momentary labors?

Sect. 3 - That God blesseth the diligent with many benefits.

Finally, let us consider the manifold benefits wherewith God hath promised to bless our labors, if we be painful and diligent in the duties of our callings. And contrariwise, how much he abhorreth and condemneth sloth and idleness, punishing them that live in it, with innumerable evils which he hath justly caused to attend upon it. Concerning the former, it may be a strong inducement to make us diligent in our callings, if we consider the benefits which accrue upon it. For whereas everyone is ready to ask, Who will show us any good? And is easily drawn to any course by the golden chain of gain and advantage, the Wiseman telleth us first generally, that in all labor there is profit, whereas idle talking with the lips tendeth only to penury. And in many other places he setteth forth more particularly the manifold benefits that do accompany it. For it exalteth to honor and authority, according to that, The hand of the diligent shall bear

rule, but the slothful shall be under tribute. And again, Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean men. It buildeth the house, and maketh and erecteth mansion places for themselves and their posterity. So saith Solomon, Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thy house. Contrary to the practice of many in these times, who prefer building, and neglect husbandry, and take care to set up fair houses, before they have any land to lay unto them; building themselves quite out of doors, and like fools, making houses for wise men to dwell in. It is crowned by the Lord with riches and plenty; For he that tilleth the land, shall be satisfied with bread; and the hand of the diligent maketh rich. And whereas that which cometh lightly, is as idly spent; that which is gotten by honest labor, is preserved and multiplied; according to the saying of the Wiseman, Wealth gotten by vanity, shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labor, shall increase. It preserveth the body in health, which languisheth with idleness, maketh the meat pleasant by quickening the appetite, and the sleep sweet; whereas the idle turn upon the bed, as a door upon the hinges, and not being able to rest, because they have not labored, toil themselves with too much ease, and are tired with tumbling, even upon their beds of down, being justly punished by God, with restless tossing and sweating in the night, because they would take no pains to serve him in the day. It affordeth comfortable and liberal means, not only for the maintenance of ourselves and those that belong unto us, but also whereby we may be beneficial unto others that need our help, and exercise our charity in the works of mercy, and in relieving the poor members of Jesus Christ; which he will richly reward and crown with glory and happiness at the day of Judgment. For whereas the sluggard, whose hands refuse to labor, getteth nothing for himself to satisfy his desire, though he coveteth greedily all the day long, the righteous that is diligent in the works of his calling, hath not only sufficient for his own use, but giveth liberally to others and spareth not. And this end the Apostle propoundeth to our pains in our honest callings, willing men to labor, working with their hands the thing that is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth. Finally,

if fearing God, we walk painfully in our callings, we shall not only enjoy the fruit of our labors, but also be blessed in this fruition; according to that of the Psalmist, Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord, and walketh in his ways, for thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands, happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. And if God seeth it fit that he should miss of this earthly happiness, he will abundantly recompense it with everlasting blessedness in the life to come.

Sect. 4 - That the Lord abhorreth idleness and negligence, and severely punisheth it.

Contrariwise, the Lord abhorreth idleness and negligence in our callings, esteeming them that are slothful, more brutish and without understanding, then the dumb and brute creatures, and therefore sendeth them to their School to be instructed by them. Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. And therefore it is condemned in the Scriptures; reprov'd in the Parable; Why stand ye here idle? Forbidden in all our affairs, Be not slothful in business; Matched and ranked with wasting our own goods, and stealing from other men; for he that is slothful in his work, is the brother of him that is a great waster; and the Apostle implieth by that Antithesis, Let him that stole, steal no more, but let him labor with his hands; that an idle person is no better than a thief. For he robbeth the poor of their right, who depriveth them by his sloth of that relief, which he might yield unto them out of his honest labor. And finally, to be wicked and slothful, are words of like signification, and fit to describe a person desperately naught and designed to destruction. Whereof it is that our Savior joineth them together in the Parable of the talents; Thou wicked and slothful servant, &c. But how much God hateth idleness and negligence in the duties of our callings; it will better appear, if we consider the manifold evils which he causeth to accompany and attend upon it.

Sect. 5 - That idleness is the cause of innumerable sins.

The which are of two sorts, both the evils of sin, and the evils of punishment, of both which it is the cause, producing the one, and by due desert drawing upon us the other. For the first; idleness is a mother sin, and (as we usually say) the root of all evil; for when the devil findeth us not employed in God's service, he entertaineth us into his, and setting before us the objects and baits of worldly vanities, he offereth to give them unto us as the wages of iniquity, if we will serve him in those sinful lusts and works of darkness wherein he will use us. When he seeth us like grounds untilled and unmanured, and therefore unfit to receive the seeds of God's graces, he soweth in us the weeds of all vice and sin, besides all those which grow up in our hearts naturally, and of their own accord, being grounds which in themselves are too fertile, to breed and bring forth all fruits of impiety. More especially, idleness and neglect of our callings is a notable cause of heresies, sects, and schisms. For when men want employment in their own affairs, they grow curious and inquisitive after other matters; propound many vain questions and needless doubts, tending more to contention, then the use of edifying, which when they have resolved, according to their own humor and fantasy, they go (having nothing else to do) from house to house to possess others with their conceits, and when they have privately trained up many in their opinions, at last they make a general muster, and become heads and captains of that faction, which themselves have raised; disturbing the peace of the Church, by renting themselves from it, and making war against the truth; as the miserable experience of these times doth too evidently show. Neither doth it alone make men busy and curious in matters of Religion, but also in civil affairs; for when men grow negligent in their own business, they have leisure to intermeddle with other men's, and having nothing to do at home, they range abroad; carrying tales from house to house, and sowing the seeds of discord and dissension among neighbors. Of such idle busy bodies, the Apostle complained

in his time, who walked disorderly, and worked not at all, but busied themselves in other men's matters, and disquieted all whom they came among. And such were those young idle widows, who wandered about from house to house, and by being idle, became tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not. And as it is a cause of schism in the Church, and dissension in families, so also of sedition and rebellion in the Common-wealth, whilst it maketh men inquisitive after news, and to pry curiously into matters of state; busy in censuring those that are in authority, and so filling both their own and other men's minds with discontents, they become seditious, and upon all occasions ready to rise and rebel, for want of other employment; and the rather, that by fishing in troubled waters, they may supply those wants and necessities which negligence in their callings hath brought upon them, therefore betaking themselves to Arms, because poverty and want (like an armed man) hath first assaulted them. And this was the reason why Pharaoh, fearing that the Israelites would rise and withdraw their necks from under the iron yoke of his tyrannical government, probably, though falsely, conjectured that want of work was the cause, out of that general maxim and principle in policy, that idleness maketh men seditious and rebellious; whereas employment in their callings so taketh up their minds, that they have no leisure to think of things impertinent to their private estate and affairs. It is the cause also of covetousness, and all the evils that do spring from it, as wrong and oppression in the mighty, fraud and deceitful dealing in the weak, yea even of theft, robbery, and piracy; for when men through idleness and negligence in their callings, become poor and have nothing of their own, they greedily desire other men's goods to supply their wants, and use all unlawful means whereby they may compass them. Which caused the wise Agur to pray against penury and want of necessaries, lest being poor he should steal, and so take the name of his God in vain. And this made the Apostle inhibiting stealing, to enjoin labor, as being the best means to keep men from this sin. It is the cause likewise of gluttony and drunkenness, if want keep not from this excess, and emptiness of the purse prevent not this too much fullness of the belly. Whereof it is, that in the

Scriptures they are joined as companions and mutual causes one of another. So it is said, that the sins of Sodom were pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness; and that the Israelites sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. For when men's minds are not employed about their callings, they are set upon their bellies, not only to please their appetite, but also to take away the tediousness of time, which is caused by idleness. Which I am persuaded is the chief cause of the excessive and hurtful use of Tobacco in these days; for because men's heads are idle and empty of business, they fill them with smoke; and for want of better employment, they betake themselves to this vain exercise; making hereby their idle time less tedious, and taking away melancholy, the usual companion of sloth, by intoxicating their brains, and stupefying their senses, so as they become less apprehensive of their mis-spent time, and the manifold evils which accompany their idleness; till by much use and custom they grow to such an habit, that they now use it not only for delight, but also for necessity, having no power to forbear and wean themselves from it. Of which I am the rather persuaded, because I see it most used amongst those who are most idle, as inordinate youth and loose gallants, and by those who are otherwise industrious and laborious, when they intermit the works of their callings, and upon any occasion are at leisure from their employments. Finally, idleness is the cause of whoredom and all unclean lusts, not only as it is a special means to pamper the flesh, and so to enable and provoke it to these works of darkness, but also because it giveth leisure and liberty to the heart and eyes, to wander and rove after wanton and lascivious objects, as the lamentable example of holy David, and of innumerable others since his time, and even in our own days, have too manifestly proved.

Sect. 6 - That idleness maketh us liable to many punishments.

Secondly, as idleness and negligence in our callings produceth these manifold evils of sin; so is it no less fruitful in bringing forth the evils

of punishment, both in this life and in the life to come. For first, as it is the root of all sin, so by consequence it generally bringeth with it all punishments that these sins deserve, of which it is the cause and root, seeing they are but the after-fruits of the same tree. Besides which, it may be truly and properly said to be the cause of diverse special punishments. As first, of poverty and penury of all God's blessings, through neglect of the works of our callings, which are the ordinary means ordained by him, whereby he deriveth unto us his gifts and benefits. And this Solomon often affirmeth, and much beateth upon in many places: He becometh poor, that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing. Love not sleep, lest thou come unto poverty, open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. Yea it is punished, not only with want of riches, but also of necessaries, and with pinching hunger the worst of all corporal evils; For slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. For as they have no store of their own, but want in others greatest plenty, and beg through extreme penury, even in the time of harvest; so do they deserve by their slothfulness to be neglected of others, and harden the hearts of those who are able and willing to give, so as they think it no Alms-deed to relieve them out of their store; for they that will not work, are not worthy to eat; seeing they are unprofitable burdens of the Common wealth, the blemish of a well governed Church, and idle Drones, who devour the fruit of other men's labors. Or if men seeing their want and misery, give charitably to their necessity, though they respect not their person, yet it is punished with servitude and base subjection. For through penury they are constrained to live upon begging and borrowing, and as the Wiseman observed, The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is a servant to the lender; and again, The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the slothful shall be under tribute. Finally, in the life to come it is punished with everlasting death; for not only the wasting and riotous servant, which mispendeth and consumeth his Lord's talents, but also the idle and

unprofitable servant, which doth not increase them by his honest labor, shall be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER XIX.

That all persons without exceptions, are bound by God's Law to walk painfully in the works of their callings.

Sect. 1 - That the former reasons bind all men to painfulness in their callings.

And these are the reasons which may move us to be painful in our callings, and preserve us from idleness. But a question may be made whom it concerneth to be thus daily employed, seeing common practice of the world doth plainly proclaim, that they think, all are not tied by these reasons to spend their time in pains and labor; and that many may live without any calling at all, or having one, may only labor so much as they need, or will stand with their credit and place. As though there were no other bonds to tie them unto any pains, but necessity among the poorer sort, increase of riches among those who desire to increase their wealth to an higher pitch, and honor and authority among those who are in place of government. As for the rich that are contented with their wealth, and Gentlemen who live upon their lands and great revenues, and desire not to have the honor with the burden of government, they need not to employ themselves in any calling, but may spend their time in all ease and pleasure, in hunting, and hawking, in gaming, and reveling; with which conceit they are so possessed, that they hold it some disparagement to be otherwise exercised, or to take any pains in any lawful calling. For answering whereof, we are to know, that these

reasons concern all men of all estates and conditions, rich and poor, noble and base, so long as they are able to take pains, and are not made unfit by age and impotency, sickness and such other infirmities. For the Law imposed upon Adam, bindeth also all his posterity, that in the sweat of their face they should eat their bread. By which borrowed speech, from the practice of those who labor with their hands, is meant that all, of all estates and conditions, should serve God with pains and diligence, according to the nature of that calling which they have taken upon them; as Magistrates in their government, Ministers in their studies, preaching, and other Ministerial functions; the Artificer and Craftsman in his Science and Trade; the Husbandman in the works of Husbandry. And it is indefinitely said in Job, that man is born unto labor, as the sparks fly upward, so that he who would have passport to lead an idle life, must forgo the privilege of being a man. Yea, not only men, but women also are tied to this task of daily labor in their callings; neither may they eat the bread of idleness, as the Wiseman speaketh, but must take pains, according to their place and state, either in working with their hands, if they be poor, or by governing their families, and with the good housewife in the Proverbs, looking well to the ways of their household, or some other honest employment which may keep them from idleness, fit them for a charge, and make them more helpful unto others, and in some kind or other, profitable members of the Common wealth. For if they consume their time in sloth and idleness, and according to the common custom of many in the world, spend all the rest of the morning which they can spare from sleep, in curious adorning of their bodies, in frizzling and curling the hair, painting the face, with such like vanities; and the afternoon in vain talking and courting, idle visitations, carding, playing, and sporting themselves in such carnal delights; they (for ought I know to the contrary) shall as well as men bring upon themselves all the former evils of sin and punishment.

Sect. 2 - That Gentlemen have no privilege of idleness, and how they should spend their time.

As for Gentlemen and those that have attained unto lands and riches, whereby they are able to maintain themselves and their charge; though they are not, in respect that God hath thus advanced them above others, to perform servile works, which were too much baseness, nor to overtoil themselves in bodily labor, which were needless and unprofitable for the Common wealth, by taking from the poor their work, and with it their wages and means of maintenance; yet they are not exempted from such labors and employments, as beseem their place and state. Yea, in all reason, because God hath been so gracious unto them above others, that he hath advanced them to more honorable callings, wherein they may exercise themselves in employments of a more excellent nature, and greater worth with greater ease; and hath richly rewarded them beforehand with such extraordinary pay and bountiful wages, above the rest of their fellows, whose labors are more base and toilsome, less honorable and important; therefore of all others, they should be least idle in this fair, easy, and honorable service, and exceed all others in diligence, as far as they exceed them in these many and rich privileges. And hereof it is that Sodom was so much condemned and fearfully punished; because abounding in all wealth and plenty, they exceeded also in sloth, abusing the blessing of riches and prosperity, to pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness. Besides then those religious duties, of praying, hearing the Word, reading, meditating, and such like, in which it becometh Gentlemen and rich men to be most diligent, as having more leisure and better opportunity to perform these exercises, then the poorer sort: there are also many civil duties, in which their time and pains may be profitably employed; As first and chiefly, the duties of Magistracy, if they be furnished with fit gifts for it by God, and called thereunto by superior authority; wherein they are chiefly to aim at God's glory, and the good of the Church and Common wealth, by preserving Justice, truth, and peace, the beating down of all vice and sin, and the advancing of virtue and godliness in them. And not the pleasing

of their own humors, the pleasuring of their friends, and the filling of their purses with gifts and bribes. But if they be not fit for these employments, or not called thereunto, then may they profitably be exercised in governing their own families, appointing their servants to their work, overseeing their labors, and taking account of what they have done; in husbanding and managing their estates, that they may, as much as in them lieth, preserve it entire, and leave it to their posterity. And what time they can spare from these employments, they may profitably spend; either, if they be of a martial disposition, in feats of Arms, riding of great Horses, and such like exercises, whereby they may be fitted for the service and defense of their Country. Or if they be naturally inclined to contemplation, and a quiet and peaceable life, they may apply themselves to the study of Law, Physic, or Divinity, that they may not only be able to direct themselves in all things that concern their estates, bodies, and souls, but also may be helpful unto their neighbors about them, by directing them in their courses, and resolving them in all their doubts, when as they resort unto them to ask their counsel. Unto which studies, if our Gentility were inclined, I see no reason why they might not be (like that worthy and renowned P. Mornay du Plessis of France, famous in all Countries for his valor and learning) the greatest Scholars in the Common wealth, next unto them that reside in the Universities; seeing they have most leisure and opportunity to follow their studies; and best purses to furnish their Libraries. Or if they have not been brought up to learning, they may employ their time profitably in according differences, and ending controversies between their neighbors; in using all good means both by word and example, to discountenance sin, and advance virtue; in doing the works of mercy, as overseeing the poor, and taking order for their provision, relieving the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick; to which duties God hath enabled them above others, by making them stewards in his family, and committing a greater portion to their ordering and disposing. And if Gentlemen would thus spend their time, they should be truly noble in the eyes of God and men, and reap more true and lasting honor in their Country, by this their Christian conversation, then the antiquity of their house, their

ancient and ennobled pedigree, their coats of Arms and Ensigns of Gentility, their gilded Coaches and gay apparel can yield unto them. Yea, which is above all, they should by these courses have the inward peace of a good conscience, and enjoining their earthly privileges as pledges of God's love, and earnest-pennies of their salvation, their hearts would not be set upon these, but upon the main bargain of heavenly happiness assured by them; and would be content with all cheerfulness to leave them, and to lay down their talents at God's feet, when as he shall call them to enter into the joy of their Lord.

Sect. 3 - That the poorer sort must labor painfully in their callings, notwithstanding that the badness of their trades afford small earnings.

Now if the rich and noble are not privileged from diligent walking in their callings, then much less can any of the poorer sort, who are able to take pains, think themselves exempted, seeing they are tied to the performance of their duty, not only by the same golden bond of conscience, but also by the iron chain of necessity, that they may have wherewithal to relieve and sustain themselves and those that belong unto them; which if they be not strong enough to tie them to their duty, but that they will live like idle loiterers, and not labor for their living; it is fit, that unto these two, there be added a third, which is the bond of authority, whereby they should be compelled to take pains, and not live as idle and unprofitable Drones in the Common wealth. And if this treble bond will not hold them, then are they as inordinate livers (according to the Apostles rule) to be cast out of all civil society, and not suffered to eat, because they will not work; or else to feed upon the bread of affliction and the water of sorrow, because they will not eat the bread of their honest labor, nor earn their living in the sweat of their face. Neither doth any law bind us to relieve such as will be subject to no law, nor to pity their wants who will take no pity on themselves. But what if being poor, they cannot maintain themselves and their charge, either because it is so

great, or the gain so small that cometh of their labors? And what if their trade be so hard, and pains in it prized at such low rates, that there is no competency in their earnings to minister unto them and theirs necessary relief? In this case the poor are ready to say, that it is as good to sit still, as to rise and fall; and that they had as less play for nothing, as work for nothing. But it is far otherwise; for howsoever if the case truly standeth thus (for it is not always so when it is pretended; and oftentimes the trade is blamed, when the fault is in the negligence and sloth of them that loiter in it, as hereby it appeareth, in that many others of the same trade, by their laborious diligence, do with their earnings comfortably maintain themselves and their families) yet (as I say) if it be truth which they speak, howsoever they may in this case (if they can) change their calling for a better, which will afford them more sufficient means and maintenance, for the laborer is worthy of his hire, and by God's Law, if we be liberal in spending our sweat, we should not be scanted in eating our bread; yet so long as they hold their calling (as they ought to hold it till they can change for a better) they must not surcease and give over their labor in it. To which end let them consider, that they do not only thereby serve cruel man, who being straight in his bowels, will not suffer them to get their living by their labor, nor allow them food to recover that strength which they have spent in his service; but that in all their works and laborious pains, they serve as their chief Lord, the bountiful King of heaven and earth, which will richly reward their diligence, if it be done in obedience to his Commandment, and supply abundantly whatsoever is defective and wanting on the behalf of their earthly master. The which, if he doth not to their full content in this life, but, to humble them and wean them from the world, doth feed them with a sparing hand, yet if they will perform their duty, and possess their souls with patience, what is wanting in full payment here, he will double and redouble, yea infinitely multiply, by crowning their pains and patience with unspeakable joy and endless glory, in the life to come. Yea if they will, making conscience of their duty, cast themselves into the arms of God's providence, he will assuredly provide for them, according to that of the Psalmist, Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou

dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. And either he will allow them more liberal maintenance, by pouring out a larger blessing upon their labors, or by opening the hearts of those who are rich, to contribute to their necessities; or else, seeing man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of God's mouth, he will give such an extraordinary blessing upon their little poor pittance, that like unto the widows handful of meal and cruize of oil, and Daniel's pulse and water, it shall be as sufficient to preserve their health and strength, as the dainty fare and full tables of the rich. In the meantime, they whom God hath blessed with sufficient plenty, are to be persuaded, to let the chief streams of their bounty and Christian beneficence run into these dry and thirsty lands, and to take special care, that above all other poor, these who are painful in their callings, and yet not able thereby to sustain themselves and their families, may be relieved and comforted. For of seed so seasonably sown in such choice grounds, they may assuredly expect a heavenly harvest, and plentiful crop of joy and happiness. Whereas if they shut up the bowels of their compassion, and will not communicate some little part of those many rich talents which God hath entrusted to their disposing, for the glory of their Master, and good of their fellow-servants, but let them or theirs famish and starve for want of relief; their riches and they will perish together, and that little pittance of portion which they hold in their hands, and of right belongeth to the poor, shall bring them in the end no more comfort then Achan's wedge of gold, or Dives riches, when he was in hell torments. For in this life it shall canker and corrupt the rest of their treasure, and the rust of it in the day of Judgment witnessing against them, shall cause them to hear that fearful and dreadful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; For I was hungered, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c. In which respect, I should ten thousand times rather choose to perish for hunger; then abounding in their wealth, to let others perish for want of charity; and with Lazarus, to die at the rich man's gate; then with Dives, to sit gorgeously appareled at a full table.

Sect. 4 - That the impotent are not bound to labor, but may with good conscience take their case.

Now concerning those who are impotent and cannot work, being disabled by age, sickness, lameness, or other infirmities, they are not by the former reasons bound to labor in their callings, because God himself hath exempted them from the common rule and law, and hath left their consciences free from guilt of sin, in the omitting of those duties, unto the performing whereof he himself hath disabled them. And therefore if they be rich, they may live at ease, and enjoy thankfully their portion, as the gift and blessing of God. Or if they be poor, they may with good conscience live upon those charitable benevolences which others shall be pleased to bestow upon them; praising God for raising up such good instruments to serve his providence for their relief and maintenance; and praying unto him daily for their benefactors. Yea, in this case men are bound in conscience to lay open their wants, if others take no notice of them, and to crave and receive their help and assistance; which if out of an high stomach in a low estate, or out of a proud modesty and bashfulness, they neglect to do, and so perish for want of relief, they are injurious to their able and willing neighbors, in refusing to be subjects of their charity; and so hindering them of that heavenly harvest which they should reap of it; and guilty also of their own death, in not using those lawful means whereby their lives should be preserved. And of these also the rich are bound to take care, that according to order and Law in this case provided, nothing which is necessary be wanting unto them; for God hath lent them their wealth to this end, that what they can spare from their own necessary expenses, they should cheerfully bestow for the relief of others; which if they neglect to do, they shall have a fearful reckoning to make at the day of Judgment. But of this I have largely written in a Treatise of this Argument, and therefore here pass it over.

CHAPTER XX.

Of Recreations, which are not only lawful, but also profitable and necessary, if we be exercised in them according to God's Word.

Sect. 1 - That we cannot continually be exercised in the works of our callings.

The chief end for which God hath created, redeemed, and doth preserve and sustain us, is, that we should serve him, and the principal means whereby he is worshipped and served, are the general and religious duties of Christianity, and the special duties of our callings. In which regard, it were much to be desired that we could spend our whole times in the performance of them, and esteem it our meat and drink to do the will of our heavenly Father, and our chief delight, to exercise ourselves continually in these duties. But because this is impossible, in regard of human frailty and weakness, therefore hath God graciously permitted, yea enjoined unto us some time of intermission and cessation from these labors, wherein we may refresh ourselves, and repair our decayed strength, exhausted and spent in these Christian exercises, that so we may be the better enabled and fitted to return unto them again with renewed vigor, reassume our task, and perform our duties in them with more ability and dexterity. And these are the times which are allotted to recreation, taking of our repast by eating and drinking, and composing our bodies to rest and sleep. For that we cannot always labor in the duties of Christianity and of our callings, nature itself teacheth us, and the experience of our weakness, which maketh us to sink under this burden, if we never lay it aside; and the example of our Savior Christ himself, who though in his divine nature he were omnipotent and needed not to rest, yet as he was man, who had taken upon him, not only our nature, but our infirmities also, after his painful labors, he needed, being weary, to rest, and being hungry,

to refresh himself and repair his strength. And therefore after his journey, being weary and hungry, he rested himself at Jacob's well, whilst he sent his Disciples into the City to buy him meat. And in another place being tired with the coming and going of the multitude whom he taught, so as he had no leisure so much as to eat, he commandeth his Disciples to accompany him, and to go apart into a desert place, that there they might rest a while and take their repast. Which whoso neglect, and think that they can spend their whole time in labor, they foolishly tempt God, in refusing his ordinance, and the means which he hath appointed to repair their strength, and preserve their health; they proudly presume on their own power, as though they were better able to do the duties which God hath enjoined then Christ himself; and are no better than self-murderers, bringing themselves unto an untimely death, because they refuse to use the means which God hath ordained and sanctified for the sustaining of their lives.

Sect. 2 - What lawful recreation is; and that it may be used with a good conscience.

Seeing then it is not only allowed as lawful, but commended as necessary and profitable, that ordinarily we should spend some part of the day in vacancy from labor, and remission of the works of our callings, therein taking our recreation, diet and repast, rest and sleep, that we may more cheerfully return to our labors, and more ably perform them, when as our bodies and minds are refreshed by this intermission; we will in the next place speak of them severally, and show how we may lawfully so use them, as that they may be helps and not hindrances to the well-performing of all Christian duties. And first we will speak of recreation; which is an intermission of our labors, and spending of convenient time in some delightful exercise, for the refreshing of our minds and bodies, that their vigor and strength being repaired, we may more cheerfully return to our callings, and perform the duties of them with more ability. Which

that we may use without scruple of conscience, (which would make it, though lawful in itself, unlawful unto us, because whatsoever is not done of faith, is sin;) let us know, that honest recreation is a thing not only lawful, but also profitable and necessary. The lawfulness of it hence appeareth, in that it is according to God's will, which he hath manifested, both by his works, in that he hath made man so finite in his powers and abilities both of body and mind, that he cannot hold out in continual labor, nor long subsist in well-being, in health, and strength, unless he be refreshed with seasonable recreation; and also by his Word. For the same Law which enjoineth painful and profitable labor in our callings, requireth honest recreations as a special means which enableth us unto it, seeing in every Commandment wherein a duty is imposed, all the helps and furtherance's which enable us to do it, are also enjoined. And though God hath appointed this world to be a place of pilgrimage and warfare, and not a Paradise of pleasure, and Chariot of triumph, reserving that for his own Kingdom, when having finished our journey, and obtained victory, we shall rest from all our labors, and be complete in all joy and happiness; in which regard it becometh us not here to spend most of our time in sports and pastimes, but rather in painful travail and sore conflicts with our spiritual enemies; yet because we could not hold out in our pilgrimage and warfare without some refreshing, he hath graciously allowed us some time (as it were) to lie in our Inn and Garrison, to take our pleasure and delight, that being refreshed, we may more lustily proceed in our journey, and more courageously renew our warfare and fight; and to this end hath fitted his creatures, both for the use of necessity, and also comfort and delight; and not only alloweth man bread and water to sustain him in life; but as the Psalmist observed, wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him look with a cheerful countenance.

Sect. 3 - That recreations are profitable and necessary.

Neither is recreation only allowed as lawful, but also enjoined as profitable and necessary. It is profitable, because it enableth us to hold out in our labors, and to perform all good duties with more vigor, and in much greater perfection. For as the strings of a Lute let down and remitted, do sound sweeter when they are raised again to their full pitch; and as our fields, being every year sowed, become at length more barren in bearing, but being sometime laid fallow, repay the Husbandman's patience and forbearance with double increase: so our bodies and minds, if they have no remission from our labors, will make but dull music; if we do not sometimes let them lie fallow, and give them a Summer-tilth of seasonable recreation, they will remit much of their vigor, and become quickly more barren, to bring forth any good fruits; whereas by timely remission, they will afterwards make more harmonious melody, and double their fruitfulness, if, languishing with labor, we refresh them, and repair their strength with some pleasant intermission. And as recreation in these respects is very profitable, so also is it no less necessary: for if (like bows) we should always stand upon our bent; we would in a while prove stark slugs; and if (like Lute strings) we should always have our strength stretched to the highest pitch; it would not only be deadened and dull, but still in danger to crack and fail. We are not made of God fit instruments for perpetual motion, but rest is to hold interchangeable course with it. The which is to be understood, not only of our bodies, but also of our minds; for both of them have but a finite virtue, and their powers and faculties proportioned unto finite actions and operations: and therefore as they cannot do things above their strength, so neither can they continue in doing beyond their time; or if they do, they are soon wearied and spent, and forced to leave their labor upon the necessity of impotency, which we would not intermit upon the choice of discretion. But chiefly this falleth out in the studies and labors of our minds, when as they are exercised about intellectual objects, and intently bent upon discourses of reason. For sensible things are con-natural and familiar unto us, and therefore being exercised about them, we do it with ease and delight, as being (like the fish in the water, and the bird in the air) in our own proper element; but when they are employed about things only

intellectual, especially in divine contemplations which are most contrary to corrupted nature, and are elevated above their pitch, and wholly abstracted from all things sensible, as in divine studies, prayer, and heavenly meditations; then they cannot (like men in the element of water) support themselves without much intention and labor. In which regard, as the body needeth rest, both when it is wearied by greatness of labor, or long continuance in that which is more easy, in the proper objects of its own actions; and also after serious studies and contemplations of the mind, seeing it worketh not alone, but exerciseth its faculties by the body, and the chief parts of it, as organs and instruments: so likewise the mind and soul itself, after it is wearied with labors and studies, needs refreshing, not like the body by rest, but by delighting itself with change of objects and operations, leaving those which being serious, high, and difficult, need much intention and study, that we may conceive and comprehend them; for those which being easy, familiar, and delightful to the senses, recreate also the mind, and bring unto it much ease and pleasure. And if it want these seasonable recreations, the powers and faculties of it will be soon blunted and dulled, and made utterly unfit for intellectual studies and divine contemplations. To which purpose there is a Story of the Apostle and Evangelist John, recorded in the collations of the Fathers, and cited by Aquinas; who when one found him recreating and sporting himself with his disciples, and was offended at it, as a thing misbeseeming his Apostle-like gravity; enjoined one in the company, to put his arrow into his bow and draw it to the head; which when he had done often, he willed him to continue drawing it still; unto which when he answered, that if he should so do, his bow would either be broken or become sluggish; the Apostle inferred, that so likewise the mind of man would be broken, or grow dull and blockish, if it should always stand upon the bent, and never be remitted from the earnest intension of serious studies.

Sect. 4 - That we must make choice of such recreations as are lawful, and which they are.

And thus it appeareth that recreations are not only lawful, but also profitable and necessary. Now because many are apt to abuse this liberty unto licentiousness, and to rush upon all sports and pleasures without choice or difference, or if they pitch upon those which are allowable in themselves, care not how shamefully they abuse them, in respect of their ill carriage in the manner of using them: We are in the next place to know, that recreations are not absolutely good, but of an indifferent nature; good to those that use them well, and evil to those who abuse them unto sin; not simply good being considered apart by themselves, but as they in their use tend to the advancing of those ends for which they are used. Finally, not good at all unto us, if we rush upon them rashly and hand over head without choice, and have neither care nor conscience in our manner of using them; but when we observe diligently those laws and cautions, wherewith we are limited and bounded in their use by the Word. And these either respect the matter or manner; the recreation itself, or our course and carriage in exercising ourselves in it. For the recreation itself, our first care must be that it be lawful, and either approved and warranted, or at least, not forbidden and condemned in the Scriptures. And here we are to observe not only those recreations which are particularly named, but likewise all those which have some analogy and similitude with them. And these are either of the mind alone, or of the body and mind jointly together. The recreations of the mind, as the propounding of Riddles, and resolving of them, for the exercise of wit, of which we have an example in Samson, propounding unto the Philistines at his marriage feast this Riddle, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness, &c. Wherein we are to observe, that both the words and meaning be modest and chaste, and not like many Riddles, propounded in obscene words, which men think excused by their modest resolution. So also the contemplation of God's works, flowers, and plants, birds, fishes and beasts, that out of their beauty and excellent properties and qualities, we may take occasion to see

and admire the infinite wisdom and power of their Creator, without which, the bare sight of the creatures, and delight that ariseth out of them is vain and fruitless, in respect that it faileth of one principal end, and will (as experience showeth) rather distract us from our callings, then fit us for them. And this seemeth to have been one of Solomon's recreations in his best times, who out of this exercise of contemplation, was able to speak of all trees, from the Cedar that was in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that sprung out of the will, and also of beasts and fowls, creeping things, and fishes. Unto which we may add the delighting of our minds one with another, with pleasant discourses and witty conceits, and by ourselves by using the excellent Art of Poetry, either making Poems ourselves, or reading those which are composed by others. In all which, and the like exercises of the mind, our care must be that our recreations, neither in respect of words, matter, or manner, be wanton or wicked, insulting or corrupt, and neither bitter and biting, tending to the disgrace of others, nor profane and filthy, tending to the poisoning of our hearts and affections, or to the corrupting of our manners and conditions; neither to the impeaching and loss of Christian gravity, nor to the hindering of that harmony and seemly decency which ought to be observed in all our conversation. The recreations of the mind and body jointly together are many, as the exercise of the senses, especially the eyes with delightful sights, and the ears with harmonious music, which above all other recreations is commended in the Scriptures, and by the example of the Saints, who not only used it in God's worship, to cheer and fit the heart the better for holy duties, but also for civil recreation, that they might thereby be the better enabled for the duties of their callings. And thus the Prophet in almost innumerable places, stirreth up both himself and others, with voice and musical instruments to praise the Lord; and having penned the Psalms for his own use and the benefit of the Church, appointeth them to be sung by the most skillful Musicians to diverse instruments. Whose steps Solomon his son herein followed, and appointed most exquisite music, not only to be used in the Temple in God's service, but also in his own house for his recreation and delight. The which continued in the Church, even in the time of their

captivity; for howsoever they refused to gratify the proud and scornful heathens, by making them music in their misery, yet they continued this recreation for the solacing of themselves, as hereby appeareth, in that at their return out of Babylon to their own Country, they had amongst them two hundred, forty and five singing men and singing women. And unto these we may add hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling; feats of activity, running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, with all lawful sports and games; amongst which that laudable exercise of shooting chiefly excelleth, as being not only a manly exercise, most fit to preserve the health and strength of the body, and delightful to the mind, in respect of that Art and skill which may be showed in it; but also a good defense, both privately for ourselves, and publicly for our Country, if it were rightly used as in ancient times.

Sect. 5 - Whether it be lawful to play at games which stand upon hazard and chance.

Contrariwise our care must be, that we avoid such recreations as are unlawful, which howsoever for the time they may be pleasing unto the flesh, yet leaving behind them the sting of sin, they will, like the play of Joab and Abner's soldiers, be bitter in the end, and not bring unto the mind any lasting delight, but at the best, mournful repentance and afflicting grief. And such are all those sports as are so vain and light, that they will not beseem Christian gravity; all those which tend to break peace, and weaken love, as bitter or scurrilous jesting, and rude horse-play; all lascivious and effeminate sports which corrupt the mind, or weaken the body, inflame the lust, or poison the manners, as vain dalliance, and courting of women, chambering and wantonness, profane stage-plays and Interludes, which make the Theater a School of all impiety and profaneness, lust and uncleanness, and wanton dancing of both sexes one with another; especially in those light and lewd Lavoltoes and Corrantoes used in these times, which are so full of lascivious and immodest

gestures and actions, Goat-like jumps and frisks of women as well as men; proclaiming wanton immodesty, and tending only to the inflaming of lust, that they would not well beseem an honest Pagan; and better fit a cunning Courtesan, who cast before men these alluring baits, that they may be caught in the snares of lust; then for a true Christian, who esteemeth modesty and chastity her best ornaments. Unto these we may add carding and dicing, as they are almost generally used. For suppose that all games at them are not simply unlawful, and that the argument of lots taketh no hold of them, because they are in nothing like, but as they are both disposed by God's providence, which hath a chief stroke in disposing all things, or because (as they allege) the most games stand not so much upon chance and casualty, as on the Art and skill of the player, the which they think cleared by experience, in that a bungler playing with a cunning gamester, though he get some games, yet he is no constant winner, but if he continue long at play, is almost sure in the end to depart a loser; yea, let it be granted unto them, either that they are not therefore unlawful, because providence ruleth them; which is not abused when we depend upon it for decision of the least matters, but when it is joined with irreverence and profaneness, or that there is great Art and skill to be used in those games that are most casual, without all deceit and imposture, which is allowed amongst all gamesters; yet can they not deny, but that they are liable to many abuses, which are so generally incident unto them that spend their time in them, that they are at least generally of evil report, in regard of their common abuse beseeming Christians, and dangerous snares, in respect of common corruption to entangle us in many sins, or else such multitudes would not be inveigled with them; as fretting and chafing, cursing and swearing, repining and murmuring against God's providence, when it crosseth their pleasure, and doth not give them such success as they wish; sharpening their tongues like swords against it, and wounding it with reproaches under the names, and (as it were) thorough the sides of luck and fortune; that they are common thieves which rob men of much precious time, because they do not, like other exercises, weary them with labor either of body or mind, and draw them on with

expectation of new variety; yea, also rob many of their purses and states, more than any other recreations. For whereas in other games which stand most upon skill and cunning, men being beaten are willing to give over with little loss, when they find themselves therein inferior to those who play with them; in these which stand so much upon hazard, their losses draw them on further and further, out of an expectation of the changing of chance, and recovery of their loss. Now if any will say that they are never serious in these sports, and can so moderate their passions and affections, that they never bewray any such infirmities and corruptions, and can long play before they burst out into any of these sins, playing for little which they respect not, and only for recreation, and having such power over themselves, that they can take up at pleasure, and spend at them as little time as they list; To such I answer, that if by the arguments which by Divines are ordinarily brought against them (as the abuse of lots, and God's providence directing them) they are proved simply unlawful, or if by them they are brought to staggering and doubting whether they be lawful or no, then can they not be lawful unto them, seeing he that playeth doubting, offendeth in playing; for whatsoever is not done of faith, is sin, though in its own nature it be indifferent. But suppose that upon thine own grounds thou art persuaded, that such games are allowable; then my resolution is, that if withal thou hast such rule of thy passions and pleasures, that thou canst preserve thyself well enough, both from inward fretting and outward fuming, from covetous desiring gain by play, and canst also moderate thyself in expense of time; then it were thy best course to forbear them altogether, and next unto that to use them rarely. For it is unto thee a matter of small difficulty and labor, seeing he that hath truly such power over himself, that playing at these games he can with ease shun the abuses of them, may with much more ease refrain from using them; even as it is much better and more safe to avoid infected places, when we are at our choice, then to go into them, presuming upon our Antidotes and preservatives; to keep ourselves (if we can) from danger of being hurt and wounded, then to undertake quarrels, trusting to our valor and skill. Besides, if thou art a man of such excellent temper and moderation, it is pity that so well a composed

mind should not be exercised in better employments; for make the best of these games that thou canst, yet are they but of evil report, in respect of the daily abuse unto which they are subject; and though they were lawful unto thine own single self, yet they may prove offensive to others, grieving those who are well affected, and condemn these sports, to see thee so ill exercised, drawing on weaklings to follow thine example, who are apt to abuse them, wanting thy government and moderation, and countenancing and encouraging those, who being loose and profane, make these games their ordinary occupation, to continue in their course, when they can excuse themselves by such patterns and precedents as are virtuous and religious. Finally, these games which are unto such multitudes the common causes of so much sin and evil, cannot be but somewhat dangerous unto us. And who, that respecteth not his gain more than his safety, will walk aloft upon a rope with much difficulty and peril, when as he may securely go upon the firm ground? For he that loveth danger, shall perish in it, it being just with God, by withdrawing his helping hand, to let us catch a fall, because we rush into temptations, and take delight to walk in such slippery places.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of diverse Cautions which ought to be used in all our Recreations.

Sect. 1 - That recreations must be used with moderation, in respect of our love of them.

The next point to be considered in our recreations, is the rules and cautions which are to be observed in the manner of using them. The first whereof is this, that as much as in us lieth, we so compose our minds and hearts, as that we take our chief delight in those which

most tend to God's glory, and the furthering of our own salvation. In which respect it were much to be desired, that we were so heavenly-minded, and so weaned from worldly vanities, as that we could take our chief pleasure in holy duties, and esteem it our meat and drink to do the will of our heavenly Father; recreating our minds, like the Saints and Angels in heaven, in glorifying God by singing of his praises, holy conferences tending to mutual edification, and stirring up one another to perform service unto God with all cheerfulness and delight. Or if we cannot, being clogged with the flesh, attain unto this perfection, our next care must be, that we delight ourselves in things indifferent, with such lawful and laudable recreations, as that we may in all things, and even in our sports, have, with the Apostle, a good conscience, willing to live honestly. Secondly, because in nothing more than in recreation, we are apt to forget and overshoot ourselves, by taking unto us an excess and over-measure, we are to take special care that we use them with due moderation. For seeing recreation in the use of things indifferent, is not simply and absolutely good, but only as it is rightly used according to the rule of reason, and that is superfluous which exceedeth this rule, and defective which cometh short of it; therefore we must carefully conform ourselves unto it, and not recreate ourselves more or less than nature requireth, or then is necessary for the preserving of our health and strength, and our better fitting for more serious employments. More specially this moderation in our recreations must extend both to our minds and hearts, and to the time which is spent in them. We must moderate our minds that we do not too highly value them, but esteeming them in the number of things indifferent, we must cause them to give place unto duties which are simply good and of greater importance, when they cannot conveniently stand together. Our hearts also must be bounded with moderation, in respect of our affections and passions, so as we burst not out into anger and rage when we are crossed in our sports (a usual fault that accompanieth the pleasure of hawking and gaming) and neither wax proud of our own skill and activity, nor be envious against those which do excel us in them. But especially we must watch over ourselves, that they do not steal away our hearts; for this

were with Solomon, in seeking pleasure, to lose ourselves in a labyrinth of delights, and for the enjoining of trifles, to forgo that Jewel wherein God chiefly delighteth, and desireth above all other things to have in his keeping. And though we use them for our delight, yet we must take heed, that we make them like servants to wait in the out-rooms, to come at our call, and to depart when we have no further need of their service, and not like our best beloved admit them to keep residence in the privy Chamber of our hearts, so fixing and fastening our love and affection upon them, that we cannot endure to have them out of our sight. For then we shall not only be in danger of spending too much time about them, but after we have done with them, they will so unsettle our hearts, and wean our affections from all good duties, that we shall not without much labor reduce them into good frame, nor make them fit without distraction to perform any religious duty, as hearing, reading, praying, meditating, or else the works of our ordinary callings. And therefore though we use pleasures, yet we must take heed, that we do not with Solomon, give ourselves unto them, for of such laughter, we may rightly say it is mad; and of such mirth, we may demand what good it doth us?

Sect. 2 - Moderation must be used in respect of time.

In respect also of our time, which is spent in our recreations; we must use great moderation, making them serve like sauces to our meat, to sharpen our appetite unto the duties of our callings, and not to glut ourselves with them, and so to make us the more unfit for any necessary employments. We must remember that they are but recreations to refresh us, and not occupations to tire us, and that they are allowed us to cheer our spirits, and repair our strength, that we may be made more fit for the well-performing of the duties of God's service and of our callings, and not that we should by toiling ourselves in them, spend and consume them, and so be disabled for any necessary employment. We must consider that God hath not

created and redeemed us, that we should wholly follow our pleasures, and with the Israelites, sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play, but that we should spend our time and strength in the duties of his service, or in the means whereby we may be fitted for them. Neither hath he appointed recreation to be the end of our lives, but only as a means to preserve them, for more high and holy employments, tending to the glory of God and the salvation of our own souls. We must esteem time the most precious treasure, and that the consumption of it is the most dangerous disease, and desperately irrecoverable; that it exceedeth all other losses, and that the wasting of it is the greatest unthriftiness. And therefore we must not turn our recreations into pastimes, as the English name importeth, making only this use of them, to cause idle hours seem less tedious; for this were but to set spurs to a running Horse, which of itself posteth away speedily, and when it is once past, can never be recalled. Let us not fool and trifle out this our most precious treasure, upon every base vanity; or if we have done it in the days of our ignorance, when we did not know the worth of it, let us, according to the Apostles counsel, redeem it at any price, and recover our loss, by redoubling our diligence in all good duties. Let us learn to set a right value on these wares; and to this end let us not go to inquire of worldly Impostors, who will set a base price of this Jewel, to cozen us of it, not to enrich themselves with our spoil, but to spoil themselves also with our loss; but rather let us think how they prize it in hell, and how willing they would be to give millions of worlds, if they had them in their possession, for the purchase of one day, to repent of their former courses, especially the prodigal mis-spending of their time. Finally, let us remember, that our works and labors which must be here dispatched, are weighty and manifold, seeing in this world everlasting life and happiness is either gotten or lost, and that our time is so short, that we are in danger to be benighted before we have ended our business, and so (as the Apostle speaketh) to come short of the promised rest. That this short time is also uncertain, seeing we know not at what hour our Lord will come and call us to our reckoning; and therefore if we be wise unto our own salvation, we will not spend much of this short and uncertain time in

sloth and idleness, sports and pastimes, but rather in making and keeping straight our accounts, and in preparing ourselves with joy and comfort to appear before our Judge. Especially considering that he hath assured us beforehand, that he is most righteous, and without respect of persons, will reward every man according to their works; that he will take an account of us for every idle word which we esteem as wind, and therefore much more will call unto a reckoning our precious time spent in idleness and vanity; and will make us exceed in everlasting punishments, as we have in this life exceeded in momentary pleasures.

Sect. 3 - That they must be so used as that they may refresh the body, not pamper the flesh.

The third caution to be observed in our recreations, is, that we use them so, as they may refresh the body, but not pamper the flesh, and that we so endeavor by them to cheer our friend, as that we do not strengthen our enemy. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and therefore we must not use such recreations, or after such a manner, as may feed and fat it with carnal delight; neither are we debtors unto it to live after it, seeing this life bringeth death; but rather, as the Apostle exhorteth, let us abstain from fleshly lusts, because they fight against our souls; and so use this gracious liberty which God hath given us, that the spiritual part may take occasion of doing good duties, and not the flesh of plunging us into sin.

Sect. 4 - That in our recreations we must avoid giving of offense.

The fourth caution is, that in all our recreations we do not give any scandal and offense, neither using such before our weak brethren, though lawful in themselves, whereat they stick or stumble with some scruple of conscience, nor yet carrying ourselves offensively in

such as they approve, either by spending unseasonably our time in them, or too much of that which is in moderation allowable, or with any lightness and vanity, or by giving ourselves over to some unruly passion. Yea, as much as in us lieth, we must abstain not only from these faults themselves, but also from the least show and appearance of them; and not only take care to do those things which are true and just, pure and lovely, but also which are of good report; not only taking care to be virtuous, but also to be so esteemed, and have the reputation and praise (all pride and vain-glory being avoided) which (as the shadow the body) doth attend and wait upon it. And seeing recreations are things indifferent, we are rather utterly to forbear them, then to give unto our brethren any just cause of offense, because the greatest danger that can hereof come unto us, is but the hazard of our health, whereas by offending them, we may endanger the loss of their precious souls, for which Christ hath shed his blood. In which regard, if the Apostle was so charitable, that he would refrain from his lawful food, rather than offend his weak brother; then how small is our charity, if we will not forbear for this cause, or at least in offensively use our sports and recreations?

Sect. 5 - That all due circumstances must be observed in our recreations, and what they are.

The fifth caution is, that we observe in our recreations all due circumstances. As first, that it be decent and beseeming our person, place, and calling; neither is it fit that age and youth, Magistrates and common people, should use the same recreations, lest for the gaining of a little vain sport, they lose their gravity, and with it their authority, and that reverence which is due unto them from their inferiors, in respect of their age and government. Secondly, that it be apt and fit for our callings, and to refresh and make us more able for the well-performing of the duties belonging to them. For that recreation is best which cometh nearest to the end for which we use it, and best fitteth us to attain unto it; as rest of the body, and

exercise of the mind, for those that are wearied with corporal labors; and bodily exercise for them whose callings do wholly stand in the study of the mind. Or at least some easy exercise after the greater labor of the body, or some slight and pleasant employment of the mind, after that it is wearied with more serious and earnest studies. In which regard I have always thought the play at Chests most unfit for Students and Scholars, because it as much occupieth and wearieth their intellectual faculties as their other studies; and on the other side, violent exercises unmeet recreations for those who ordinarily spend their strength in painful labors of the body, because both these fail of their proper end, which is to refresh the body and mind: but contrariwise do more weary and tire them, and so make them unfit for the duties of their callings. And although (as I confess) there is some recreation and delight in change and variety of employment both of body and mind; yet it tendeth not greatly to the refreshing of either, but rather deludeth men with a false show, and remedieth not the evil, but only depriveth them of the sense of it whilst their pleasure lasts, and causeth them to spend and consume themselves with more delight. Thirdly, in respect of the circumstance of time, there is required that our recreations be seasonable, according to the saying of the wise Solomon; To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. In which regard there is required, that first our recreations do not go before, but succeed the labors of our callings, unless in case we may thereby be the better enabled, for the performance of them; as when they shake off dullness and drowsiness, and make us more active and cheerful for employment, which rarely happeneth in the labors of the body, but sometime falleth out in the studies of the mind, as we see in the example of Elisha, who by music was better fitted for prophecy, whilst it made him more apt to receive divine revelations. For weariness is a kind of disease, and recreation is of the nature of a medicine; and therefore as it is preposterous, that the cure should precede and go before the malady, or the medicine the sickness, unless it be such as is fit to prevent it; so, that we should refresh ourselves with recreation, before labor hath caused weariness; for

this were to apply the salve to a sound place, which doth no good, but if it hath any great strength and attractive virtue, will rather cause it to pimple and draw off the skin. And therefore as Solomon saith of the use of wine; Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts, that he may forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more; so may I say of sports and recreations; Give them not to them who need them not, having no use of refreshing before they have labored, nor of repairing their strength before it is spent, but unto those who are wearied with pains-taking, that they may more freshly return to their labors. Secondly, in respect of time, there is required that recreations be only used in such seasons as by God are allowed and allotted unto them. And that is not on the days of our rest, but on the days of our labor, not on God's Sabbaths, which he hath appropriated to his service; but upon the week days, which he hath allowed for our own use. For if the Lord hath inhibited the works of our callings, which in themselves are in their seasons lawful and necessary, and cannot be neglected without sin; yea, if he will not allow us on his Day, to speak our own words, or to think our own thoughts, because he would have us wholly devoted and consecrated to the duties of his service; then much more doth he inhibit sports and recreations, which tend not at all to the sanctification of his Sabbaths, and are of an inferior nature and less excellency and necessity, and which also, in respect of their carnal delight most pleasing to the flesh, are more likely to steal away our hearts, and to distract us in the performance of holy duties. And therefore on this Day the recreation of our bodies, ought to be their resting from all labor, which is not necessary to the duties of the Sabbath; and the recreation of our minds, must be in changing their object, not employing them in worldly cogitations, but about spiritual exercises, hearing the Word, praying, and praising of God, holy conferences, and lifting them up in heavenly meditations. And the like also may be said of the Sabbaths of humiliation, when we humble ourselves solemnly in the congregation, or privately by ourselves, in the sight and sense of our sins by fasting and prayer, or when some judgment and affliction is feared or inflicted, either upon ourselves or the Church, or some special members of it, which we

desire to prevent, or that being inflicted it should be removed. For if it were not lawful at those times for God's people to delight themselves with the use of their best clothes, no not to refresh their bodies with their ordinary food; then much less is it lawful at such times to feast and sport ourselves with pleasures and recreations. And this is the sin which the Lord taxeth in the Jews. In that day (saith the Prophet) did the Lord of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; Saying, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die. And also in the Israelites; who when the Church of God was afflicted, and they thereby called to humiliation, did lie at ease, pamper their bellies with full diet, chanted to the sound of the Viole, and invented unto themselves instruments of music, like David; drank wine in bolls, and anointed themselves with the chief ointments; but were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Sect. 6 - That we must consort ourselves with good company.

The sixth caution is, that for our recreation sake we do not willingly consort ourselves with evil company; observing herein the Apostles rule; Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Wherein our care ought to be the greater, because nothing more causeth near familiarity and friendly acquaintance, then agreement and communion in the same delights, and nothing sooner breedeth likeness of manners and conditions, then when in our pleasures we jump and conjoin together with one mind and affection. So that as our recreations with them that truly fear God, are strong bonds to tie us unto them in love, and forcible motives to make us also join with them, whom we so love in all good duties and virtuous actions; so contrariwise communicating with profane persons and carnal worldlings, in our sports and pastimes, causeth us in time to proceed from liking of the pleasure, to like the party that joineth with us in it, and from affecting of the man, we

come at last to affect his manners. Neither is there more danger in the time of plague, for one that is sound, to keep in the same house with those that are sick; then for a true Christian, to consort in pleasure with such as make no conscience of their ways; seeing as well from the one as from the other, there issueth and spreadeth a secret poison, which with its contagion, infecteth those that come into their company.

Sect. 7 - That we must take heed that our recreations do not steal away our hearts from God.

Seventhly, we must take care that in our recreations we forget not God, and that they do not steal our hearts from him unto worldly vanities, lest by degrees we dote so much upon them, that we come under that censure of the Apostle; of being lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God; and grow like those Israelites, against whom the Prophet denounced a fearful woe; who spent the day in quaffing and carousing, and had the Harp and the Viole, the Tabret and the Pipe, and wine at their feasts, but regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands. Which if we would avoid, we must often take occasion from our pleasures to think of the Author of them; and be ashamed that a Heathen Poet should be more forward in the fruition of his peace and pleasure, to acknowledge Augustus as his God that sent them; then we to remember and acknowledge the bounty and goodness of our gracious Lord, who hath multiplied his blessings upon us, not only serving for necessity, but also for pleasure and delight. Secondly, if we would not forget God in our sports and recreations, nor have our hearts drawn away from him; we must sanctify them to our use by the Word and prayer. Thinking before we undertake any, if it be agreeable with God's will revealed in the Scriptures, or at least of an indifferent nature, and not forbidden. And being persuaded that it is lawful in itself, we must, before we enter upon it, make it lawful unto us by hearty prayer for God's blessing upon it, not using (if we be in

company) audible words and visible gestures and actions, which would savor too much of hypocritical ostentation, but lifting up our hearts and souls only unto God by short prayers and exclamations. And as we are thus to begin them with prayer, so we must end them with thanksgiving, praising the holy Name of our gracious God, who hath by these recreations refreshed and fitted us for his service; and hath given unto us this joy in earth, as a sign of his favor, and a pledge and earnest of those everlasting joys of his heavenly Kingdom.

CHAPTER XXII.

The last caution is, that our Recreation be a liberal exercise, and not sordid for gain.

Sect. 1 - That greedy gaming for gain is unlawful.

The last caution to be observed, is, that we use our recreations as a liberal exercise, and not as a sordid trade to get money. To which end let us know, that if we use gaming with a greedy and covetous desire, to enrich ourselves by impoverishing others, it is but an inordinate course, which God never appointed and blessed to get wealth, and consequently no better than theft; yea herein worse than the most thefts, in that other thieves rob strangers, but these commonly their friends and familiar acquaintance, and in that it is committed by mutual agreement, whereby the loser becometh an accessory to the theft of the winner, and so is as well as he a robber, not only of himself, but also of his wife and children. As also because the covetous delight which they take in this kind of gaming, not only robbeth them of their riches; in which respect, the saying of the Wise man may be applied and appropriated hereunto, that he who loveth pleasure, shall be a poor man; but also spoileth them of their hearts, so that after much loss and great experience of this gamesome misery, they have neither power nor will to leave their folly, and to be better husbands for the time to come. Let us know, that by such kind of greedy gaming, we set our hearts and minds upon a strange kind of rack, which pleaseth in tormenting, and tormenteth in pleasing; even the rack of tumultuous passions, which draw and distract us diverse ways; one while hoping, another while fearing; now rejoicing, and soon after grieving and fretting at our loss. Finally, that such will have a fearful reckoning to make at the day of Judgment, not only of their precious time, lavishly mis-spent in these vain and wicked exercises, but also of their wealth lewdly wasted and consumed, when in their accounts there shall be found so much wasted in

gaming, and so little given to the poor, and to religious and charitable uses, or employed in those works of mercy, which Christ hath graciously promised should be so richly rewarded at the last day.

Sect. 2 - Whether it be simply unlawful to game for money.

But here it may be demanded, whether it be altogether unlawful to play for money? Or if it be, whether wagering for money, and the winning or losing of it in gaming be simply to be condemned? To the first I answer, that to play for money, that is, to make the winning of money the main and chief end of our recreation, which ought to be the fitting of us the better for God's service and the duties of our callings, is utterly unlawful; seeing it is a corrupt and covetous desire to get money by an inordinate way which God never appointed. To the other I answer, that howsoever it were to be desired, that our minds were so well composed, and so weaned from all worldly things, that they might purely aim at their chief and main ends, without their help or any respect unto them; yet take us as we are, needing earthly helps to further us, even to the attaining of spiritual and heavenly ends; I cannot see (saving the better judgment of the wise and religious) that all kinds of interposing money in gaming, by way of winning and losing, is simply sinful and unlawful, if these cautions be observed. First, that it be but a trifle and small matter for which we game, which is to be measured according to the state and means of those that play; seeing a half-penny is more to a poor man than a shilling to a rich. For I call that a trifle, the losing whereof hurteth not him that loseth it, in respect of the smallness of it, and the greatness of his means. Even as a few drops are not missed in a whole bucket, nor many buckets-full abate the height of the river, nor many rivers running by their fountains from the sea, make it any whit at all the less full; and so it is in this case, because (as between the rivers and the sea) there is a revolution of these small winnings and losings, one winning at one time that which he lost at another,

which will make a small difference between them at the years end. But here care must be taken, that this caution extend to both parties; neither is it enough that the money for which I play be a trifle unto me, unless it be so also to the party that gameth with me. For if I be rich and may well bear it, though I often lose; and he that playeth with me be poor, and unable to sustain the loss, there is inequality and want of charity; seeing in drawing him or consenting to accompany him in such great game, or small game, yet greater than his poor ability can afford to lose; I shall do him hurt, and those perhaps that belong unto him. The second caution is, that the chief motive inducing men to play, be not greediness of gain and covetousness, which may possibly creep into little trifles, seeing it will play at small game rather than sit out, and being an hungry disease, will snatch at a crust, when as no better provision is set before it. But this small play must chiefly tend to our recreation and refreshing of our bodies and minds, for which it is more fit then greater, because it leaveth no place (unless there be more fault in the party then in the play) unto tumultuous and disordered passions. And if these cautions be observed, playing for money (as I think) is not sinful and unlawful, because it neither offendeth against charity nor against Justice. Not against charity, seeing it tendeth not either to the hurt of our neighbor or of ourselves, but to the good of both, serving to make our recreation more pleasant and delightful; seeing it causeth us to be more earnest at our sport, and setteth an edge on our appetite; whereas otherwise we should be slack and careless, not regarding whether we win or lose; in which sloth and remissness, there can be no delight; and maketh men careful to observe the rules and orders of the game, which otherwise would be neglected, the one not caring to use, nor the other to require true and fair play; seeing bare conquest, unless it be crowned, is little regarded. Neither is justice violated, if true owners take upon them to dispose of some small part of their goods, which they can well spare from their necessary uses, for their honest recreation and delight; and by mutual agreement consent to hazard a small wager (which is to be the reward of him that getteth the victory) to be either won or lost between them. Now if any object, that this kind of gaming is against

charity, because loss of a little is a little hurt, though he that loseth be not sensible of it, because it cannot be missed, by reason of the greatness of his means: To this I answer, that it deserveth not the name of hurt, which is so little that it is not sensible; or though it were so indeed, it is sufficiently recompensed by that delight which it addeth to our recreation of which I have spoken. Neither is it unlawful to purchase our pleasure, or any access unto it, when as we may have it at so easy a rate. Nor is this objection of any moment to say, that though that we lose be of small value, as an half-penny or penny, yet it might better be employed and given to the poor, seeing we are not bound to give all that we can spare from our necessary occasions unto these uses, but may lawfully spend somewhat for our honest delight; for by the same reason we should be bound to use only mean apparel and few suites, though we were never so rich, and but one or two dishes at our table, if our company be small, because this is sufficient to keep us warm, and satisfy hunger. Neither can our play hinder our alms, if our game be so little, that we have plenty for both uses. Yea, though we would give all we can spare from our necessary employments, to the relief of the poor, yet playing for a little would not hinder our charity, seeing we win at these games as well as lose, and being so charitably affected, are more ready to give out of our winnings, then having plenty and sufficiency, to forbear giving because of our losings. Again, whereas it may be objected that such kind of gaming is against Justice, because we play with a desire to win other men's goods, and so fall into the sin of covetousness: To this I answer, that simply to desire other men's goods, were injustice, but not so, when it being upon equal hazard of our own, we may lose as well as win. Or if we should desire their goods against their will, it were injustice; but not when they are willing we should have them, not absolutely, but upon a contract and agreement between us, which hath this condition, that they shall have them that win them. Yea, but can we be excused of inward covetousness, although there be no outward injustice, seeing we stand not equally affected, but desire to win rather than to lose? I answer, that desire of winning doth not simply argue covetousness; but to propound gain as the main end of our play, and not our recreation; not when we desire to win in

playing, but when we play out of a greedy desire of winning. For play being a kind of friendly combat and contention, wherein we strive who shall show most skill and activity, everyone doth naturally desire to get the victory, not simply in regard of the gain that ariseth of it, but because it is a sign and evidence, that in Art and cunning he excelleth him with whom he contendeth; and contrariwise avoideth loss, not for the value of that he loseth, but because it argueth his defect and insufficiency in skill, and that therein he is inferior unto him with whom he playeth, seeing he hath got the victory. Even as in hunting, those that are rich or noble, take great pains in pursuing their game, not out of a desire to kill it, that the poor Hare may furnish their table, which in respect of gain were but a small reward for their great labor; for in this regard when she is killed, they could willingly wish, that she were alive again, that by renewing her life, they might have a fit subject for the renewing of their pleasure, and yet whilst they are hunting, they desire not only their sport and exercise, but even to kill her, because it is the consummation of their pastime, and the Trophy of their victory. But yet lest there should be any fear that covetousness (which is a cunning insinuator, and sticketh as fast to corrupted nature, as the shirt to the skin, yea as the skin to the flesh) doth yet lie lurking in our recreation, we may agree in our gaming, that the winnings shall not come into the winners purse, (although in this respect it lawfully may, that his winnings at one time may make amends for his losses at another, which if there be no quitting, will come to more than he is willing to spare) but that it be converted to the use of the poor, or bestowed when it cometh to a convenient sum, partly this way, and partly upon love-feasts, for the preserving and increasing of amity and friendship one with another.

Sect. 3 - A serious admonition that none abuse their liberty in recreations of this nature.

And these are the reasons that induce me to think that playing for money, if the former cautions be observed, is not unlawful. Now if any abuse this liberty unto licentiousness, and under color that it is in some cases lawful, will use, or rather abuse it unlawfully, without any care to observe these cautions; his sin be upon his own soul; seeing it is far from mine intention to encourage any in their sinful courses, or that my writings should be any cause or occasion of heartening any in those shameful abuses of gaming for money, which are too common in these days, whereby misspending their precious time, they also consume their substance, and utterly spoil one another with much more pernicious robbery then can be committed by common thieves by the high-way side. For they seldom take any one man's purse; but these often, and with it even their houses and lands, and all that they possess, which are free enough from the others violence; besides innumerable other mischiefs which accompany these losses, and many outrageous sins committed against God, their neighbors and themselves. Yea seeing the end of lawful liberty, is to preserve men from lawless licentiousness, I was willing to extend it as far as the Word of God would permit, that it might move all men more willingly to contain themselves within the compass of their duties, when as they may have sufficient means of comfort and refreshing allowed them, within those lawful bounds which God hath limited. Now if any be rich, and yet will steal, he is twice worthy to be hanged; if any be such unruly beasts, that having pleasant pastures, watered with the delightful streams of Christian comforts, which like living waters are constant in their flowing, without the stops and checks of conscience, out of God's rich bounty allotted unto them, and yet will not be contented, nor quietly graze under the conduct of our heavenly Shepherd, but will leap over hedge and ditch, and break thorough all fences, that they may come into forbidden pastures, because they have ranker grass, not so sweet in itself as their own feed, but more pleasing to their carnal appetite, because they can devour it with full mouths; and out of a desire to drink of stolen waters, because they are sweeter to a fleshly palate; then surely such are well worthy to be turned out into the bare commons of penury and misery in this life, and if they repent not of

their folly, to be eternally pounded in hell in the life to come. And so much of the first kind of cessation from our labors by lawful recreations; of which I have spoken much more largely then at the first I intended, because howsoever it may seem but a light subject to bestow much pains upon; yet I plainly perceived, that it is of no light consequence; seeing it is a matter that concerns all men, and not seldom, but almost every day of their lives; seeing also nothing is more commonly abused unto sin, it being one of Satan's most alluring baits, to entice us to come within the compass of his pernicious nets and snares of wickedness; and finally, because that many who truly fear God, and desire to use them with a good conscience, endeavoring to please him as well in their recreations as their labors, yet know not how to do it as they ought, and so out of scruple and timorous doubting forbear them altogether, or else transported with their pleasure, take greater liberty then God hath allowed them, which though it be sweet for the present, yet in the end it turneth to bitterness. In all which respects there are few other things in the whole course and carriage of our lives, for which we stand in more need of counsel and direction, and the rather because there are few particular rules hereof in the Scriptures, of which chiefly the weaker sort of Christians are capable, but only some generals, out of which they cannot so easily gather special directions in this behalf, unless they have some guide to go before them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the duties which ought daily to be performed at our meals.

Sect. 1 - That we ought to take special care of our carriage at our meals.

The second kind of cessation from our labors, is that time which is spent daily in taking our repast and refreshing of our bodies, by receiving of our food, whereby our decayed strength is repaired, our health preserved, and we enabled to the better performance of the duties of our callings. The which is to be performed of us, not as mere natural men, but as Christians, using therein such rules and cautions as the Word of God prescribeth unto us, that we do not famish our souls, whilst we feed our bodies, nor weaken our spiritual part and defile ourselves with sin, whilst our outward man is refreshed and strengthened with the use of God's creatures. For as the devil layeth in every place baits and snares to entrap us, so especially upon our tables, and mingleth the poison of sinful corruption with our meats and drinks, that if we do not use them in the fear of God, and keep a narrow watch over ourselves that we offend not in them, they will prove no less dangerous to our souls, then necessary and profitable for the refreshing of our bodies. And this David implieth, where making many fearful imprecations against his own, and our Savior Christ's desperate enemies, he prayeth that their table might become a snare before them, and that that which should have been for their welfare, should become a trap. The which made holy Job so careful to sanctify his children after the days of their feasting, and to offer burnt sacrifices to expiate their sins, because he well knew how prone they were through human frailty, to offend against God, by abusing of his blessings.

Sect. 2 - Of the duties which ought to be performed before we eat, and first, that we must sanctify the creatures to our use by the Word.

Let us therefore in the next place consider the duties which belong to all Christians in receiving of their food; the which are to be performed, either before we eat, at our meals, or afterwards. Before we eat, our duty is to sanctify the creatures by the Word and prayer; for howsoever every creature of God is good in itself, yet it is not so unto us, unless it be sanctified unto our use. They are sanctified by

the Word, when as the use of them is warranted unto us by the Scriptures, that is, when as we do not receive them as absolute owners of them, but acknowledging God the Author and chief Lord both of them and us, do receive them at his hands as his free gifts, the which he bestowed upon us, first, by his law of creation, not only making all the creatures for man's use, but also by his word, giving him dominion and lordship over them, and liberty to use them for his food and nourishment. But this first gift and donation from God is no sufficient warrant unto us, seeing through the fall of our first parents we lost all our dominion, right and interest which we had unto the creatures, unless our Charter be renewed by Christ, who by satisfying God's Justice for our sins, hath recovered our right, and reentered us into our possession which we lost by Adam; and hath purchased for us that glorious liberty of the sons of God, whereby we may with a good conscience freely use all God's creatures, without any doubting, scruple or superstition, for our necessity and profit, yea for our comfort and delight. So that now we are not to put any difference between meats, seeing unto the pure all things are pure, and every creature thus sanctified is good; and if for conscience sake we abstain from flesh more than fish, or any one meat more than another, we shall show hereby that we are not taught of Christ, but that we have (as the Apostle plainly speaketh) learned this lesson in the school of the devil. Only our care must be, that we be engrafted into Christ by a lively faith, by whom only we have right unto the creatures, and that we know our liberty, to the end we may use it without doubting. For otherwise we are intruders and usurpers, who having no right unto any of God's blessings, shall have a fearful account to make for encroaching upon them, and (as it were) like thieves living upon the spoil.

Sect. 3 - That we ought to sanctify the creatures to our use by prayer and thanksgiving.

But howsoever it is necessary that we be always in this state of Christian liberty, and have the knowledge and acknowledgement of it habitually in us; yet not that we should, every time we eat, particularly meditate of all these things; only it is sufficient, that having this Charter of our liberty in our keeping, we bring it out as oft as we have occasion, especially when our right unto the creatures is called into question, either by the devil, the world or our own flesh. And that acknowledging God to be the Author of all these blessings which we receive, who not only giveth them unto us, but also all their virtue and power, whereby they become effectual for our nourishment, we do take them not chiefly as our own provision, but at his hands as his gracious gifts, which cannot nourish us by their own virtue, but as he enableth them hereunto by his blessing. In which regard it is necessary, that before we receive the creatures, we do in the next place sanctify them unto our use by prayer and thanksgiving, craving God's blessing upon our meats and drinks, that being thereby made effectual for our nourishment, we may in the strength of them do him more diligent and faithful service. For to this end God hath created our meats and drinks, that they should be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth, as the Apostle teacheth us, seeing every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. And this hath been the practice of the faithful in all ages. So we read that the people would not eat before Samuel came, because he did first bless the sacrifice, and afterwards they did eat that were bidden. And the Apostle Paul, though he were among Heathens, Infidels, and common soldiers, yet before he falleth to meat with them, gave thanks unto the only true God in the presence of them all. And this also was the ordinary and constant custom of our Savior Christ himself, which was the reason why the two disciples knew him by his blessing of the bread, before he break it and gave it unto them. Which examples that we may imitate, let us consider that no creature hath virtue and power in itself to nourish us, unless God that made it, do by his blessing sustain it, and give vigor and strength unto it, that it may be effectual for this use. For as our Savior saith, Man

liveth not by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of God's mouth, that is, that special and powerful word, whereby he appointeth and commandeth it to nourish us. And if the Lord do take away the staff of bread, that is, the virtue and strength of it, we shall eat, and not be satisfied, be famished in the midst of our plenty, and even consume and waste away in our iniquity. Yea, if the Lord curse his blessings for our ingratitude, we shall either have no power to feed upon them, or instead of nourishing us, they will be the causes of weakness, sickness, and death itself. Of the former not long since myself, with many others, saw a fearful example, in one whom I visited in his sickness of which he died; whose strength being little abated, and his appetite very good to his meat, would often and earnestly desire to have some brought unto him; but no sooner did it come into his sight, but presently he fell into horrible shaking and trembling, distortions and terrible convulsions of all his parts, so as the bed would scarce hold him whereon he lay; all which presently ceased, as soon as the meat was taken away. And this was done so often, till at length he grew weary of so many attempts in vain, and prepared himself for death, giving unto us all many signs of earnest repentance. Among others he penitently confessed, that this punishment was justly inflicted upon him for his abuse of God's good creatures, especially because he would neither of himself, nor by the persuasion of his friends, give thanks unto God when he received his food, which he conceived to be the cause why now God would not suffer him to have the use of his creatures, which he had so often abused by his gross ingratitude; and earnestly desired that he might be an example unto all men in this fearful judgment, that they might escape the like by shunning his sin. The which being so notorious, I thought fit in this place to insert, though no man is more sparing in such particular relations. Neither let any man here say, that all this might proceed from some natural causes, and that there might be some such like reason given of it, as of that disease which Physicians call <H&G>, when one bitten by a mad dog, feareth the water, like the dog that did bite him. For howsoever it was an example strange and wonderful, yet do I not say nor think, that anything in it was supernatural and miraculous. But let us not for this cause neglect to

make a holy use of it, in avoiding this sin, which God by this fearful judgment brought home to this poor man's conscience, unless we would proclaim, that nothing but miracles can affect us. For howsoever God bringeth these things to pass by natural causes, yet because they are so far out of the ordinary course of nature, and do so rarely happen; and seeing by a special providence, God causeth a concurrence of seldom meeting causes; that they may produce such strange effects after a wonderful and unwonted manner; such examples should not be much less effectual to work upon our hearts and consciences, then miracles themselves, seeing they are purposely sent of God for this end. And as God may justly for our unthankfulness utterly deprive us of the use of his creatures; so doth he often in their use turn his blessings into curses, making them through our abuse the causes of all diseases, yea of death itself, as common experience showeth; yea, he may justly cause the least bit of meat or crumb of bread to choke instead of nourishing us, the which also hath sometime happened. Again, let us consider that it is brutish and swinish ingratitude, if when God openeth his hand, and filleth us with plenty of his good pleasure, we do not by the eye of faith look up to the Author of all our good, to render unto him thanks for all his blessings; yea, herein we shall be much worse than beasts, in that diverse of them acknowledge their masters, and recompense their care and cost, by their profitable labor, according to that of the Prophet, The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Sect. 4 - Of some short meditations before we eat.

Unto this prayer and thanksgiving, let us add in the next place, as opportunity will serve and our company and occasions permit, some short meditations, before we eat, or in the beginning of our meal; as first of God's infinite goodness and bounty, who preserveth and nourisheth all his creatures, especially us by a more special providence, providing for us sufficient plenty of all good blessings,

and causing us to enjoy them with peace and safety. Whereas there are many afflicted and poor servants of God, who would be glad to feed upon our reversionaries and leavings; and are in danger before they rise from their table, to have their throats cut, and their meats mingled with their blood. Yea, consider that thou enjoyest from God, not only this plenty with peace and safety of body and state, but also with it the light of the Gospel, and the food of thy soul, whereby thou mayest be strengthened in all grace, and nourished unto life everlasting, which many poor souls have not at all, or secretly and by stealth, with extreme hazard of their states and lives. Unto which meditation of God's mercy and bounty, let us join the consideration of our own vileness and unworthiness, in which, if God should look upon us, he might justly deprive us of all his benefits, and not suffer us to have a bit of bread to satisfy our hunger, nor a drop of drink to quench our thirst. Let us remember that at our meals we are to nourish two guests, the soul as well as the body, and let our chief care be to give best welcome to our best ghost; the which will bring unto us chiefest comfort. For what food our body receiveth, it keepeth not, but within a few hours is again vexed with hunger; but the food of the soul shall still remain, and we shall have the fruit and benefit of it in this life and the life to come. Let us consider, that as we feed in great part upon mortal and corruptible creatures, so our bodies like our meats are mortal and corruptible; and therefore following our Saviors counsel, let our chief care be for our immortal souls, and to labor, not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life. Finally let us remember, that this our food is part of that allowance which our heavenly Father giveth unto us as his household servants, that being strengthened hereby, we may more cheerfully do him service, in performing those duties which he requireth of us; and therefore as God maketh his creatures to serve us, so let us dedicate and devote ourselves wholly to the service of our great Lord and Creator, using so his blessings, as that they may be helps and furtherance's, and no impediments and lets, unto the well-performing of all Christian duties.

Sect. 5 - Of the duties which ought to be performed at our meals; and first, that we use God's creatures with temperance and sobriety.

And these are the duties which we are (as much as conveniently we can) to perform before or at the beginning of our meals. The duties which we are to practice whilst we are eating and drinking, are diverse. First our care must be, that we use the creatures of God with temperance and sobriety, so as they may serve for the satisfying of our hunger, and the sustentation and strengthening of our frail nature (which if it be not misguided by our corruption, is in itself content with a little) and not tend to their weakening and disabling unto all good employments; for the feeding and refreshing of our bodies, that they may be fit servants for our souls in all Christian duties, and not the filling and glutting of them, whereby they become till they be emptied, unprofitable burdens to the soul, and good for nothing but sloth and sleep. Now this temperance must show itself in two kinds; first, in our provision; and secondly, in the applying of it to our own use. Our provision of meats and drinks ought not to be over-costly and curious, excessive and superfluous, which becometh not Christians which profess sobriety, but rather heathens, epicures, and belly-gods, who place a great part of their happiness in pampering their flesh with all kinds of voluptuousness. But ordinarily our provisions ought to be competent, not excessive and curious; and rather savor of frugality, then of lavish, waste, and prodigal superfluity. Yet that our Christian moderation and frugality may not be pretended and abused of any as a mask, to hide under it, their base and sordid avarice and stinginess, we are in this temperance of our provisions to observe these cautions. First, that therein we have respect to our place and calling, our means and ability, making our provision for our tables so, as it may be fitting and suitable in these respects; on the one side not exceeding our means, seeing frugality is the nurse and fountain of true bounty, and on the other, that it do not come much short of them, our charge and other necessary expenses being considered. And thus David a King numbereth it among God's special favors, that he had not only given him sufficient maintenance and convenient food, but had thoroughly

furnished his table as beseemed a King, and had not only filled his cup, but caused it also to overflow. Secondly, that we have respect to the times: for howsoever ordinarily our moderation must be bounded with parsimony, yet at times extraordinary, as at our solemn feasts, and when we give entertainment, either to strangers, or our superior friends much respected of us; it must enlarge itself even unto liberality and large bounty. And thus Abraham feasted his friends at the weaning of Isaac; and Levi is said to have made a great feast to give our Savior Christ entertainment; and our Savior himself at the marriage-feast turned the water into wine by miracle, that there might be sufficient plenty. Thirdly, we must take heed, that our moderation in our provisions tend to the maintenance, and not the decay of good hospitality, which is so much commended unto us in the Scriptures. Neither doth one virtue or Christian duty, if it be right and true, exclude another, but contrariwise are inseparably linked, giving to each other mutual support and aid; and they which seem to be in this number and do not thus, are but shadows, false and counterfeit. Fourthly, we must be careful that it be no hindrance to the poor, and to the works of mercy and Christian charity, but contrariwise what we save by this moderation in provision, from that which our state and ability might well afford to spend, we must not hoard it up for our private use, but liberally bestow it in alms-deeds and other religious and Christian uses, knowing that our riches are not absolutely our own, but lent unto us of God, to be employed for the glory of our Master, and good of our fellow-servants.

Sect. 6 - That we must be temperate and moderate, in respect of the quantity of our meats and drinks.

But especially our temperance and Christian moderation must show itself in our eating and drinking, and that both in respect of the quantity and also the quality of our food. First, for the quantity, our care must be, that we at least ordinarily eat and drink no more than is fit for the sufficing of nature, and the preserving of our health and

strength. For howsoever some may lawfully have their tables thoroughly furnished, yet none may rise from them with full and gluttonous bellies; though our cups with David's, may be filled till they run over, yet the overflow must not be into our own bellies, and much less mount so high as to our heads, but like Solomon's cisterns, they must have their waste into the streets, and serve as fountains to water and refresh the thirsty lands. Though it be a blessing of God promised unto the faithful, that they shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, that they may take occasion thereby to praise the name of the Lord for all his bounty and goodness; yet it is a fearful curse and heavy judgment, to be given over unto our own carnal appetite, and a grievous sin to mind so our bellies, as that we take more care and pains to please them, then to please God; which is to be a right belly-god indeed, to be transformed from men to beasts, who are led more by their sense and appetite, then by reason and Religion, and have their gluttonous paunch the chief state of their souls, and not in their head and heart; herein like as Clemens compareth them to the sea-Ass, which only among all other living and sensible creatures hath his heart in his belly, as the Philosopher hath observed. It is true that we may lawfully use the creatures, not only for the necessity of nature, but also for our comfort and seasonable delight; and that we may at sometimes more than other, take our liberty to feed upon them more liberally, as at the time of our feasting and rejoicing one with another; for it is one chief end of the blessing of plenty, that we should have the fruition and benefit of it; and a punishment which God threateneth for sin, that the people should be scant in their food, and have only sufficient for necessity of nature, to hold life and soul together, but not enough to satisfy the appetite and strengthen the body. But to exceed in gluttony, and to pamper the belly with superfluous excess; to surcharge the stomach, and to oppress the mind and heart; to make the body with too much eating and drinking heavy and lumpish, and the mind dull and blockish, is never seasonable at any time, nor suitable for any person. For this is expressly forbidden in many places of Scripture, and of our Savior Christ himself by a special Mandate and Memento; Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over charged with

surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you at unawares, &c. So that we are with equal care to avoid excess in meats as well as drinks; for howsoever drunkenness above gluttony exposeth to worldly shame, because it hath not so many colors and excuses to hide and cover it, and hath not, like the other, the wits at home to make apologies in its own defense; yet is it no less to be avoided, as being a sin alike odious unto God; and pernicious and hurtful unto us, and our poor neighbors. For it is a shameful abuse of God's rich bounty, when we take occasion thereby to disable ourselves unto the duties of his service; and a miserable servitude which we bring upon his good creatures, when as we make them serve our filthy lusts. It is a notable means to weaken our bodies, and fill them with diseases, to impair our strength, and shorten our lives. It filleth them with crudities, noisome humors, and dangerous obstructions, quencheth the natural heat, dulleth the senses, and deaddeth both the vital and animal spirits. And consequently, it disableth all the faculties of the soul unto their functions and operations, seeing it worketh by the body as by its instrument, and so maketh it unfit and unable, slothful and sluggish unto all good duties. It maketh us slaves unto our meats and drinks, over which God hath made us Lord's and rulers, and hurtful and injurious unto the poor, whilst we devour that portion of our superfluity, which God as their right hath allotted unto them. It maketh us foolishly, for a short delight, which lasteth no longer than the meat is in eating and swallowing down, to endure many hours grievances through the descension of the belly, the oppression of the stomach, the pain of the head, yea oftentimes dangerous surfeits and sicknesses accompanying them which hazard life itself. Yea in truth, for a forced and false delight, (for what true pleasure is there in eating and drinking, when hunger and thirst are fully satisfied?) it forfeiteth that pleasure of the meal following, making us to forgo our meat, or to eat it with loathing, which would be equally delightful with that which went before, if we came unto it with like appetites. Finally, this worse than brutish delight, which is so short and momentary, depriveth us of those heavenly joys which are everlasting, and plungeth us into woes and miseries which never have end, whilst it

armeth the flesh against the Spirit, and enableth it to foil and cast us head-long into many sins, as our Savior hath implied in the parable of the rich glutton, who took his chief pleasure in going richly appareled, and faring deliciously every day.

Sect. 7 - Other directions concerning the quantity of our meats and drinks.

Now for the quantity of our food which everyone ought to eat and drink, no certain rule can be given, no more than we can appoint any one size of apparel to fit men of all statures, seeing one man's stomach, health, and strength, requireth more, and another man's less, and that which is but sufficient to satisfy one, is excessive and superfluous to another, and would cause him to surfeit with too much fullness. And therefore the proportion of our meats and drinks is to be measured unto everyone by Christian prudence, which we may help by observing these general rules. As first, every man must carefully observe out of his own experience, how much is ordinarily sufficient for the nourishing of his body, and the preserving and increasing of his health and strength, and keep himself unto this proportion as near as he can, not pleasing his greedy appetite, by adding to this sufficiency that which by experience he findeth to be superfluous and more than enough. Secondly, that being in health and strength, or troubled with such infirmities, which cause greater appetite than good digestion, they do not fully satisfy hunger, nor eat so much as the stomach craveth, seeing this fullness within a few hours will turn to a superfluous burden, and this enough will prove too much; but they must (as we say) rise with an appetite, and not make such a churlish feast as we can eat no more. For herein Christian temperance is exercised, when we stint the stomach of its desire, and teach it good manners, following herein the direction of reason, and not (like brute beasts) of sense and appetite. In which respect, one giveth this rule, that our ordinary diet should be a daily abstinence, and our refection without all glutting satiety; for it

profiteth not to go two or three days with empty bellies, if afterwards we surcharge them with too much fullness, and recompense our fast with saturity and excess. Lastly, seeing the end of our eating and drinking is, that we may be fitted and better enabled for the service of God, in the common duties of Christianity, and the particular duties of our callings, we must therein respect grace as well as nature, the glory of God, as well as the preserving of our health and strength, and the thriving of our souls, as well as the nourishment of our bodies. In which regard, the best rule of Christian moderation in our diet is, that we eat and drink so much only, as may make us fit to serve God in religious duties, as hearing, reading, conferring, praying, and in the duties of our callings, that we may, having our spirits refreshed, and our strength repaired, more cheerfully and vigorously undertake and perform them; and not so much as dulleth our spirits, and maketh our bodies heavy and sluggish, whereby we fail of our ends, and become less fit for any good duties. And this the wise Solomon requireth even of Princes themselves, that they eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness. And our Savior Christ would have us so to eat and drink, as that thereby we should not be disabled unto continual watchfulness and prayer. To which purpose one saith well, that when we rise in the night to prayer, our stomachs should rather upbraid us with their emptiness, then with their crudities and indigestion. And as we must avoid excess in quantity, so also in variety; not that it is unlawful to eat of diverse dishes, so far forth as it will stand with our health and strength; but that we do not too much affect it, and pitch our study upon it. For if we do, it will be a notable means to draw us on to excess and gluttony, when as having eaten enough, we will still feed on new and more dainty dishes then the former, because we would please our taste with this variety. It is a notable means, unless we have Ostridge stomachs, to disturb concoction, and impair the health, when we make them like a Noble man's kitchen, furnished and fraughted with all varieties which land and sea can yield unto them, jumbling together (like wares in a Brokers shop) things of a far different nature, some whereof are of easy digestion, and some of hard, and some also of a middle nature; as if herein also they would make this

Microcosm and little world of man, like unto the greater world, containing in it, at least, some small fragments of innumerable creatures. Finally, as it is hurtful for the body, so not good for the soul, the which is waned from spiritual comforts, whilst it is too much affected with these carnal delights. For as one saith, When the body is resolved, and as it were, melteth in this pleasure of refection, the heart is loosened unto vain joy and sensual delight.

Sect. 8 - Of moderation in respect of the quality of our meats.

In respect of the quality of our meats and drinks, Christian temperance and moderation must be used, in bridling our appetite and taste, that they do not licourously long after, at least in our ordinary diet, such as are curious and costly, dainty and delicious, which was the sin of the rich Glutton, who in the parable was condemned unto hell, and tormented in that part wherein he had chiefly offended. For howsoever it is lawful for all men at sometimes to feed upon the choicest of the creatures, if the cost exceed not their state and means, and if they be not much affected, but come into their way without any great care or trouble; and though it be lawful at all times for those that are weak and sickly, and cannot safely eat courser and ordinary meats, to provide, if they be able, such dainties and meats of good nourishment and easy concoction, as will agree with their stomachs; yet for those that are healthy and strong, it is not lawful that they should, with the rich Glutton, every day fare deliciously, nor convenient, though it were lawful, to do it often and ordinarily, seeing he who will do all that is lawful, will within awhile do also that which is unlawful; he that will walk upon the brink, is still in danger of falling into the water, though yet he be upon firm ground; and he that will stretch his desires to the extreme borders of virtue, is within one step of vice, the which was typically implied at the giving of the Law, where the Lord forbiddeth the people, not only to come into the Mount, but also to touch the borders of it. And therefore if we would shun intemperance in diet which is utterly

unlawful, we must moderate our appetite even about those things which are lawful; and avoid carefully all means that tend unto it. Among which, one of the chiefest is delicacy of meats, which draweth on the appetite unto excess, with the strong Cable of bewitching delight. And not much less dangerous are pleasant sauces curiously cooked; both which are to be ordinarily shunned of all who would be temperate in their diet. For as we cannot attain unto Justice by coveting much wealth, nor unto temperance by the means of intemperance; so neither (as one saith) can we be brought unto a Christian-like course in our diet by curious-cooked cates, and alluring delicacies. In which regard the same author saith, and Socrates long before him, that we are to take heed of those meats, which allure us to eat when we are not hungry, and of those drinks, which entice us to drink when we are not thirsty, because like witchcrafts they delude our appetites, the devil the great devourer of mankind, having a great hand in them. For howsoever all things were made for man, yet it is not good for him to use all things, nor at all times, but the circumstances of time, occasion, manner, and other relations and respects to the things used, are of great moment to make them profitable or hurtful. Add hereunto that these dainty cates require much expense of time, and trouble both of body and mind in those that provide them, which made Epicurus the Philosopher himself, who placed man's chief felicity in voluptuous pleasure, in teaching rules of diet, which might bring with it most delight, to appoint notwithstanding unto his disciples for their ordinary diet, herbs, roots, fruits, and common fare, because these were at hand and easily cooked, whereas the tedious trouble in providing dainty fare is so great, that the short delight of fruition will in no sort recompense it. And how much more then should we, who profess Christianity, restrain our appetite from affecting these delicacies, even for conscience sake; seeing, if not we ourselves, yet some other for us (which charity maketh much alike) do spend the strength of their minds and bodies, in making and cooking these curious provisions, and waste and mis-spend their precious time, for the base purchase of these voluptuous pleasures? And as they require great labor and expense of time in him that provideth them; so also

excessive cost in him who payeth for them; in which respect I appeal unto their consciences, with what comfort they can hope to appear before their Judge, calling them before his Tribunal to give up their accounts; when as it shall appear that they have consumed so many of his Talents entrusted unto them, in riotous and dainty cheer; and have bestowed so little upon the poor members of Jesus Christ, to supply their necessities and keep them from famishing. Now how little profit do they purchase unto themselves at these dear rates? If indeed by bestowing treble cost upon their diet, they could but double their strength, health, and all their abilities both of body and mind, and so become twice themselves, and as much outstrip other men in these things, as they exceed them in these costly curiosities, they should have laid out their moneys upon a reasonable good purchase; but we see the clean contrary in daily experience; namely, that those who ordinarily feed on courser fare, have good complexions and sound temperature, and are healthy and lusty, strong and vigorous for all manly employments; whereas the other look pale and thin, as though they had but single nourishment by their double cost, and are so effeminated in their minds with luxury and excess, and disabled in their strength, that they are more fit for venereal courting's, and to combat before a Carpet, than for any manlike exercises or martial achievements. Yea oftentimes by glutting them with these dainties, they fill their bodies with diseases, as gouts, palsies, stone, colic, and sicknesses of all sorts, from which a more spare diet, which commonly accompanieth courser fare, would have privileged and exempted them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of diverse other duties which we ought to perform at our meals.

Sect. 1 - That we ought to be content with our allowance.

Other duties there are which at our meals ought to be performed, in which I will be more brief and sparing, because I have been larger in the other then I purposed, the excess of diet in these times drawing me on, and making me also exceed in prescribing rules of moderation. The next duty then which we are to observe at our meals, is, that we be contented with our cheer, as being that portion which God in his wise providence hath thought fitting for us; and not suffer our minds to surfeit by feeding on idle wishes of better cheer, when our sensual appetites are stinted with ordinary fare and short commons. Neither let us murmur and repine because we have such mean allowance, nor envy others their full tables; much less let us (as it is the manner of many nice wantons) excuse our too little or too mean fare, when even their own consciences tell them that they have too much, yea, when they are so proud of their cheer, that their dispraises serve but (as their salt meats to their drinks) to draw on their guests to give more commendations. Nor yet let us (like the same persons upon other occasions) fret and fume when as our meat is not so curiously cooked as standeth with our nice appetite, chafing as much at the small errors of the Cook, as if the good of the Common wealth, and our own safety and salvation wholly rested on it. But let us that profess Christianity leave these vanities, and learn of the Apostle to be contented with such food as sufficeth nature, and is fit to preserve our health and strength; for if we would but consider how unworthy we are of the least part of our provisions, and how far the smallest of God's favors do exceed our greatest deserts: and how many of God's dear children come far short of us in these his blessings and testimonies of his love, we should find just cause of turning our murmuring and repining into praises and thanksgivings.

Sect. 2 - That we may be merry at our meals.

Thirdly, so far as will stand with Christian gravity and the occasions that shall be offered, we must be merry at our meals; for seeing then the Lord conferreth his blessings upon us, and giveth unto us these testimonies of his love, showing that he watcheth over us with his providence to preserve and nourish us, it is a time of rejoicing in the fruition of his favors. And this is one special end for which the Lord giveth us his benefits of meat and drink, that in eating and drinking we should delight our souls in enjoying the fruit of our labors; and therefore he hath bestowed upon man, not only bread and meat to nourish and strengthen him, but also wine to make his heart glad, and oil to make him look with a cheerful countenance. Which liberty and comfort of rejoicing at their meals, the holy Saints of the Primitive Church took unto themselves, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God in the fruition of his benefits. Again, the chief end of our eating and drinking is, that being thereby refreshed, we may be made more fit for the duties of God's service; now the body is no more cheered with wholesome meats, then the heart and mind with honest mirth, and consequently the one is no less profitable than the other. Neither is it only necessary for the soul, whose refreshing and recreation consisteth in delight, but also for the body and preserving of health; and therefore mirth is worthily esteemed one of the chief doctors amongst Physicians, because if it be seasonable and moderate, it cheereth the spirits, and so causeth better concoction; whereas contrariwise, melancholy and lumpish heaviness, damping and dulling them, doth turn much of our nourishment into the same humor. But yet our care must be, that as we season our meat with mirth, so our mirth with the salt of grace, that we may glorify God in it, who is the chief cause of our rejoicing; and mutually profit one another. In which regard, we must take heed that our liberty burst not out into licentiousness, and that we do not make ourselves merry with profane jests, by abusing the Scriptures, and taking God's holy name in vain; nor with ribaldry and scurrilous conceits, which tend to the corrupting of manners, and the poisoning of our own hearts and theirs that hear us; nor with biting and bitter gibes and frumps, which wound the good name of our neighbor, and

as much vex his heart with anger, grief and discontent, as we are delighted with the salty wittiness of the conceit. Finally we must be careful (because here going with the wind and tide, we may easily over-shoot ourselves) that we be not immoderate in our mirth, but keep ourselves within the bounds of sobriety, lest our mirth degenerate into frenzy, and so justly incur the Wise man's censure, I said of laughter, It is mad; in which respect it is fit, that we be careful to keep the reins still in our hand, that we may check and curb in our mirth when it beginneth to gallop, lest it give us a fall, and cause us to discover much weakness and infirmity. But as the Lord is the cause of our mirth, so he must be the chief end of it; and as our rejoicing is of and from him, so it must be for him and in him; according to that of the Apostle, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, Rejoice; so that we may rejoice, even with a double joy, not only in spiritual, but also in civil and temporal things, if our joy and mirth be honest and harmless, witty, without the froth of vanity; and so ingenuous and charitable, that it tend not only to make ourselves merry, but to delight them also that bear us company.

Sect. 3 - Of our conferences and discourses at our tables.

The fourth Christian duty to be done at our meals, respecteth our speeches and conferences, unto which is required that they be profitable, tending to make us more holy and religious, or more wise and morally virtuous; or more lively and cheerful unto the performance of all good duties. The first kind of Colloquies and discourses are chiefly to be preferred, seeing we must first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and worldly things in an inferior place, which are incomparably of less worth. Of which conferences we may reap more fruit and benefit then of our bodily nourishment, seeing that preserveth the outward man only, but these are the spiritual food and repast of the soul, which is by much the more excellent part; that is but perishing food which corrupteth, and we with it, but this food of our souls will endure to life eternal. Now

because, our hearts being barren in good meditations, we cannot easily find out upon a sudden, fit matter for these discourses, and when we do, are easily put out, and drawn upon every occasion to fall again to worldly and idle talk; therefore it were good for us to think beforehand on some profitable subject whereon we may discourse and confer; or at least, that we do lay hold on the best opportunities that for the present are offered unto us, and slightly passing over things which are impertinent and unprofitable, as we do those meats which do not please us, pitch upon that which best maketh for our purpose, and make our spiritual meal of it, as being that wholesome and well-relishing dish, for which, putting all the other back, we have all the while reserved our stomachs. But though these religious conferences at meals be most profitable, yet may we also lawfully talk of civil and moral points; yea, even of our own affairs and ordinary business, or things some way pertinent to the bettering of ourselves, or some in our company, either for the increasing of our wisdom and prudence, or the fitting of us for action and employment, especially when we observe that our company cannot be easily drawn to entertain such speech as wholly tendeth to piety and Religion. Yet may we, as occasion serveth, powder even these discourses with piety, and lying (as it were) at the spiritual lurch, take all good advantages to insert and interlace into these discourses something profitable for the soul, and to bring, as much as we can, civil premises to pious conclusions. Finally, it is neither unprofitable nor unseasonable, if our speeches at our meals do sometimes tend to the refreshing of our wearied minds after serious studies, with pleasant conceits and honest mirth, because though these be of no great worth in themselves, yet they look to things of more value, and serve as helps and means to fit and prepare us for employments of a higher nature. The which, being a thing which we chiefly aim at in taking our repast, and in refreshing thereby both our minds and bodies, I dare not exclude all pleasant discourse from such meetings; for though we may not make our spiritual meal of such light meats, yet may they well serve as sauce to quicken our appetite; and though we may not dwell in such merry conceits; yet when our wits are dulled and blunted with more serious discourses, we may use them (as the

Israelites did the Philistines forges) for our necessity, and descend unto them for a while to sharpen our tools. The which course in our conferences I do not commend as most excellent in its own nature: for it were to be wished that we were so spiritually and heavenly-minded, that our hearts might be at all times even ravished with delight, when we are exercised in high and holy meditations and speeches, or bringing them to their full effect in our works and actions; but I only allow it as lawful and well agreeing and suitable to our present estate full of frailty and infirmity. Unto which, having respect, I will conclude this point with this one caveat; that neither in matters appertaining to Religion nor civil wisdom, we do in these table-conferences, either propound or admit knotty and hard questions, or polemical disputes, and difficult and subtle controversies, both because these often-times through pride and over-eager handling, do heat the heart, and cause wrangling and contention; and also because they are not suitable and seasonable to the time and the ends at which we aim. For it is a time of refection and refreshing, and not of toil and labor either to body or mind, and we must let our bows stand unbent, that they may afterwards be more fit for shooting, and not be still drawing our arrow to the head. It is a time to recover our spent spirits, and not to consume and waste them; which will not only make our minds unfit for employment (for if we toil them when they should rest, they will be dull and slothful when they should labor) but also much hurt our bodies and impeach our health, whilst these over-earnest discourses about points of great difficulty, do disperse the natural heat, and dissipate the spirits, calling them away from the work in hand, to assist the soul in the exercise of the brain, and so cause ill concoction and indigested crudities.

Sect. 4 - Of the choice of our company at our meals.

The last duty in our eating and drinking respecteth the choice of our company: for if we be of ability, it were to be wished, that we would

follow Job's practice, who would not eat his morsels alone, making to this end choice of fit company to consort with us. Neither is it commendable in a Christian to keep open house for all comers, and so to make it worse than a common Inn, a cage of unclean birds, and a place of all mis-rule and disorder, which was the hospitality of able men in the days of ignorance, who are more to be praised for their bounty and zeal to house-keeping, then for their piety and prudence. But seeing our guests must be our companions for the time, of which there ought to be made great choice; therefore besides those whom bonds of society, kindred, trading and commerce, and such like respects; and those that resort unto us as strangers, or by some casual and extraordinary accidents; we are in our common course, as near as we can, to make choice of such only, as are known unto us (at least in the judgment of charity) to be virtuous and religious; and among these, such especially as are most fit for our spiritual trading, either to make us more rich in knowledge, faith, obedience, and all spiritual graces, or at least to be enriched of us. By which kind of meetings we might receive singular comfort and benefit, seeing this good society and kind familiarity between Christians, is a notable bond of love, and an excellent and effectual means for the mutual stirring up of God's graces in one another, and for their strengthening and encouraging unto every good duty. In which respect it were much to be desired, that that ancient custom in the Primitive Church, of love-feasts among Christians, were more in use in these days, that we might not so deservedly lie open to that aspersion of worldlings, namely, that where Religion is planted, there all good neighborhood and friendly meetings are almost quite laid aside. To which end let us take notice of the causes of this decay, that so they being removed, this communion and fellowship among the faithful may be restored. And first, when men are wholly carnal, and set altogether on fleshly delights, it is no marvel if they take pleasure in one another's company, seeing they are mutual helpers in this worldly joy; and so if we were in any perfection spiritually minded, we would take much more delight in consorting together, because it would tend much to the increasing of our Christian comfort; but when by the preaching of the Gospel those carnal joys

and unlawful pleasures are so cried down, that some forbear them out of conscience, and some, to avoid the shame of profaneness; there followeth a breach of society and familiarity, because the bond is broken that held it together. The which is not repaired and reunited, till instead thereof there be a spiritual bond to link us together; and this being so weak among most Christians, which still remain more flesh than Spirit, it is no marvel, if there be seldom any good meetings, seeing the bond is no stronger of such society and familiarity; whereas if they were more spiritual, they would find in them more spiritual joy, and so entertain them with more ardency of affection. Another cause, which is but a branch of the former, is, that in the time of the Gospel, carnal love, which was of old a strong bond of fellowship, is not so hot and strong as it was, neither to men's persons, nor yet to the pleasures of sin and delights of the flesh; nor spiritual love so fervent as it should be, either unto our neighbors themselves, or yet to Christian conferences, religious duties and exercises, and those sweet comforts which we should take in mutual society, and should be the chief motive to bring us together; for were we inflamed with this ardent love, it would make us greatly delight in one another, and to seek all good occasions of such sweet society.

Sect. 5 - Of the manifold abuses of our feasting one another.

Unto these we may add the many abuses of these meetings, which are notable means of their dissolution; as because we fail in the main ends of them, not chiefly aiming at our spiritual good, and that we may mutually stir up God's graces in us by Christian conferences, edify and strengthen one another unto all good duties, and rejoice together in the Lord by setting forth his praises, the which were the ends that the Saints in the Primitive Church propounded to their feasts of love; but for the most part inviting one another to pamper the belly with good cheer, and to please the flesh with carnal pleasures, which leaving behind them a sting of conscience, it is no marvel if we take small comfort to meet after this manner often

together, seeing the sweet is exceeded by the sour; and keep our hand from tasting of the honey, which endangereth us to be wounded with the sting of sin; and though it be sweet in the mouth, yet is turned in the digestion into bitter choler. And as we fail in our ends of meeting, so also in our carriage, when we are met together, in which regard we justly deserve the Apostles censure, that we come together not for the better, but for the worse. For either the time is spent in idle and vain talking, unprofitable discourses, hurtful invitations, to excess in eating and drinking. Or if some religious conference be admitted, yet through pride and want of charity it is often crossed of the main ends. For not being, as we ought, fast linked together in the bond of love, every difference in opinion disjointeth our affections; and wanting charity to bear with one another, and humility to think that we may err as well as our brethren, or patience to wait upon God's leisure till he be pleased to reveal the truth unto them as well as unto us; and unanimity to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing, whereto we have already attained; we commonly take delight to spend our speech in questions and controversies, and in showing wherein we dissent, rather than wherein we agree, which oftentimes draw men to heat and contention, yea to wrangling and hard speeches, which alienate their hearts, and make them part more cold in love, and remiss in friendship, then when they met together. Whereas if self-love did not wed them to their own opinions, and pride made them not impatient that any should dissent from them, but that in charity and Christian humility, they desired to edify one another, not so much desiring to make them their scholars in embracing their private opinions, as the Disciples of Christ, by knowing better the main points of Christian Religion, or more conscionable in embracing holiness and righteousness in their lives and conversations; there would be much more fruit and benefit of such conferences, and much more encouragement unto our often meetings. Finally, the great cheer, and excessive cost, and trouble to provide it, which is commonly used at these meetings, is one special cause why we meet so seldom. Which though all mislike and speak against, because they cannot meet often that meet so chargeably, their state and means being not able to bear

it, yet it fareth herein as in the case of brave apparel; all complain of it because of the cost, but none will reform it because of their pride; whereby in their mutual entertainment, one seeketh to out-vie another, till at length it come to that height of excess, and groweth so over-chargeable to their purse, that they leave off such meetings altogether. Let no man therefore complain of the hardness of the times, which will scarce afford means of necessary maintenance, and much less of entertaining our friends to eat and drink together. For howsoever it may be true that these times will not bear us out, if we be resolved to be still excessive in our cheer and cost; yet if we would chiefly aim in our meetings, at the maintaining of love, comfort and joy in one another's company, stirring up God's graces in us, and our building up unto all good duties; I see no cause why we should not, to enjoy these Christian comforts and spiritual benefits, be contented with lesser cheer in our neighbors house, then when we eat our meat solitarily at home; and consequently, no reason why the hardness of the times should be pretended, unless our hearts be more hard then they, and will by no means be reclaimed from this fault of excess. Now as we are for these ends to invite one another, so are we especially according to our ability to make the poor our ordinary guests, because therein we shall do a work of mercy acceptable unto God, who hath given unto us our greater provision, that we may impart it unto those who have less, and out of our plenty minister unto them that want necessaries. And thus our Savior requireth, that when we make a dinner or supper, we should not invite our friends, brethren, kinsmen and rich neighbors, namely, not to these ends, either to receive recompense by the like invitation, or to approve our charity, seeing men out of natural self-love or carnal affection, may do the like; but the poor, maimed, lame and blind, because they being unable to make any recompense, it will be a good sign, that we do it out of simple charity, and pure respect unto God's Commandment, and not out of self-love, and such respects as are natural and worldly. And this was Job's practice, who as he did not eat his morsels alone, so the guests whereof he made choice, were the poor, widow and fatherless, as he professeth. Which example if we imitate, we shall in them feed Jesus Christ himself, and be richly

rewarded at his appearing. Or if we cannot invite all to our table whom we desire to relieve; our care must be to send, according to our ability, such relief as we can spare from ourselves and families, unto those whom we know do stand in need; for though God alloweth us to eat the fat, and drink the sweet, yet withal he requireth, that we send portions unto the poor for whom nothing is prepared; according to the example of the Jews at their feasts of Purim, who sent portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. To which end we ought to use all good providence and frugality, not suffering anything to be lost, though we have never so much; for if our Savior, after that he had fed the poor by miracle, though he was able as easily to have done it again, yet would not let anything be lost of his provision through negligence, but would have all the remainder reserved for another time; then how much more should we be provident, whose bounty is limited by our means, that we may relieve those poor, who are still hungry, and need our help for their comfort and relief?

Sect. 6 - That after our meals we must show our thankfulness by praising God.

And these are the duties which ought to be performed at our meals. The duty to be performed afterwards, is true thankfulness in the heart, and outwardly expressed both by our words and actions. Unto inward thankfulness of the heart is required, that we know and acknowledge that we have received our food at God's hand, and that by his bounty and gracious providence we are fed and nourished, and not by our own policy and power, industry and labor. The which Moses presseth upon the Israelites to make them thankful; for if we know, that God of his rich mercy hath bestowed these blessings upon us, and hath fed and nourished us with his good creatures, it is a notable means to make us also acknowledge it, with all due thankfulness. Even as contrariwise when we take no notice of this bounty and providence of God in feeding us, we are ready to sacrifice unto our own nets, and to ascribe the praise of our provision to our

own wisdom, and endeavors, and so to make Idols of them. And of this we have an example in the Israelites, who received God's blessings for their use, but not as from his hand, and therefore were not thankful unto him, but gave the praise to their lovers. The which ingratitude God will punish by depriving us of his blessings, that by our wants we may be driven to go unto him by prayer for a supply, who in the time of plenty would not go unto him by thanksgiving, as not acknowledging the Author of these benefits; the which also the Lord threateneth against his people of Israel in the same place. Secondly, unto this inward thankfulness there is required, not only that we know and acknowledge the Lord to be the Author of our food and nourishment habitually, but that we also actually remember this his bounty and goodness, and having them in fresh memory, that upon all new occasions we bless his name for them: According to that commandment: When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee; beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, &c. Outwardly unto this thankfulness is required, that we express it, first, by our words, in returning thanks and praise unto God for our food and nourishment, and for all other good blessings spiritual and temporal which we have received at his hands; the which in company is to be performed by one as the mouth of all the rest, and most conveniently by the master of the family and feast; and jointly together, as occasion, company and other circumstances will permit, by adding hereunto singing of a Psalm, according to the example of our Savior Christ himself at his last Supper with his Apostles. Secondly, we must express our thankfulness outwardly in our works, in employing that strength which we have renewed by our nourishment, in the service of God, by performing the general duties of Christianity, and the special duties of our callings, that by both we may glorify his most holy name, who hath so graciously fed and nourished us. For if we expect this at the hands of our servants; that being nourished at our cost and finding, they should not wait upon themselves and spend their time about their own pleasures, but in our service from whom they have their maintenance; which if they neglect, we are ready to turn them out of the doors, as unprofitable drones good for nothing,

but to live upon the spoil of our goods: then how much more will the Lord, who is a much more absolute owner than we, justly require at our hands, that after he hath refreshed us with his creatures, we do not spend our strength in fulfilling the lusts of our own flesh and the pleasures of sin, but employ it in all such good duties, as most tend to the advancement of his glory from whom we have all our maintenance? And so much concerning the second kind of cessation from our labors; of the third and last kind, which is taking of our rest by sleep, I will not here speak, having a more convenient place for it, when we have finished all our day labors, and are come to speak of the duties in the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of the duties which we ought to perform, when we are solitary and alone.

Sect. 1 - That when we are alone, we must not be idle and unfruitful.

Besides those Christian duties which are ordinarily and constantly to be done in some part of every day; there are others which are more accidental, unto which we are not tied every day or any certain time of the week, but to be done when as we shall have fittest occasions and best opportunity offered unto us. And which belong not to all persons, or to the same persons at all times, but wait upon uncertain occurrence, variety of estates, and such like circumstances. As for example, we are sometimes by ourselves alone, and sometimes in company with others, sometimes in prosperity and joy, and sometime in adversity and trouble, and uncertain it is in what day or what part of the day any of these shall happen; notwithstanding there are diverse duties which belong to these several conditions,

which with no less conscience and constancy are to be performed then the other, of which we are now come to entreat. And first, we will show what are those Christian duties which belong unto us when we are alone, and then what those are which we ought to perform in the company of others. Concerning the former, we must, when we are solitary and alone, keep a narrow watch over ourselves, that we be neither idle and unfruitful, nor ill employed and taken up with bad exercises. We must not suffer our minds to be slothful and sluggish, and so to languish for want of spiritual exercise; nor our hearts to remain in us dull and dead, barren and empty of all good desires and holy resolutions; neither yet must we in respect of action and bodily employment, give ourselves over unto ease and sloth; for if we thus (as it were) lie fallow without any seed of grace sown in us, the devil knowing us to be fit grounds for his husbandry, will sow in us the cockle and tares of all sin and wickedness; if he find us thus swept and empty of all good, we shall be fitly garnished for his dwelling, as our Savior hath taught us. If we be not employed in some good duty of God's service, the devil will take us up like masterless men, and allure us with the pay of worldly vanities, to serve him in the works of darkness. As we see in the example of David, who spending his time in sloth when Kings went out to war, and the Army of God was in the field, the devil taking him at this advantage, put his press-money of carnal pleasure into his hand, and so employed him for the time to fight his battles, even to the shedding of the blood of innocent Uriah and other of his faithful servants.

Sect. 2 - That we must spend our solitary hours in good exercises, shunning vain thoughts and entertaining Christian meditations.

And as our care must be, that we be not idle, so much more that we do not spend our solitary hours in doing that which is ill, the which notwithstanding inseparably accompanieth the other. For no sooner do we cease to do good, but we begin to do evil; no sooner do we

leave the Oare, as we are rowing towards the haven of rest, but the wind and tide of our corruption carrieth us down the stream towards the dead sea of death and destruction. And therefore if we would not be drawn unto ill, we must still be employed in good exercises; keeping always a narrow watch over our minds, hearts, and actions, that on the one side they be not overtaken with any evil, nor prostituted unto any sin; and on the other side, that they be wholly taken up and exercised in all Christian and holy duties. First, above all observations we must look to our deceitful minds and hearts, that they be not stolen from us by the subtlety of the devil when we are alone; and that they do not (as naturally they are apt) wander in this solitariness, and go astray from the way of God's commandments, and so losing themselves (like Lambes in the Desert) in the by-ways of sin, become an easy prey to the ravening Wolf. In which regard we must keep a careful watch over our minds and cogitations, that they do not take their liberty when we are alone, to rove and range after worldly vanities, the pleasures of sin, and things that being utterly unprofitable do us no good, though we spend many hours in thinking on them. For what sin and pity is it, that such excellent faculties of the soul, the mind, imagination, and discourse of reason, should be so vainly employed, either about things evil and hurtful, or fruitless and impertinent, that if, after much time thus spent, we should call ourselves to account, and say; Soul, what good hast thou reaped by so many hours study and Meditation, either for the subduing of thy corruption, or thine enriching with grace, and enabling unto any holy duty; either for thy better securing from sin and death, or further assurance of life and happiness; it would be stricken dumb, and not able to answer any word? Contrariwise our care must be, that in our solitariness our minds and imaginations be exercised in good Meditations, as in the consideration of God's nature and saving attributes, his Wisdom and power, his Justice and mercy, his infinite Goodness in himself and graciousness towards us, the excellency and perfection of his Law, and his admirable works of creation and providence; the great mystery of our Redemption by Jesus Christ, and of the means whereby we may be assured of the fruit and benefit of it; of the inestimable privileges, which belong to all true

Christians, and of the innumerable miseries which are incident unto them who live still in the state of infidelity and corruption; of the excellency of spiritual graces, and of those heavenly joys, wherewith they shall be eternally crowned in the life to come; or of the means whereby we may attain unto them, and be more and more assured of them; of the foulness and odiousness of vice and sin, and of the fearful condemnation, and horrible torments of the wicked, who live and die in them without repentance. So also we are to meditate of man's misery through the fall, and of the means whereby we may be freed from it; and more particularly, of those special sins, unto which by nature we are most inclined, and wherewith we are most often overtaken; and of the means whereby we may be strengthened against them, and enabled to mortify and subdue them; and contrariwise, in what virtues and graces we are most defective, and of the means whereby they may be increased in us; with what temptations we are most often and dangerously assaulted; what part of Christian Armor is most wanting, and what place in body or soul being weakest, is likely to give advantage unto our spiritual enemies in their assaults of temptation, and to endanger us to be surprised and overcome. Or if our minds be not thus taken up in things appertaining to the good of our souls, yet at least, they must be exercised about matters that concern our temporal estate and the works of our callings; and how we may so well contrive our worldly businesses, as that they may by our care and providence succeed the better when we undertake them. But here our care must be, that our minds be so exercised about these worldly things, as that they be not wholly swallowed up of them, and that like Eagles they stoop down to them as unto their prey, for the relieving of our present necessities, but that they do not wholly dwell upon them, but, according to their divine and excellent nature, they do again raise themselves upon the wings of faith, and soar aloft in divine contemplations; spending some part of our solitary hours, in our holy soliloquies and conferences with God, divine Meditations, Prayer at least by short exclamations, and thanksgiving unto God for all his benefits, reading of the Scriptures, and other holy and religious books, for the increasing of our knowledge, and strengthening of our faith, and the

directing and reforming of our lives, with such other religious exercises.

Sect. 3 - That in our solitariness we must avoid carnal concupiscence and the pleasures of sin.

With like care we must in our solitariness watch over our hearts, that they be not poisoned with carnal concupiscence, nor inveigled and enamored with the pleasures of sin, and that they do not affect and fasten themselves upon worldly vanities, nor dote upon uncertain riches, voluptuous delights, and vain honors, unto which naturally they are so much inclined, and so commit with them a kind of contemplative idolatry, when as they are debarred of actual fruition, and cannot, in this solitary absence, perform unto them any real worship. But seeing God requireth to have them as his own peculiar and chief possession, we must keep them fast linked unto him, and so fasten them upon spiritual and heavenly excellencies, that no worldly thing may cause a separation. And because we have no bond strong enough to tie them together in this inseparable union, we must often pray with David, that the Lord will knit our hearts unto him with his holy Spirit, and so engrave his Law, and put his fear in them, that they may never depart from him. And that they may not be fixed and fast glued unto earthly things, we must with an holy violence pull them often asunder, and lift them up with holy desires, affecting, yea hungering and thirsting after such things as are spiritual and heavenly, as after the food of our souls, and God's presence in the Sanctuary, after Christ and his righteousness, and the means of our salvation, after the perfect and full fruition of God, when as beholding his face in righteousness, we shall be satisfied with his Image. The which our desires and affections must be fervent and earnest, like those of little children after their mothers breast, when as they are newly weaned, or of women with child, which are so sick with longing, that they are ready to miscarry, if their desires be

not satisfied, or of men near famished with hunger and thirst after their meats and drinks.

Sect. 4 - That we must in our solitariness beware of sinful actions and secret sins.

Finally, though our minds and hearts do sometimes break thorough the watch at unawares, yet at least let us not so negligently keep it, as to be overtaken in our actions with any gross sin, as either by spending our time in idleness without any employment, because there is none to take notice of our sloth, or by committing any sin which we would be loath to do if we were in company, and had the eyes of men to look upon us. And to this end let us consider, that in the greatest solitude we have God present to bear us company, who beholdeth our most secret actions, not as an idle spectator, but as a righteous Judge, who will call all our works to account, to reward them if they be good, or to punish them if they be evil; and what extreme folly and madness is it, to make no scruple of committing those sins in the presence of our Judge, which with all care we hide from our fellows, who, it may be, are guilty of the same or like crimes? Let us also consider, that we carry our own consciences ever about us, which are such witnesses as will not be bribed and corrupted, but will one day give in true evidence before God's Tribunal, either to acquit or condemn us; besides all those present accusations wherewith they are always ready to upbraid us after our ill doing, and those horrors and terrors wherewith they affright us, after we have wounded them with known, willful, and heinous sins; if at least by impudency in sinning and customable wickedness, they be not for the time seared and senseless. Let us remember, that there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest, and that all our works and actions which are done in the most secret corners, shall, as our Savior speaketh, be proclaimed upon the house tops; yea shall one day come to be viewed and scanned before all the holy Saints and Angels, and be either applauded and commended, or else derided

and condemned. Finally, that it is gross hypocrisy to seem more careful and conscionable of our works and ways, when we are in company and in the sight of men, then when we are alone and in the presence of God; the which abuse of his Majesty he will not endure, but will, unless we repent of it, pull off the veil and vizard of hypocrisy, and lay open our nakedness and filthiness to the view of the world. Or if he forbear us so long, yet will he not fail to uncase and unmask us at the day of Judgment, and give us our portion with the rest of our fellow hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Sect. 5 - That it is pleasant, profitable, and necessary to spend our solitary hours in Christian duties.

And thus are we in our solitariness to watch over our minds and imaginations, our hearts and affections, our works and actions, that they may be preserved from all sin, and wholly taken up and exercised in religious and honest duties; which that we may observe with more vigilancy and diligence, let us consider that it is a course, pleasant, profitable, and necessary. For what can be more pleasant, then so to carry ourselves in our solitariness, as that we may converse with God, and feel within us the beams of his favor warming our hearts, and the sweet communion and gracious influences of his holy Spirit directing, comforting, and encouraging us in these good courses? What greater joy in this life, then thus to enjoy God in some first fruits and small beginnings, which shall be the perfection of our happiness, when we come to full fruition? We shall find it also most profitable both for ourselves and others. For if we make this use of our solitariness, our minds will be the better fitted for divine contemplation, when as they are sequestered for the time from the world, as our bodies are from company, and so freed from all those distractions and interruptions, which when we are in company, do hinder us in this exercise. And this benefit of solitude for holy Meditations the Psalmist noteth; Stand in awe (saith he) and

sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. And our Savior Christ enjoineeth it as a notable help to fit us the better for prayer; When thou prayest (saith he) enter into thy Chamber, and when thou hast shut to the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And as we are hereby made more fit to converse with God, so also with men; seeing if we keep our minds and hearts thus well seasoned in our solitariness, all our words and actions will hold the same taste when we come into company; and if when we are alone, our hearts be the inditers of good matter, when we come among others, our tongues will be as the pen of a ready writer, to discover and lay open for the good of others, the things which we privately have conceived. If when we are alone, we thus furnish and enrich ourselves with these provisions of spiritual and heavenly treasures, we shall be able out of our store to spend liberally when we come into company, and to enrich others also with our plenty. Finally, it is necessary that we keep this watch over our thoughts, hearts, and actions, when we are solitary, because then we are more in danger to fall into sin, and to become slothful and negligent in all good duties; for then the bond of fear and worldly shame, that restraineth the flesh from many disorders, which otherwise it would willingly rush into, being taken away, it will eagerly desire more liberty to sin, and then also we want the encouragement of fame and commendation, which is due unto well-doing, and is a notable spur to prick us forward in virtuous actions; the which moved our Savior to encourage us in our private prayers, by telling us, that howsoever by performing this holy duty in secret, we should want the applause and praises of men, yet there is sufficient cause to make us persevere in it, seeing our heavenly Father would abundantly supply this defect, who seeing us in secret, would reward us openly. Again, when we are solitary and alone, we are destitute of the help of our religious friends, who by their counsel, exhortations, and encouragements, make us more ready to undertake, and more able to perform Christian duties, and by their admonitions and reprehensions, do raise us up by repentance when as we are fallen into any sin. In which regard the Wise man saith, that two are better than one, because if they fall, the one will help up his fellow; and denounceth a

woe against him that is alone when he falleth, because he hath not another to help him up. And therefore in this respect also we need to double our care, in watching over ourselves when we are alone, because we have no other to watch over us, who might supply those defects in which we are wanting. Add hereunto, that when we are alone, we are more exposed to the danger of temptations, seeing Satan our spiritual enemy is ready to take the advantage of our solitude, and to assault us in single combat, when we have no seconds nor succors to assist us in our foils. And this made him to tempt Eve when she was alone, that she might not have the counsel and help of her husband to make resistance. And Joseph, when there was none with him but his unchaste mistress, whom he used as his wicked instrument to assault his chastity. And thus he assaulted righteous Lot unto incestuous lust, not in Abraham's company, nor yet in Sodom itself, though in respect of their professed filthiness, it was a fit Theater for such a fearful Tragedy; but when he lived solitarily in the mountain, and had none but his daughters to bear him company, who were to provoke him unto this uncleanness. And thus when he would tempt David unto lust, he chooseth his time when he walked alone upon the roof of his house, and then allured him, by presenting unto his sight a fit object of uncleanness. The which he found by often experience to be so great an advantage, that when he was to combat with our Savior Christ, he made choice to set up his lists in the wilderness, that having in this solitary place, none of the former helps, he might have full liberty to bend against him all his engines of battery, and use without any interruption the uttermost of his power and skill to give him a foil. Finally, as solitary places are fittest for Satan's filthy embracement's, and to pollute the soul with sin, so also for the unlawful conceptions of our wicked lusts, which afterwards are brought to the birth, and grow to their full maturity in outward actions, when we come into company, as the Apostle James implieth in the like Allegory. Thus also the Prophet Micah denounced a woe against them who devised iniquity, and in their meditations plotted the work of wickedness upon their beds, and when the morning is light, practiced it, because it was in the power of their hands. And when they had by themselves coveted

their neighbors fields, they did afterwards seize upon them with open violence, &c. In which regard, we are in our solitariness to watch most carefully over the purity of our souls, because they are then most endangered to these spiritual rapes; and in vain shall we labor to hinder the birth and growth of sin when we come into company, if when we are alone, we be not as careful to shun Satan's embracement's, and so to prevent its first conception.

CHAPTER XXVI.

What duties we ought to perform when we are in company.

Sect. 1 - That civil conversation excelleth solitariness.

But howsoever there is a fit time for solitariness, where in the former duties belonging to it, are to be practiced of us; yet we are not chiefly to affect it, much less to put such perfection in it, as to devote our lives wholly unto it, contemning and shunning all civil conversation, and all intercourse and dealings with one another; but leaving unto it due place; and deserved commendation if it be seasonable, we are, if they come in comparison, generally, both in respect of persons and times, to prefer civil conversation before solitariness, and a life taken up in virtuous action, before that which is spent in bare theory and contemplations. For God is more glorified, the Kingdom of Christ advanced and enlarged, the good both of Church and Common wealth with all the members of them, both more furthered and increased, and our own present comfort and future joys in our heavenly happiness, much more multiplied and augmented, when by our Christian conversation and virtuous actions, our holy profession and good example, our admonitions, exhortations, counsel, consolation; our works of justice, charity and mercy, and all other

good offices mutually performed, we edify and build up those which are about us, in their most holy faith, and draw many others to accompany us unto the Kingdom of heaven; then in the strictest course of a solitary life, to go by ourselves alone unto this place of happiness. And this the Lord hath ratified by his Word, when as he said, that it was not good for man to be alone: and two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor, (namely, in that mutual society, and in those good offices of piety and Christian charity which they perform to one another) for if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he hath not another to help him up. And the Apostle layeth it as a charge upon all men, that they should consider and watch over one another, to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, &c. The which also is commended unto us by his works both of creation and renovation; For he hath made us in our natures, not like unto wild beasts, who take their pleasure to lurk alone in their dens, but political and sociable creatures, who take all their chief joy and comfort in conversing with one another; and so in his wise providence he hath disposed of us, that we should not be absolute, and able to live of ourselves, but need the mutual help one of another, so that the King needeth the subject, as much as the subject the King; the rich the help of the poor, as well as the poor the hire of the rich; the city the country, as well as the country the city; and so hath he combined and linked all men together into societies, as it were particular members of the same bodies, and hath so furnished them with diversity of gifts and several abilities unto sundry offices, that no sort of men can be wanting without a maim, nor any part utterly pulled from the whole, but that he must necessarily become a dead and unprofitable member, and work his own ruin by this divulsion and separation. So in our renovation we are as it were anew created into one body, whereof Christ Jesus is the Head; and as diverse members, have our several functions and offices allotted unto us, which are not only for our peculiar use, but for the good of the whole body, and of every other of our fellow members, as the Apostle excellently showeth in

his first Epistle to the Corinthians. So as none are so perfect in themselves, that they need not their fellows, that there might not be any schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another, and that they might both suffer together and rejoice together. Of which sweet society singular benefits redound to the whole body, and to all the particular members of it; for they are linked together by the same Spirit, and in the bond of love, performing all mutual offices of Christian charity which may advance their good. They communicate in the same blessings, and rejoicing in one another's good, have according to their number their joys redoubled; in their troubles and afflictions they also communicate in one another's grief, everyone comforting his fellow, and making the burden much more light, by compassion and fellow-feeling, and by bearing of it upon many shoulders. Finally, they stir up God's graces in one another, both by word and good example, helping to remove impediments that lie in the way; and exhorting one another to cheerfulness in their journey, they hasten their speed towards the Kingdom of heaven.

Sect. 2 - That we must not rashly rush into all companies, but with good choice and advice; and also with due preparation.

Now if any of these benefits be wanting in societies, or the contrary evils fall out through this conversation and mutual conversing one with another, the fault is not in the things themselves, but in their sinful corruptions, who pervert them from their first institution, and grossly abuse them to ill ends. For as it is generally observed, that the more anything excelleth in excellency, the greater is the difficulty in attaining unto it; and the greatest benefits in temporal things, are most liable unto abuse; so cannot it be denied, but that it is much more hard to attain unto the right use of society then of solitariness; and lamentable experience teacheth us, that those who make conscience of their ways, and desire to carry themselves in all places as in God's presence, do more often forget him and their duty when

they are in company, then when they are alone, and fall into many more errors and sins, because they have more occasions, and do lie open unto many temptations of the world, if they do not make the better choice of their companions, or at least, keep not a strict watch over their words and ways, that they be not overtaken. In which regard, it is necessary unto this Treatise of a godly life, that we set down some directions, which may serve to guide us in our course when we converse with others. And these either generally respect the duties that concern society with all men, or more specially those which belong to our own families. The duties that concern society withal, either respect our preparation before we go into company, or be such as we ought to perform when we are come into it. The first general duty in our preparation, is, that we do not rashly rush into all companies; but seeing there are amongst men many more bad, by whose society we may be made much worse, then good, by whom we may in our conversing with them, receive much fruit and benefit, that therefore before we resort unto them, we make careful choice of such, as may either in all likelihood do us good, or at least receive some good from us. And because we are often mistaken in our choice, not knowing the course and conversation, and much less the hearts and affections of men, before we have had some trial of them, therefore it is fit that we pray unto God, that he will direct us in our choice, and make our meeting and society profitable for the advancing of his glory and our good. The which is to be understood, when as we are free, and left to the choice of our companions, and not when they are put upon us, or we upon them, by some urgent necessity, the duties of our calling, some weighty business or other unlooked for accident. Secondly, let us pray also unto God, that he will by his grace and holy Spirit so assist us, as that our meeting and society may tend to the advancement of his glory, and good one of another. Thirdly, seeing the enemy of our salvation doth in all places lay so many nets and snares to entrap us, and especially in our company, if it be not well chosen, whereby it cometh to pass, that we are often caught at unawares, and depart away worse than when we came into it; therefore we must resolve beforehand, that we will arm ourselves against all these dangers, and keep a narrow watch, that we

be not ensnared or overcome of any evil. Fourthly, we must not propound this as the end of our society, to pass away the time with less tediousness, or to delight our flesh with carnal pleasure, but go into it with this resolution, that we will do our best endeavor, either to receive some good thereby, especially to our souls, by gaining more wisdom and knowledge, or better our desires and affections, or more power and cheerfulness in the service of God, and in the performance of all Christian duties; or to do some good unto those who consort with us, by our words, examples and actions, either by keeping them from sin when they are ready to fall into it, and pulling them (as the Apostle Jude speaketh) like firebrands out of the fire; or instructing them that err from the truth, in the right way, or performing unto them some other Christian duty which may further their salvation, either as a means of their conversion, whereby they may be gained unto Christ, or for their further building in their most holy faith; the which we are chiefly to intend as an excellent work: for he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins, as the Apostle James speaketh. And if we be not thus resolved before we come into company, but rather go with a purpose to fit ourselves to everybody's humor, and rather to please then to profit either them or ourselves (like reeds that will bend with every breath; or writing tables, which being newly made clean, are fit to receive any impression of good or evil) it were much better to refrain company and to be alone, seeing there is more danger of hurt, then hope of being made ere a whit the better. Finally, we must be no more careful in putting off our rags and old clothes, and in making ourselves handsome, in our outward habit and attire, before we go into respected company, then in putting off and casting from us turbulent passions and disorderly affections; and in decking and adorning ourselves with the contrary graces of God's Spirit. As for example, we must subdue our pride, which maketh all meetings unprofitable, by stirring up heart-burnings and contention amongst men, either about preeminence and precedency, or when they are crossed in their proud humors and conceits; so also our wrath and frowardness of nature, which is provoked with every small occasion, envy towards superiors, and

disdain towards our inferiors. And contrariwise, we must put on brotherly love, which is the best ornament to fit us for Christian society, as freeing us from many corruptions which make company unprofitable, and enabling us unto many duties which are necessary unto it; For charity suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. And with it we must put on the Spirit of meekness and patience, which will enable us to put up injuries, and to pass by offenses, and to bear with the infirmities of our brethren, till by some good means they may be amended; the Spirit of humility, which will make us to deny ourselves, our own wills and obstinate conceits, and to think better of the good parts of our brethren than our own; candidous and ingenuous simplicity, whereby we are apt to interpret the words and actions of our brethren in the best sense, and even to season them, if they be somewhat sour or bitter, with the sweetness of our nature and disposition.

Sect. 3 - That our whole carriage and conversation must be religious, civil and honest.

And thus we are to prepare ourselves before we go into company, if we desire to profit by it. Now after we are come into it, diverse duties are to be performed of us; some whereof generally concern our whole conversation, and some more specially respect our works and words. Generally there is required, that our carriage and conversation be holy and religious in respect of spiritual things; and civil and honest in respect of the things of this life. And first, that chiefly aiming at God's glory and our own salvation, we labor by all means to advance them, and shun all occasions in our whole conversation, whereby they may be any ways impeached and hindered. Secondly, that we be innocent and unblameable in all our words and actions, and give no

ill example, scandal or offense unto any that keep company with us, but shine before them in our faith and holy profession, and in the light of a godly life, that so they seeing our good works, may glorify our heavenly Father, and by our holy example may be gained unto Christ. So the Apostle exhorteth us to abstain, not only from all evil, but also from all appearance of it, propounding himself an example of it unto the Thessalonians for their imitation. Ye are witnesses, saith he, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we have behaved ourselves among them that believe; for whom he also prayeth, that their whole spirit and body might be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, we must be just and righteous in all our conversation, observing truth in our words, and equity in our actions, giving unto everyone their due, and dealing with others as we would have them to deal with us; which is a main bond of all good society, and maketh it to hold together with peace and comfort. And thus the Apostle exhorteth the Philippians to embrace, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, virtuous and praise-worthy; and then the God of peace would dwell with them: And telleth us, that they, unto whom the grace of God bringing salvation, hath appeared, are thereby taught not only to live holily towards God, and soberly towards themselves, but also righteously towards all that converse with them. Fourthly, we must be fervent in love towards those with whom we consort, which will make us ready to perform all other duties unto them, according to that of the Apostle, Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, &c. And this love will unite us together, for it is the bond of perfection, or a most perfect bond, which knitteth us together one with another. Fifthly, As we are of the same company, so we must labor to be of the same mind, and to mind the same things, and to be of the same affections, rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, and to walk by the same rule, as the Apostle speaketh, so far forth as will stand with truth and justice. For if our bodies be united by society, our minds and hearts being disjoined and disjointed, we shall be but tied together like Samsons Foxes by the tails, with

firebrands between them; and looking with our faces a contrary way, shall hinder one another in all good proceedings. Sixthly, we must not carry ourselves proudly towards one another, nor being wise in our own conceits, mind high things; for this will make us so stiff in our opinions, that we will not bow unto any man's judgment, but rather break off all friendship and society about every trifle, then we will seem to take the least foil. But contrariwise, we must be of humble minds and meek spirits towards one another, condescending to men even of low estate, in matters of truth, and things indifferent and of small weight, or dissenting from them in love, and after a meek and peaceable manner. Finally, we must be patient and peaceable in all our conversation, and be much more ready to bear, then offer injuries, according to the Apostles rule; Recompence unto no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. To which end we must (as elsewhere he exhorteth us) Put on (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us.

Sect. 4 - How we must carry ourselves in the company of those which are worldly and wicked.

And this ought to be our conversation when we come in company with our brethren. But what if by accident, or by our necessary occasions, we fall into the company of mere worldlings, and such as are irreligious and profane? Surely we are not to cast off the cloak of our profession, and the badge and cognizance of virtuous and religious behavior, as though we were ashamed of our Master; for if we thus deny him before men, he also will deny us before his Father which is in heaven. And much less ought we to approve and applaud them in their wicked courses, or because we would not displease them, and endure their reproaches and disgraceful taunts for our

profession and practice of Religion, countenance their ribaldry, swearing, and profane jests, with our smiles, or join in the same graceless courses, running together with them into the same excess of riot, that they may not speak evil of us. But so long as we are in their company, we must labor by all means to reclaim them, and to gain them to Christ; out-countenancing their levity and profaneness, by our gravity and piety shining in our words, countenance, and conversation. And first our care must be, that in all our carriage we be unblameable, although their malice will not allow us as commendable. So the Apostle exhorteth us to do all good duties without murmuring and disputing's, that we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we should shine as lights in the world. Herein indeed like the Sun, which though wicked men may at sometimes hate, because it discovereth their works of darkness, yet are they so convinced with its beauty and excellency, that they cannot for shame speak against it. Thus also he exhorteth Titus, to show himself in all things a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he who is of the contrary part, may be ashamed, having no evil to say of him. And thus the Apostle Peter persuadeth us, not only to sanctify the Lord in our hearts, but also to make profession of the hope that is in us, upon all good occasions; having a good conscience, that whereas they who speak evil of us, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ. Secondly, it is not enough that we be unblameable in our conversation, and without the spots and blemishes of known sins, but we must also walk worthy our high calling, and adorn our profession by our practice of holiness and righteousness, that so we may not only stop their mouths, but also (if it be possible) may be means of their conversion, when they shall see the light of our holy conversation. So our Savior requireth of us, that our lights should shine so before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. And the Apostle Peter exhorteth Christians to abstain from fleshly lusts, and to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they

spake against them as evil doers, they might, by their good works which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. And though we cannot bring forth alike fruits of piety, when we are in company with them that will not join with us in holy exercises, yet at least let us not neglect civility and morality, and as the Apostle speaketh, provide things honest in the sight of all men. Thirdly, though they will not be reclaimed, neither by our words nor example, yet we must not for this mingle spleen and choler with our zeal, but carry ourselves in all meekness and mildness, patience and forbearance; and though we cannot by all our endeavors unite them unto us in the bonds of love; yet let us by all good means move them to keep the peace, and bind them to their good behavior whilst they are in our company; assuring ourselves, that if meekness and love joined with strong reasons and good persuasions, will not prevail with them, then much less will rough words and choleric speeches: for here the Apostle James saying is fitly verified; The wrath of man doth not accomplish the righteousness of God. And this the Apostle presseth with great vehemency; If it be possible (saith he) as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. But yet we must not be so zealous of peace, that we do cowardly betray the truth, nor for peace sake forgo our own piety; For we must so follow peace with all men, as that we follow holiness also, without which no man shall see the Lord; or hereby lose any opportunity of furthering our neighbors salvation. For we must, by the Apostles direction, so follow after the things which make for peace, as that we by no means neglect the things whereby one may edify another. And therefore if those with whom we converse, be not desperate sinners, and more likely to hurt us for our good will, then to receive any good to themselves by our reproofs, we may admonish and rebuke them in the spirit of meekness and love for their sins, that we may reclaim them, or at least, if they be such as in Christian prudence we may not make so bold with them, yet at least, let us show our dislike, when we see God dishonored by our countenance or some other signs, that we do not become accessories to their wickedness. Neither let any man account it Christian meekness and patience to sit by and say nothing, when God's holy Name is profaned, Religion scorned, and the banners of

wickedness displayed, seeing the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, which was so much commended for patience, had also this praise annexed, that he could not bear with them which were evil. And therefore it is no patience, when we let men go on in their wickedness, and give them neither by word nor countenance, any sign of our dislike, but want of zeal and Christian courage, yea dastardly cowardice and too much love of the world, which maketh us more careful to please men then God himself. Finally, we must not by such wicked company be out-countenanced in any good, nor be moved to neglect any Christian duty, which present occasion maketh necessary. For if they be not ashamed to serve the devil by their professed wickedness; let us not be ashamed to serve our gracious God, by performing such duties as he requireth of us; If they with all boldness glory in their profaneness; let not us be bashful in the profession and practice of religious and pious actions: But as the Apostle Paul gave thanks, and blessed the creatures in the midst of Infidels, before he would feed on them; so let us with like boldness use good communication, read the Scriptures, sing Psalms, and perform all other Christian duties, notwithstanding that profane men be in the company. Seeing thereby we shall keep a good conscience before God and men, and may, if God give a blessing to these holy exercises, not only edify those who are alike minded with us, but also gain them likewise unto us, by our good example, who are as yet otherwise disposed. By all which good duties if we prevail nothing at all, our best course will be, as soon as we can, to quit ourselves of such company, and more carefully afterwards make choice of better. For consorting with such companions longer than we need, endangereth us to be tainted and corrupted with their evil manners: and if we continue with such as we can by no good means make better, we are in great hazard to be made worse, as hereafter we shall more fully show.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of Christian conferences, which we must use when we are in company, for our mutual good.

Sect. 1 - That our speeches must be gracious and prudent.

And these are the duties which generally concern our whole conversation in company. The special duties respect either our words and conferences, or our works and actions; In all our conferences with our brethren we are to observe two things. First, that our speech be gracious. Secondly, that it be wise and prudent. Both which are required by the Apostle; Let your speech (saith he) be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that is, wisely fitted to the time, persons, occasions, and other circumstances, and uttered prudently in due season. Our speech is gracious, when it savoreth of grace and goodness, and appeareth to proceed from the Spirit of God dwelling in us, as though he used our tongues to deliver by them that which he suggesteth and inspireth into us; whereby it becometh gracious and acceptable in the ears of God and all good men. And unto this there is required, that it be not only gracious in itself, but also to all that hear us. In itself it is gracious, when as it is either holy and about spiritual and heavenly things, points of divinity, and religious matters, our salvation itself, or the means whereby we may attain unto it; God's mercies and blessings multiplied upon us, or his judgments and chastisements inflicted for sin, and such like; or else when as it is honest and civil, and about the things of this life, appertaining to our temporal profit, or our comfort and delight. Our speech is gracious to the hearers, when as it tendeth to their profit, either in respect of their souls, or bodies and states. It is profitable for their souls, when as it is referred to edification, and to the enriching of them with spiritual grace, and the strengthening and enabling them unto all Christian and holy duties. Unto which kind of speech the Apostle exhorteth; Let (saith he) no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good

for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And again, Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. The which duty is diversely performed; first, by instructing those which are ignorant in the knowledge of God and his truth, that so seeing the way of life and salvation, they may walk in it. In which, those especially fail, who like rich misers barrel and hoard up the treasures of knowledge in their own brains, but envying their brethren the use of it, will never communicate it in their conferences, nor let any be the wiser by their speeches that come into their company. Secondly, by informing erroneous judgments, and reducing them out of their errors into the way of truth. The which, the Apostle James commendeth unto us as an excellent work; Brethren (saith he) if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. Thirdly, by giving good counsel unto those that want it, and prudent advice how they shall carry themselves in all their courses, so as they may in all particular actions please God, and preserve the peace of a good conscience. Fourthly, by exhorting and pricking those forward whom we see sluggish and negligent, and to slacken their pace in the ways of godliness; according to that of the Apostle; Exhort one another daily, whilst it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Fifthly, by comforting those that want consolation, in respect of their afflictions, temporal or spiritual, inflicted upon their body, mind, or state. So the Apostle exhorteth us to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak; And again, Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. And the Prophet Isaiah likewise, Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. The which duty was performed by holy Job, as Eliphaz testifieth of him, Thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands: Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. And is highly commended by the Prophet as a special gift of God; The Lord (saith he) hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

Sect. 2 - Of Christian admonition, and what is required to the right performing of this duty.

Sixthly, by admonishing those who are ready to fall, that we may uphold them, and such as are already fallen through ignorance, frailty, and infirmity, that we may raise them up again. And this the Apostle requireth; Brethren (saith he) if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Unto which duty that it may be well performed, diverse things are required. First, wisdom and knowledge in him that admonisheth. So the Apostle saith of the Romans; that they were filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another. And first we must know, that the thing whereof we admonish our brother, be a sin, and not either lawful, or indifferent and rightly used of him. In which the Israelites failed, when they sent to admonish the Reubenites about building the Altar, and Eli in admonishing Anna to put away her drunkenness. Secondly, we must know, that being a sin, it is indeed committed by our brother, either upon that sure notice which ourselves have taken, or by the credible testimony of others who are men of credit; and not when we have a blind jealousy or ungrounded suspicion, nor when we have heard it from busy-bodies and talebearers, who will not stand unto anything they say; unless out of love and tenderness of his credit, we speak of it to this end chiefly, that he may the better clear himself of these false imputations, or that we may take occasion to admonish him if we find them true. Thirdly, we must have knowledge and wisdom to do it after a right manner, with observation of all due cautions and circumstances. As first, we must make choice of a seasonable time, not when our brethren are at their feasts, and desirous to be cheerful and merry; not when they are cast down with afflictions, the which themselves sufficiently admonish, unless we see that they make no use of them, nor are brought by them to a sight of their sins; but rather in their prosperity, when as they thrive in their evil courses. Not in the

company of others, if the fault be secret, and not open and scandalous; in which case also Christian wisdom will find private admonition best for many persons, who out of their greatness and natural pride, will burst out into rage and impatency, when as in company we take notice of their faults. Especially, we must take heed that we do not admonish them of their faults, before those unto whom they desire chiefly to be approved, and to maintain their credit; for this will make them either to deny the fault, or to defend it, or to excuse and extenuate it; or if they can do none of these, to burst out into choler, as holding themselves to be much disgraced. Neither is admonition seasonable towards others, when they have begun first to admonish us, because it will seem to proceed, not from love, but from spleen; not from any dislike of their faults, but too much liking of our own; not out of a friendly liberty to do them good by reclaiming them from their sin, but out of impatency to bear reproof, which maketh us to return like for like, because we would have both lie under the same guilt; whereas if we take admonition well, and perform the like duty at another time to our neighbor, it will be imputed to the friendly liberty of love, which seeketh to reform the faulty, and not to anger and revenge, which upbraideth the like faultiness to countenance our own. Secondly, there is required, that we take fit occasions to admonish; as when our neighbors, either by their words and speeches, or their actions and behavior do offer unto us some fit opportunity; for if it come thus by accident, it findeth more easy entrance, whereas if we seem to come of purpose prepared and armed, it will seem more harsh to them whom we admonish, and but cause them to prepare also to make resistance. Or when being sharply taunted for their faults by their enemies, they are vexed and grieved with their reproaches, then may we take fit occasion to give them admonition for them, that they may not be liable to such disgraces; for this will seem to spring out of love, which seeketh their credit, and will move them to take it well, when as we of the poison of other men's railings and reviling's, do make an antidote by our friendly admonitions, to preserve them from taking any hurt from them for the time to come. Thirdly, we must be careful in admonishing others, that we ourselves be not

guilty of the same faults which we task in them, lest they pay us in our own coin, mete unto us by the same measure, and bring us under the same condemnation. Yea perhaps we may incur thereby the suspicion of hypocrites, who tell others of their sins to hide our own, or like subtle thieves, raise a clamor against our neighbors, that we may the better escape in the Hiew and Cry; or of disliking their person more than their sin, seeing we nourish the like in our own bosom. Or if Christian love move us to admonish them in this kind, because such sins bear more sway in them than in us, being committed by them willfully and with settled resolution, by us through frailty, infirmity, and at unawares, seeing they defend them, and we bewail them, they cherish and nourish them, we condemn and labor to mortify them; we may, being ourselves faulty in this case, admonish others: but then it is best to prevent their upbraiding by confessing our own frailty, and by applying our admonition to ourselves together with them, as thereby seeking our mutual reformation. Fourthly, our admonitions must proceed from brotherly love, the which being a grace hidden in our hearts, we must make known by the fruits of it. To which end we must use all lenity, meekness of spirit, compassion in the sense of the like infirmities in ourselves, with mild and gentle speeches, showing in our hatred of their sin, the love of their person. And though the party may discern them, yet if we would do any good, we may not use any insulting speeches, contumelious words, scoffs, scorns, or biting jests; and howsoever in some cases for lesser faults, or when we have to deal with a froward nature, we may sweeten our admonition, by speaking merrily, and in a pleasant manner, yet we must take heed that we retain our gravity, lest it be turned into a jest, and so lose all its force and efficacy. But especially we are to take heed that our admonitions do not appear to have risen out of self-love, and respect to our own particular, but out of our love of them whom we admonish; for if this be but suspected, it will never take any place, because we seek not their good, but our own. And secondly, that they proceed not from anger and choler, which will make it seem a chiding and brawling, rather than an admonition; and an action of raving, rather than of love. In which respect, our admonitions will be the more powerful,

when as they have no reference to ourselves, either of profit or hurt, but rather such as by the faults which we reprove, accrue unto others. Again, to show our love, we are with the notice which we take of their faults, to acknowledge their good parts, and to give them due praise for their well-deserving. Or if their defects will afford no such occasion, we may intermix the virtues of their parents or dear friends; both which will sweeten our admonition, and serve like sugar to take away the distaste of their bitterness. Neither must we be always beating upon one string, nor use this sovereign Salve for every slight scratch; but upon some urgent necessity and weighty occasion, passing by petty matters of small value, as not seeing them, or at least reserving them, like little pieces of coin, till they be come to a sum. For to be still admonishing for every trifle, will make us seem curious busy-bodies and harsh censures, to be void of love, which maketh us pass by infirmities, and will cause our company to be tedious and irksome, and our admonitions by their frequency unrespected and of no force. Fifthly, if the parties we admonish be of stout spirits, and are bold enough to bear it, we may deal plainly and particularly with them for their sins; but if they have tender foreheads, and are so ingenuously bashful, that they are apt to be daunted, and put out of countenance, by our taking notice of their faults; it is Christian wisdom to nourish this modesty and shamefastness, seeing there is no great danger, that such will be hardened in their sins. And to this end, it is good to admonish them of their faults in other men's persons, which are alike known unto them, and to let them see the foulness of their vices, when, like impartial beholders, they take a view of them in other subjects. The which course also is sometimes good, when it is propounded by way of Parable in another person, as when we have to deal with our superiors (as Nathan with David) or such as will not by plain and direct dealing be so easily convinced of their sins. Again, to cherish ingenuity, and to preserve men from boldness and impudency, it is not good in our admonitions to press our reproofs too far, but to give them some little evasion, that they may not turn again as desperate, and fly in our faces. And therefore we are sometimes to admit of their excuses and extenuations; yea, sometimes ourselves after a

charitable manner, to do it for them, giving the best interpretation we can, either of the matter or manner of their actions, or their mind in doing them; but in the meantime these extenuations and excuses must be referred to the person, but not to the sin itself, which must be mainly beaten down, even whilst we keep the party from sinking under it. Finally, as with our admonitions we must intermix loving and kind speeches; so especially our care must be, that we always make a friendly conclusion; and not let the admonished depart discontented and exasperated, but so win him by our kind usage, that (if it be possible) he may depart, as far in love with our persons, as in hatred of his own sin; like a Patient cured of some grievous wounds, who loveth his skillful and faithful Surgeon, when the cure is perfected, though he complained of his rough handling him, when he was searching them to the quick. But if when we have done our best by admonition, we cannot reclaim our neighbors from their sins, but that they still willfully commit them, and continue in them without repentance; then is it our duty, with due respect had to our place and calling, and also their persons and condition, freely to rebuke and reprove them. And this the Lord commandeth as a testimony of our brotherly love; Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. And our Savior Christ requireth it as an action that concerneth ourselves as well as them, seeing if we neglect it when we have a calling to perform it, we also are accessory unto their sins. Take heed (saith he) to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. But howsoever here more severity and sharpness is to be used then in our admonitions, and these old festered sores are to be handled with a rougher hand, then if they were green wounds, yet we must take heed, that love shine through these clouds of just anger, that it may appear to the party reprov'd, that we intend the cure, and not to hurt the person. To which end all scolding and brawling, railing and reviling speeches are utterly to be avoided, which never do good, but work in them spleen and malice towards them that use them, rather than any reformation of their faults, or hatred of their sins.

Sect. 3 - That we may lawfully confer of moral and civil things.

And thus we are in company to frame our speeches upon all occasions, that they may tend to the spiritual edification of our brethren. But though such conference in company is to be performed as most excellent, yet may such speeches have their due place, which concern moral and civil things, about any subject which may better and improve our knowledge for the service of the Church or common wealth, or mutual good duties to be performed towards one another; about the health and well-fare of our bodies, or our common affairs and businesses which we have in the world one with another, and such matters as concern the good of our estates, of which we may lawfully advise and take counsel one of another, for the better directing and managing of all our actions and endeavors. Yea sometime our speeches and conferences may tend to honest delight, and to the mutual comfort and refreshing of one another, that our spirits being cheered and revived, we may be the better fitted for duties of a higher nature. For howsoever it be lawful sometimes to use speeches tending to our worldly profit and delight, yet let us carefully take heed, that we be not (like most men at their meetings) wholly taken up with them, talking of nothing else but of carnal and earthly things; but seeing God is the Author and giver of this excellent faculty of speech, let our tongues be chiefly employed (when we are at our free choice, and not straightened in our desired liberty by our earthly necessities that press upon us) in such conferences as tend to God's glory, and the mutual edification one of another; that so it may appear that we are pilgrims on earth, and Citizens of heaven, when as our conversation is about heavenly matters; and that we are free Burgesses of the new Jerusalem, when as we speak the language of Canaan.

Sect. 4 - That we must carefully avoid all corrupt communication.

Much more let us carefully avoid in our conferences, the speech of Ashdod, which who so useth, professing himself an Israelite, deserveth to be cursed, and that there were some good Nehemiah to smite him with the hand of Justice, and to pluck off his hair. As all hurtful speech, which tendeth to God's dishonor, swearing, blaspheming, cursing, and such as savoreth of irreligion, profaneness and Atheism; or to the destruction of our own and neighbors souls, for which Christ died; as all evil words which corrupt good manners; all filthy communication and rotten speech, which infecteth and poisoneth the hearers; all scurrility, unsavory and obscene jests; all scoffs and bitter frumps, scornful taunts and spiteful jests, impeaching the credit and reputation of our neighbors, which proceed, for the most part, from an affectation of the praise of wit, and so far bewitch men, that they are ready (as we say) to lose their friend rather than their jest, and so foolishly to exchange a precious jewel, for a trifling babble. And hereunto we may add all speeches directly contrary unto those that tend to edification; as such as tend to the corrupting of the judgment of our neighbors, and to the leading of them into error, evil counsel, and all such as discourage them in the ways of Godliness. Such as grieve the afflicted spirit, and make him to sink under his burden; such as encourage men unto sin, and countenance those, who are fearful and bashful, in wicked courses, or which hinder those that are fallen, from rising again, and turning unto God by true repentance. And as we are to avoid in all our conferences these hurtful and pernicious speeches, so also such as are vain and unprofitable, as not attaining unto our chief ends, the glory of God, and our own and our neighbors good; in which notwithstanding the most men spend their time, and as the Psalmist complaineth, speak vanity everyone with his neighbor; thinking themselves sufficiently excused, because they say no hurt. But such forget in the meantime, that the Wise man prayeth against this vanity, that the Apostle doth forbid and condemn it; and that our Savior Christ at the day of Judgment will call into account not only such speeches as are hurtful, but such also as are idle and unprofitable.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of Christian prudence, which we ought to use in all our conferences.

Sect. 1 - How we must carry ourselves when we confer with those who excel us in gifts.

And thus we have spoken of graciousness of speech to be used in our conferences, and of the contrary corruptions which ought to be shunned. The next duty required, is, that our speeches be powdered with the salt of Christian wisdom and prudence, which not only enableth us to speak good things, but also to fit these speeches to the persons with whom we confer, to occasions and opportunities, to the present purpose, use and necessity, so as they may be most seasonable, powerful and effectual for the furthering of our own good, and theirs also that bear us company. And this the Apostle understandeth, when as he requireth, that our speech should be always gracious, and seasoned with salt, that we may know how to answer every man, for their special use and benefit. This is that fit and seasonable speech which the Wise man compareth to apples of gold, in pictures of silver; and this is, to have the tongue of the learned, when as we know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. And when as we can fit our speeches to present occasions, and so apply them to every sort and condition of men, as that they may be behooveful and beneficial to them all in their several kinds. As for example, when we confer with such as excel us in grace and piety, wisdom and knowledge, we must, reverencing God's graces and greater gifts in them, yield unto them priority of speech, and attentively hearken unto those gracious words which proceed out of their mouths; not spending of our small stock which cannot enrich them, but laying up their speeches as good treasures in our hearts,

that we may increase our spiritual store, which we may afterwards lay out when we come among those that have more need. And unto this the wise Solomon adviseth us, Bow down thine ear (saith he) and hear the words of the Wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. And again; Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend unto the words of my mouth. Hear: for I will speak excellent things, and the opening of my lips shall be right things. And here the Apostle James his rule is especially to be observed; Let every man be swift to hear, and slow to speak. For the words of the Wise are of great use and profit, power and efficacy, like goads pricking men forward in the ways of Godliness, and like nails fastening and confirming their hearts in all virtuous courses. In which regard if we interrupt them in their holy and wise speeches, by interposing our unseasonable and less profitable talk, we shall, by disturbing their discourse, wrong ourselves and the rest of the company; and be more foolish than the foolish virgins, who did not desire to put out and extinguish the lights of the wise, but that they might share and communicate with them. And therefore when we come into such company, let us think that we are in a rich and plentiful market, wherein we may store ourselves with what we want. In which respect let us wholly intend to enrich our hearts with all needful graces, by trading with these rich Merchants who abound in them; and labor by communicating with them in these holy conferences, to increase our knowledge, strengthen our faith, confirm our affiance, nourish our hopes, mortify our corruptions, and to be more and more enabled to new obedience and holiness of life. On the other side, when we are in the company of those which are weak and inferior unto us in knowledge and other of God's graces, we must be as ready to speak unto their instruction and edification, as to hear those which are superior unto us. And as those who are of mean estate, may lawfully desire and receive gifts from the rich, that they may impart them unto those who are poorer than themselves, so must we also do in our spiritual trading one with another. Which we need not grudge to do, seeing we shall not lose by their gain, but mutually thrive together, not much

less increasing our own knowledge and other graces, by teaching and communicating them, then they by learning and receiving; these spiritual gifts herein resembling the Widows Cruze of Oil which filled in emptying, and when much was taken out of it for the relief of the whole family, afforded no less store the next meal, or like the milk in the mothers breast, which if it be sucked by the child, continueth and increaseth, but if it be not drawn, soon faileth and drieth up. Neither must we in this case be so proud and lofty in our own conceits, as to scorn or refuse conference with those who are not equal with us in gifts, but as the Apostle exhorteth, we must condescend unto men of low estate, and stoop unto the understanding of the meanest, thinking it as necessary an office in God's family, to put milk into the mouths of little babes, as to set stronger meat before those that are able to sit at the table with us and feed themselves. Unto the performance of which duty, Christian wisdom and discretion is very necessary, to give unto everyone a fit portion as they are able to bear; and not to glut and overcloy weak stomachs with these spiritual dainties, till, like the Israelites Quails, they come out of their nostrils. For if they surfeit through satiety, and be crammed till it be ready to come up again, they shall for the present offend God thereby, and loath this Spiritual food for the time to come. And therefore when we meet with weaklings, let us have respect unto them, and not so much consider what we could willingly give, as what their weak stomachs are able to digest; intermixing (as it were sauces to their meat) civil, moral and pleasant speeches tending to their profit or delight, that thereby, their appetite being quickened, they may feed upon more solid and wholesome nourishment with less satiety.

Sect. 2 - How we must behave ourselves when we confer with civil worldlings.

Again, if those with whom we confer are but mere worldlings, we must wisely consider whether they be morally civil, or openly profane and desperately wicked. If they be of the former sort, we

must cherish those common gifts and graces of the Spirit, which we observe in them, yet so, as we do our best to work them out of a Pharisaical conceit of them, as though they needed no more to assure them of their salvation. To which purpose we are to take all good occasions to show their insufficiency, that being beaten off from this pernicious opinion, they may deny themselves utterly, and all their own righteousness in the work of their justification and salvation, and may fly unto Christ by faith, who is only able and all-sufficient to effect them. With which we must join all other good means, which opportunity shall offer unto us for the gaining of them to Christ, and making of them truly religious. And to this end we must heedfully watch for all good occasions, which either their words or actions shall offer unto us, of speaking something which may be for the use of edifying; liking and approving anything which is well said or done by them (as our Savior dealt with the young man that answered him discreetly) showing that they are not far from the Kingdom of God; and as Paul with King Agrippa, who watched and took hold upon every word which he spake, to draw him to Christianity. Yea when none are offered by them of speaking any good, we must seek out occasions ourselves, making choice of such as we think will be most plausible, and likely to find entertainment, as some works, mercies, or Judgments of God, which are fresh in memory. And if the company be such, as that we cannot directly propound unto them such savory discourse, let us use our best art and policy to screw and wind it in by degrees and by little and little; endeavoring to drive in our wedges into these knotty pieces with many blows and diverse breathings and intermissions, when as we are not able to do it once. Or if we cannot prevail thus far, nor draw them to join with us in any Christian conference, yet at least let us join with them in their speeches and discourses, which are most civil and morally honest, that if we can do them no further good, yet at least we may hereby prevent rotten, filthy, and unsavory speech, and so preserve our own ears from being polluted, and our hearts from being grieved with such ribaldry and corrupt communication, as is often vented in such societies.

Sect. 3 - How we must deal with those who are openly profane.

But if our company into which we are come, either by accident or some urgent occasion, be notoriously profane and wicked, who would but make a scoff at any speech which savoreth of Religion; our Savior hath given us this rule for our direction, that we must not cast holy things before dogs, nor pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turning again, all to rent us. Unto which the Wise man hath adjoined another, that we must get ourselves out of such company as soon as we can: Go (saith he) from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. In the meantime, though we have some society with them, in respect of our persons, yet let us be careful that we have no fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness, by too much familiarity, applauding their speeches, and blanching over their vices and faults; but if we cannot without danger take liberty of reproofing them by direct words, yet let us do it by showing dislike, either by our silence or by our countenance. At least let us give them a real reproof by our contrary example, being (as the Apostle speaketh) blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and shining among them as lights in the world. But if they be so peaceable, that we may conceive any hope of their patience, and that they will hearken unto any good speech, loving admonition, or gentle reproof, we must not neglect it, handling these festered sores with a soft hand, that so they may more quietly endure to have afterwards salves applied which shall be fit for their curing. Neither will it stand with Christian charity to neglect any means, when there is the least hope of doing them good, nor with Christian wisdom to do it after a rough and boisterous manner, proudly and imperiously, with sharp rebukes and bitter reproofs, which like strong medicines in a weak stomach and clogged with corrupt humors, will not stay with them, but will presently be cast up again, before they have had any time to work, and so do them no good for their spiritual cure. But we must use first prepartives and

gentle purges, as they are able to bear: as loving insinuations, and mild admonitions, which must always savor more of the strength of argument and reason, then of choler or any other turbulent passion. And though when we have done all the good we can, we do not presently see any fruit of our labors, yet must we not be discouraged, but patiently leave the success unto God, and crave his blessing upon our endeavors, knowing that the best seed cometh not up as soon as it is sown; and the physic which cureth the disease, doth not as soon as it is taken, give any evidence of the patients recovery, yea oftentimes maketh him much more sick, whilst it is in working; both to the judgment of others, and in his own feeling and apprehension. Yea, though they cast up this spiritual Physic presently after it is taken, yet may it do them some good, seeing some hurtful humors may be raised with it, as some cold phlegm of sluggish sloth and careless security, and some hot choler, which so imbittered their stomachs, that they had no appetite to any wholesome nourishment; and something also may remain behind, which will work upon them when we least think of it.

Sect. 4 - Of the manifold and dangerous abuses of Conferences in these days; and the causes of them.

And these are the duties which are to be observed in our society and conversation one with another, in respect of our speeches and conferences. The which in these days, are all for the most part lamentably neglected, to the great dishonor of God, and our own exceeding hindrance in our Christian progress. And contrariwise, as we find by daily and woeful experience, all our time at our meetings, is wholly spent about earthly trifles, and things of no value. Of which neglect of the one, and too much use of the other, there are diverse causes. As first, the malice and subtlety of the devil, who knowing how much religious conferences do weaken his kingdom, and build us up in all spiritual graces, and how much they strengthen us unto all Christian duties, doth use all his Art and skill to hinder and

interrupt them, by putting into men's minds matters of no use and profit, earthly vanities, and things utterly impertinent to our persons, states, and callings. Or if we will needs talk of Religion, he is ready to propound unto us by some of his instruments, captious questions, or wrangling controversies about trifles of no value, which tend not to the use of edifying, but to cause heart-burning, and alienation of affections, strife, and contention, that so for the present he may keep out all profitable conferences, about sanctification and the main points of Christian Religion, and at length may break off all such meetings, when as men find by experience, that little or no good cometh of them. And with him joineth the world and worldly men to hinder these conferences, not only by offering earthly things unto us, for the subject of our speech, but also by interrupting us, when we have entered into any good conference, by speaking of worldly matters, that so they may divert our speech from going on in any Christian discourse. Unto both which our enemies, our corrupt flesh is ready to betray us, which is soon weary of spiritual and heavenly things, because it findeth no taste or savor in them, and is never satisfied in thinking and speaking of things worldly, carnal, and sensual, as best relishing to our corrupt and fleshly appetite. A second cause is, because we are not mortified in our love to the world, nor have our hearts and affections weaned from it. For if they, like good instruments, were well in tune, they would utter by our tongues heavenly harmony; but doting as they do upon worldly vanities, it is no marvel, if out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and if the chief fountain being defiled, there issue from it the polluted streams of unprofitable discourses. A third cause, is our too little love of spiritual and heavenly things; for if our hearts were set upon them, as our chief treasure, we would take delight to be still talking of them. If they were our chief comforts and cordials to cheer our hearts, so as they could with delight exercise themselves (with David) in meditating on them day and night; then would they also be sweeter to our mouths, then the honey or the honey-comb. Neither would our tongues be so unready and barren of words, when we come to speak of holy things, if our hearts and affections were set upon them; for as the Divine Philosopher among

the Heathens observed, Love maketh even those which are rude of speech eloquent, when they speak of the things beloved. Lastly, our great ignorance of holy and heavenly matters, joined with a pernicious fear and shame, lest by our speech we should discover it to our disgrace, is one special cause which hindereth these conferences. For such is the pride of men's hearts, and their small esteem of these spiritual treasures, that they had rather remain penurious, then discover their poverty; and empty of all grace, by neglecting the means whereby they might be replenished, then that men should take any notice of their emptiness; to hide their wounds, rather than to lay them open that they might be cured; and like foolish and beggarly Shop-keepers, they content themselves with a vain show, and with painted papers stuffed with straw or rags, rather then they will use any spiritual trading with others, or lose the name and opinion of wealthy men, by taking up such wares as they want.

Sect. 5 - That Christian and religious conferences are exceeding profitable.

But that we may break thorough all these difficulties, and removing these causes of hindrance, bring these neglected holy conferences into more use, let us consider that they are exceeding profitable, first, for the increasing of our knowledge in spiritual and heavenly things, when we bring all we know (as it were) to a common stock, out of which, everyone may take that which best fitteth him for his particular use, and supply his defects out of others abundance, they in the meantime having never the less. And as it is a singular benefit unto everyone of any Trade or Mystery, when they have their common Halls where they may meet together, and confer of the best courses for the managing of their affairs, seeing it doth not only much improve their skill, but also further them greatly in all good proceedings; so doth it exceedingly advantage us in our spiritual trading, both for the increasing of our knowledge, and furthering of our practice, when as we often meet together, and confer of those

things that belong to our Christian profession. For it doth not only improve and better our judgments, by communicating with others in all that they know, but also inflame our hearts and affections with the love of spiritual things, when as we stir up God's graces mutually in one another, and like coals which are heaped up together, not only preserve the heat of the love, and zeal which is kindled in us, and would cool and die if we were scattered from one another, but also inflame those which are next unto us with our heat, which being set on fire, will also kindle those who are near unto them. In which regard, that of the Wise man is truly verified; The lips of the righteous feed many; but fools (who refuse all communion and fellowship with them) die and perish for want of wisdom. And as it is a singular means to enlighten our minds with the knowledge of the truth, and to inflame our hearts with the love of it; so also to make use of all we know and affect by our holy practice, when as by our mutual exhortations, we encourage and stir up one another unto new obedience, and to perform all good duties of a Christian life, and help both ourselves and others, with such good counsels and directions, which being observed, will make the ways of holiness and righteousness easy, familiar, and pleasant unto us. Add hereunto the great necessity of these religious conferences, and of what great moment the use or neglect of them is for our salvation or damnation. Neither are we with the common sort to esteem words as wind, or if we do, such a wind as will bring great profit, or hurt; either much furthering us towards the Haven of happiness, or like a tempestuous storm, blowing us upon the rocks of perdition. For the Wise man saith, A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it, shall eat the fruit thereof. And as he expoundeth himself in another place; A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth, namely, if his tongue uttereth good things, but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. And our Savior hath taught us, that we shall be called to account for every idle word at the day of Judgment, and that by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. Finally, let us remember how faithful in this kind the wicked are in the devils service, being

never weary in uttering such speeches as are vain and unprofitable, or hurtful and pernicious; and let this make us ashamed of our negligence, if we seldom admit such holy conferences as tend to God's glory, whom we have found so gracious and bountiful a Master, or being entered into them, do wax weary, and soon give them over, upon every slight occasion, for want of love and zeal to his service. Yea, let us consider with what pleasure and delight ourselves have been taken up in the days of our ignorance, with idle and hurtful communication, and let this make us to redeem our lost time, by being diligent and frequent in good conferences; and seeing wicked men are, and we were, not ashamed to spend much time, in speaking to God's dishonor, and our own and our neighbors hurt; let it now be a shame unto us to be backward and bashful, slack and meal-mouthed, to speak freely unto his praise, or to omit any good occasion of discourse, which may further the salvation of ourselves or our brethren.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of those duties which concern our works and actions one with another, both out of contracts, and in our buying and selling.

Sect. 1 - That we must labor both to do and receive all the good we can, in our dealings with others.

And thus much concerning those duties which are to be performed in our society and conversation, respecting our speeches and conferences. Now we are to speak of those which concern our works and actions. And these either respect our simple and ordinary dealings out of contract, or those which are to be observed in contracts and bargains one with another. Concerning the former, I

shall not need to say much more then I have written before of those duties, which are generally to be performed in our whole conversation and society with our neighbors. Only let us observe this principal rule, that when we come in any company with our brethren, we endeavor by all good means, both to receive, and do all the good we can unto ourselves and them, improving our society for the best advantage to all parties. And first for ourselves, we must not idly and vainly spend our time, when we are in company, but labor as much as in us lieth, to reap what fruit and benefit we can by it, setting ourselves to listen unto, and lay up for our use the good speeches, instructions, counsels, exhortations, admonitions or reproofs, which we shall hear from any, and those especially which are superior unto us in God's gifts and graces; as also to take notice of those good examples of piety or Justice, faith, affiance in God, humility, meekness, patience, and such other virtues, that they may serve as patterns for our imitation; according to that of the Apostle; Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example; and elsewhere he exhorteth the Hebrews to follow the faith of those who were set over them, and had spoken unto them the Word of God. But because such rules through human frailty do sometime fail, we are not hand over head to conform ourselves to such ensamples, but in any doubtful case to bring them to the main Standard, the Word of God, and to consider, if they agree or swerve from it; and to our chief Pattern and Precedent Jesus Christ, to see how their example agrees with his; seeing the Apostle, though excellently graced, would not propound himself as an absolute pattern to be followed in all things; but only so far forth as he was a follower of Christ.

Sect. 2 - That we must take all occasions of gaining others to Christ.

And as we must labor when we are in company to receive, so also to do what good we can unto those who associate us. Especially, we must endeavor to take and seek all good occasions and opportunities,

of speaking or doing anything which may further their salvation, and to use all good means, both to gain them unto Christ, if we see no signs of their conversion; or to build them up in him, to enrich them with all spiritual graces, and to confirm and strengthen them unto all Christian duties, if being converted, they belong to the same household of faith. Of the former, we have the Apostle Paul a worthy example for our imitation, who though (as he professeth) he were free from all men, yet he made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more. To the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews (that is, as he expoundeth himself in the next words) to them that were under the Law, as under the Law, that he might gain them that were under the Law; to them which were without Law, as without Law (though he were not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that he might gain them that were without Law. To the weak he became as weak, that he might gain the weak; and in a word, made himself all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. And in the next Chapter he saith, that he endeavored to please all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved. In respect of our brethren, which are already converted, we must, when we keep them company, perform all Christian duties which may enrich, or confirm and strengthen in them all the gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit. To which end, we must observe and watch over one another, not as curious busy-bodies, to intermeddle with their affairs, which belong not unto us, or to spy out their infirmities, that we may blaze them abroad to others; but seeing their weaknesses, that we may help and support them and their wants, that we may use all good means to supply them, and in the meantime, to cover them under the veil of charity. And finally, that we may provoke and stir up one another, to the embracing of all holy virtues, and the practicing of all Christian duties, according to that of the Apostle, Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.

Sect. 3 - That in all our dealings and bargaining's we must carry ourselves uprightly and honestly.

In our contracts and bargains, whereby we alienate or exchange the things which of right appertain unto us upon some equal and honest conditions, diverse duties are to be observed of all Christians, who have trading and dealings one with another, some whereof are general to all contracts, and some more specially respect selling and buying. In all our contracts and dealings, there is generally required, that we carry and behave ourselves simply and uprightly, honestly, and with a good conscience, as in the sight and presence of God, who seeth not only our outward actions and dealings, but also the inward thoughts of our hearts, and our most secret and hidden intentions, according to that of the Apostle, We trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly. And contrariwise in all our contracts, we must carefully shun and avoid all guile and deceit, all hollow and double dealing, tending to the undermining and circumventing of our neighbors. So the Apostle exhorteth, that no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such; for as the Psalmist saith, he abhorreth the deceitful and blood thirsty man. More especially we must in all our dealings observe truth in all our words, and not only speak it from our lips, but also from our hearts, hating and avoiding all subtle equivocations, and mental reservations, as tending to circumvent and deceive those with whom we deal. Secondly, fidelity in all our promises, performing them, although it be to our own hindrance, unless he to whom they are made doth release us of them. Thirdly, justice in all our actions, giving every man his due, and dealing with others, as we would have them to deal with us. Fourthly, charity and compassion in remitting our right in whole or in part, when as the bargain proveth hard, and to the great loss and hindrance of our poor neighbors, who are not able to bear it. And lastly, patience and contentedness, when we sustain any damage and detriment, or be otherwise crossed or over-reached in any of our contracts, either purposely by those with whom we deal, or by some casualty or accident which could not be foreseen. Contrariwise in all our

contracts we must avoid lying, and that which is equal unto it, equivocation; For the getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. And again, Wealth gotten by vanity, shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor, shall increase; yea though a man could by lying, get the whole world, what would this profit him, seeing thereby he shall lose his own soul? For liars shall not only be excluded out of the Kingdom of heaven, but also have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. With like care we must avoid in our dealings all perfidiousness and breach of promise, although it tend to our great advantage, seeing God will not bless goods gotten by breach of covenants, and though we should thrive by such courses, our worldly gain will in no sort recompense our spiritual loss. We must shun also all kind of injustice in our contracts, seeing though it bring in present gain, yet no profit in the end; For the treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death. Likewise we must avoid all uncharitableness, raising our gain out of our neighbors loss, but as fellow-members of the same body, we must advance, as much as in us lieth, our mutual profit, and in some equality thrive together. Finally, we must not, through impatency, murmur and repine, fret and fume, when we meet with any crosses or losses in our contracts, but be content sometime to lose as well as gain; and to this end we must not have our eyes too much fastened upon secondary causes and inferior means, which perhaps are exceeding cross and faulty, but lift them above the earth, and fix them upon the most wise providence of our good and gracious God, who governeth all things which seem most contingent and casual, and so disposeth of them, as is most for his own glory, and the spiritual good and everlasting salvation of all those that love and depend upon him.

Sect. 4 - That we must sell only things saleable.

More especially, there are diverse duties required of us in our buying and selling. As first, that the seller be the true and lawful owner of that he selleth, or his deputy appointed by him; and that the buyer do not for private gain buy anything from any man, whom he thinketh not to have any right to sell it. In which respect, they grievously offend, who buy or sell stolen goods if they know of it, and they who sacrilegiously sell and buy the livings of the Church, and such things as are freely consecrated to the service of God. Secondly, the seller ought to sell, and the buyer to buy such things only as are vendible, and may justly be bought and sold. In which regard, they offend, who sell or buy the gifts of the Spirit, as Simon Magus, or holy things which belong to God; and those who sell and buy Justice or injustice by bribery given or taken, either to fill their own purses, or to pervert right. They also who sell and buy truth and lies, as false witnesses, and they that hire them to give false testimony. But they most of all, who for corruptible things sell their souls unto sin, as Ahab did, which Christ redeemed with his most precious blood. Thirdly, we ought to sell only such things as are fit for sale, or knowing them to be otherwise, to acquaint the buyer with it, and so to pitch a lower price, according to their lesser value. Otherwise we are not to sell things falsified in respect of their substance, and such as are mixed and corrupt, for such as are pure and good, which is a common fault among Merchants and Tradesmen in these days, who for their greater gain adulterate their wares, and jumble and intermingle things of a different degree in goodness, selling them all at the best rates. Fourthly, we are bound to sell those things only which are some way profitable for the Church and Commonwealth, either for necessary use, or for ornament and delight. Neither ought we to benefit ourselves by such things as are unprofitable unto others, and much less by such as are in their own nature hurtful and pernicious, uncharitably raising our own gain out of our neighbors loss. As those that sell popish pardons, and books, to ignorant people, who are likely to be seduced by them, such also as further them in their superstition and idolatry, obscene pictures and books full of ribaldry and all profaneness, fit for nothing but to poison and corrupt such as see and read them.

Sect. 5 - That we must set and sell our wares at an equal price.

Fifthly, we ought in selling and buying, to set our wares at an equal price; the best rule whereof for the most part is the ordinary price of the market, which valueth things not simply in their own worth, but with consideration of all circumstances, as scarcity, plenty, time and place; and not according to the price we gave less or more, nor only respecting whether we gain much or little, whether we get nothing or lose thereby. For as of necessity, through the change of prices, we must sometimes lose, so it is alike necessary, that we should gain at another time, to repair these losses, and maintain our state. And as we must not, when we have an ill bargain, exceed the market, and so transfer our loss from ourselves upon our neighbor, but patiently bear our own cross as imposed of God, till he afford us lawful means to free us of it; so when we have made a good bargain in respect of the difference of places or times, we may not, unless we would be uncharitable unto ourselves, put off our gain to others, but receive it thankfully as the blessing of God upon our labors. But here we must take heed, first, that we be not over strict in this kind, seeking only our own gain and advantage, without respect to the Common wealth, nor uncharitable towards the poor, in joining with others to keep up things in times of scarcity at the highest prices. But when we can afford it, we ought to abate something, and by our example to bring down others to reasonable rates, all circumstances being considered, that neither the Common wealth generally, nor the poor in particular receive by our being just over-much, any hurt or damage. Secondly, we must take heed that we use no unjust or uncharitable courses to raise the markets, and the prices of commodities above their value; as to forestall the market, and to buy up the things which are brought, at low rates, with a purpose to set them up, and sell them dearer soon after in the same place. Or to engross commodities which are offered to common sale, that having them all in our hands, we may sell them at our own rates. In which respect they chiefly offend, who, upon no lawful and necessary cause, do abuse authority

to countenance their Monopolies (I need not to expound it, seeing custom hath made this Greek word familiar English) and get the sale of several commodities appropriated unto themselves, so as none may sell them but by benefit of their privilege, that so they may value them above their worth, and enrich themselves with the loss and damage of the Common wealth. Neither must we (as it is the usual fault of Companies and Corporations) combine ourselves together to sell our wares at a certain rate; nor keep in our commodities in time of plenty, to this end that we may cause a dearth; seeing by defrauding the people of God's blessings, we shall be exposed to their curse, as the Wise man teacheth us. And as the seller ought not to vent his wares above their worth; so neither should the buyer desire to have them under, if at least he know that the seller cannot so afford them; especially when he hath to deal with the poor, whose necessities oftentimes constrain them to take, not what their wares are worth, but what they can get for them. In which respect, many shopkeepers in Cities and towns grievously offend, which take advantage of their poverty who work for them, shamefully to oppress them, forcing them to sell their tears, sighs and groans with their wares, because wanting bread to put into their own and their children's mouths, they will not buy them off their hands, not because they are unwilling to have them, but because by these refusals they would beat them down to vile prices, and such rates, that their curious skill and painful labor in their art and trade, will scarce yield them so much as will, after the homeliest manner, feed and clothe them: whilst the other, who come further behind them in art, skill and profitableness to the Common wealth than they, go before them in stock and riches, selling with their wares their wind and words, and doubling their price with their lies and oaths, abound in all superfluous excess, and yet exceedingly grow in wealth.

Sect. 6 - That in buying and selling all fraud and deceit must be avoided.

Lastly, in respect of the manner of selling and buying, we ought to use honest simplicity, and carefully to avoid all fraud and deceit. In which respect, men grievously offend in these days, who have and use a thousand devices to circumvent and defraud their neighbors. As first, by blinding their minds with their partial and false praises of their wares, and their eyes with false and deceitful lights. By concealing the known faults of their wares, and yet coveting to get the highest prices, as if they were faultless. By asking for them a double price to their value, and taking it also, if the party be so simple to give it. By abusing their acquaintance and customers under color of love and friendship, and selling their wares dearer unto them, then a mere stranger could buy them. By telling untruths, either about the worth of their commodities, or the price which they cost them, or the money that they have been offered, or that which they will take, and not under, and (that which is worse, though this be too bad among Christians) by countenancing and confirming their lies with intermingled oaths. Unto these, innumerable other faults might be added, common in these days amongst Tradesmen, which I will only name, because it is not my purpose to rake up these filthy puddles to the bottom, but only to point at the grossest of them with my finger as I passed by, that the conscionable Christian, who desireth to please God in all his courses, may shun and avoid them. As first, they offend in their manner of selling, who sell one thing for another, and when they meet with those, who being simple and ignorant, are apt to be abused, do thus deceive them both in the colors and stuffs. So they also, who sell that which is mixed, for that which is pure; that which is sophisticate and naught, for that which is perfect and good; that which is bad, for the middle sort; and that which is mean and indifferent, for the best. They in like manner who set false glosses on their wares, by gumming, starching, pressing, and burning, and so to cause them to seem much better than they are, make them much worse for use. Finally, they who use false weights and measures, buying by a greater, and selling by a lesser; and such also as by their Art and skill increase the weight and measure of their wares in show, above that which they are in truth; as by false fingering, stretching, over-measuring, deceitful balancing; making by

their nimble tricks, the equal Scales to forget and lose their indifferency, and inclining on their side, to become accessory to their fraud. The buyer also ought no less carefully and conscionably to observe truth and justice in cheapening and buying his commodities than the seller, both offering an equal price to the worth of the wares according to his judgment, and truly paying it when they are agreed. In which respect they offend, who, to bring down the price under the true value, dispraise and disgrace the wares, before they have bought them, which after they are gone, they are ready to commend as a good penny-worth; The which Solomon observed as a fault in his times: It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, and when he is gone away, then he boasteth of his bargain. So those who offer much under that just value of the wares, which their own judgment doth set upon them, whereby the seller is driven to ask much above, that so he falling as the other riseth, (like the Scales, which interchangeably tossing up and down, stand at last in their due equipoise) he may bring the price to some indifferency; all which vain-spent time and labor might well have been saved, many idle words spared, and diverse abuses shunned and avoided, if on both sides they had used Christian simplicity. Finally, the buyer much offendeth, when having agreed upon the price, and coming to pay it, he giveth not unto the seller his full due, but either wittingly misreckoneth him in the sum, or tendereth unto him, instead of currant and lawful money, slips, and base coin, washed, clipped, and light gold, or pieces of less value, oftentimes for those of greater, which through over-sight, by reason of their likeness, may very easily be mistaken the one for the other.

Sect. 7 - How to avoid the faults commonly committed between buyers and sellers.

All which faults among buyers and sellers, which so intolerably reign in these times, would easily be avoided; if, as we profess, we would prefer Justice and charity before deceit and self-love, and

accordingly would labor to mortify the one as hurtful and pernicious, and magnify the other as most excellent and profitable, both for the setting forth of God's glory, and the furthering and assuring of our own salvation. If we would but consider that God is present, and beholdeth all our dealings, and will one day, as a righteous Judge, call them to account, to reward them if they be upright and just, or to punish them, if they be wicked and deceitful. If finally, when we come to sum up our gettings in our Trades at the years end, we would put all our gains in the one Scale, and our souls which we have hazarded to everlasting loss, by our unjust, untrue, and deceitful dealing, into the other, and consider how light they be in comparison of it, which, as our Savior hath taught us, cannot be counterpoised by the weight and worth of the whole world. And so much concerning our dealings with one another in contracts and bargains; the which I thought necessary to be in some brief manner handled in this Treatise, because all Christians almost are often employed in them, and many, whose callings consist in trading, do spend the most part of their lives in it: As also, because the corruptions of the times are so many and grievous, so backed with the multitude, and countenanced with custom, that they are scarce thought to be any sins, insomuch as many, which otherwise fear God, are often overtaken with them, either through ignorance, walking according to the common course, for want of better direction; or being compelled (as they suppose) with urgent necessity to do as others do; because there being so few which do as they should, and such multitudes which use fraud and deceit; if they should in their trading and dealings use truth and justice, simplicity and honest plainness, they should (as the Prophet complaineth of his times) become a prey unto others, and be exposed to the common spoil. The which danger would in great part be avoided, if men could live by faith, and cast themselves upon God's providence in the use of lawful means, seeing he never faileth them that trust in him. And also, if there were a general reformation of these abuses and corruptions, among them that sincerely profess Religion, and truly fear God, which might easily be done without any danger to their estates; seeing what is wanting in ill-gotten gains, would be abundantly supplied by the greatness of their custom; for

who that is wise, would go ordinarily to others, where he is likely to be deceived, when as he may trade with them from whom he may assuredly expect honest and plain dealing? And so much concerning those duties of Christian conversation, which are to be observed in all companies and societies.

CHAPTER XXX.

That Governors of families ought to train up those which are under their charge in the duties of godliness.

Sect. 1 - That it is not enough for governors to be themselves religious, but they must also train up those which are under their government, in the knowledge and practice of Religion.

The next duties belonging unto a godly life, are such as a Christian ought to perform in his family, all which may generally be referred to this main duty, that he not only duly and diligently serve God himself, but also teach those who are under his charge to join with him, and not only by instruction show them the right way, but also by wise and religious government, guiding and training them up in the fear of the Lord, he must cause them to accompany him, and to put in practice the holy duties of God's service, in which he hath informed them. Neither is it sufficient that governors of families be good Christians in their own particular and personal carriage, but according to that place wherein God hath set them, and that vocation whereunto they are called, they ought to be Christian governors, and not only fight the Lord's battles as common Soldiers, but as wise and valiant Captains, they must lead on those which are under their charge, and see that they in their places perform good service to our grand Emperor and chief Commander the Lord of Hosts, as well as they. And as Stewards and Bailiffs under our great Lord and Master, they must appoint their children and servants unto their task, and

see also that they perform it. And thus Joshua, as a governor of the Common-wealth, instructed the whole congregation in the Law of God, with the women, little ones, and the strangers that were conversant amongst them: And as a master of a family, undertaketh not only for himself, but also for his whole household, that he with them would serve the Lord. And as David's care extended to the wise and religious government of the whole Common-wealth, as their King and Sovereign, so he thought these high and weighty employments no privilege to exempt him, from performing his special duty, as a Master in the well ordering of his family. And therefore he professeth that he would walk within his house with a perfect heart; neither nourishing wickedness in himself; nor enduring it in any of his servants. And that he would drive out and expulse ungodly men out of his family, and setting his eyes upon the faithful of the land, and such as walked in a perfect way, as his special favorites, he would make choice of them for his household servants. Yea virtuous Hester, though a Queen, matched with an idolatrous King, and under a heathenish government, not only herself diligently served God by fasting and prayer, but also had so trained up her maids in the true fear of God, that they were fit to bear her company. By which examples we learn, that there are no distractions so great, no employments so weighty, which should hinder any governors of families from performance of the like duties.

Sect. 2 - Divers reasons which may move governors to the performance of this duty.

To which end let us consider, first, that every family is a member and part of the whole body, which ought to resemble it in nature and government, and as it were a particular Church, in which, the public duties are privately to be performed, as the Apostle teacheth us, whereas he saluteth Nymphas and the Church which was in his house; and the Master of the family representeth the Minister, and the rest of the house the people in the Congregation, who are to be

governed and instructed by him; whereof it is that the Apostle would not have wives and women to speak in the Church, and publicly to propound their doubts in the assembly, but to crave resolution of their husbands at home. Secondly, let us consider, that inferiors are set under our government, not as brute creatures, but as reasonable men, and therefore, that not their bodies and bodily employments alone are committed unto our charge for government and direction, but their souls likewise, that they may be trained up by us in all religious duties, and spiritual exercises, for which we shall give an account unto God, how we have endeavored to make them to thrive under us in the growth of Christianity, and fitted them for the service of God, as well as how we have taught them their Trades, and in what sort they should demean themselves towards us in our service. So that if we take no further care of them then we do of our beasts, that is, only so to govern, feed, and order them, as that they may be fitted for earthly employments, and for the advancing of our worldly profit; when that their souls perish through our negligence, their blood will be upon our heads, and we shall have a fearful account to make at the day of Judgment. Thirdly, let us consider that the family is the Seminary of the Church and Common-wealth; and as a private school, wherein children and servants are fitted for the public assemblies, as it were the Universities, to perform, when they meet together, all religious duties of God's worship and service. And as it is a notable means to make Universities to flourish, and the Students in them to succeed and prosper in their studies, when as the Masters of private schools do well fit and prepare them, teach and nurture them in learning and manners, before they send them thither: So if Masters of private families would carefully train up all their household in the fear of God, and in the exercises of Christian Religion all the week, they would with more cheerfulness on God's Sabbaths come unto the public assemblies, and with much more reverence and attention, care and conscience set themselves as in God's presence to hear his Word, and call upon his holy Name, much better understand what they hear, and lay it up in memory, profit far more by the use of God's holy Ordinances, for the conscionable practice of what they know, and thrive more in their spiritual growth

in one Sabbath, then others can do in many, who, for want of instruction in the main principles and acquaintance with the Scriptures by private reading, understand not what they hear in the public Ministry; and not being seasoned all the week in any religious duties, can find no taste or relish in them, when on the Sabbath they come to perform them with the rest of the congregation. Fourthly, let us know that by this exercise, we shall not only do much good unto those whom we instruct, but also unto ourselves, seeing thereby we do stir up and increase God's graces in our own hearts as well as in theirs. For hereby we shall move the Lord to impart unto us a larger measure of his gifts, when as we do so freely communicate them to the use of our brethren; and to impart his will and counsels unto us, when as with Abraham we will teach them unto our children and household; we shall learn much in teaching others, because it will give us occasion to set our wits more seriously for the finding out of the truth, then in our private studies and Meditations, and much clear our judgments, when we labor to deliver the things that we teach plainly and distinctly, which were before confusedly heaped up together in our understandings, as it were, in the whole lump. We shall thereby much strengthen our memories, whilst by teaching others the things we know, we shall work them into them, and cause them to make a deeper impression. Finally, we shall inflame our hearts with the love of good things, by those means which we use to work the like affection in the hearts of others; and provoke ourselves unto a conscionable practice of what we know, by the same arguments and reasons which we use to persuade them unto it. And consequently, in seeking to save them, we shall also thereby much further our own salvation; according to that of the Apostle to Timothy, Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue therein; for in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Which privileges, howsoever they belong more principally to the public Ministry, yet do they in some good proportion appertain also to those, who exercise themselves in this private duty of teaching their family. Fifthly, let us consider that it is the best means to make our children and servants faithful and

conscionable in performing their duties unto us, when they are first made careful and conscionable in God's service. For when their hearts are seasoned with the true fear of God, then do they perform their duty as unto God in us; not out of servile fear, but for conscience sake; not for temporal rewards, but in hope and assurance of those that are heavenly and eternal; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart, as in the sight and presence of God, whom they labor to please in all things; seeing from him they expect the chiefest and best part of their wages and reward. Which means if masters and parents neglect, let them never complain of bad servants and untoward children: for it is just with God, that these should neglect their duties toward them, when as they, by neglecting their duties in training them up in his fear, do cause them to neglect their duties towards him. Sixthly, let us remember, that if we will thus set up God's Kingdom in our families, he will govern together with us, and so by his wise and powerful providence guide and prosper all our endeavors, as that they shall wholly tend to his glory and our good. For thus performing our duty, he will double and redouble his favors upon us, blessing our servants and children for our sakes, and us for their sakes, by causing all their labors to prosper in their hands, as we see in the example of Abraham's servant, Jacob, Joseph, and the Soldiers and servants of Cornelius, who being trained up in the fear of God, either by their masters or their own parents, prospered in their proceedings, and so brought a blessing upon them and the whole families. Whereas contrariwise, the neglect of these religious duties bringeth God's wrath upon the governors, and those likewise that belong unto him; according to that of the Prophet; Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy Name. Lastly, it would be a notable encouragement to make us diligent in performing these religious duties in our families, if we would but consider that we should hereby be special means of gaining many unto Christ, which shall hereafter be the Crown of our rejoicing; that we shall much more comfortably travel in the way of holiness and righteousness, and in our tedious pilgrimage towards our heavenly home, when we go not above, but have those that belong unto us to

bear us company, who will be ready at hand to assist us in our journey, to admonish us when we are going out of the way, to keep us from falling, and when we are fallen, to put to their helping hand for the raising of us up again, and to fight on our side against those spiritual thieves, that come to rob us of the rich treasures of God's graces, and the malicious enemies of our salvation, when they encounter us in the way, that they may foil us in the fight, or force us with their fury to desist from our course, and to return back again into the ways of sin and death. Finally, that we shall, with unspeakable joy and ravishing comfort, appear before the Lord at the latter day, when being accompanied with those (who having been by God committed unto our charge, we have carefully governed and guided in the ways of salvation) we shall resign and re-deliver them unto God, to be crowned with the same happiness which ourselves shall enjoy; saying with our Savior, of our families, as he of his Church; Behold me and the children which thou hast given me: which will infinitely more rejoice our hearts at that day, then if having been Monarchs of the whole world, we should have left it to our posterity, as an inheritance after us.

Sect. 3 - That it is the duty of householders to catechize their family; and of the causes why it is neglected.

Now that we may thus nurture our family in God's fear, and train them up to the performance of all religious and Christian duties, as prayer, singing of Psalms, reading the Scriptures, holy conferences, and such like, of which we have already spoken, there is required first, that we instruct them in the knowledge of God and his will; and secondly, wise government, whereby they may be moved and drawn to put in practice, and make an holy use of all that is taught and learned for the right informing of their lives. Concerning the former, it is the duty of parents and governors of families, that they instruct and catechize their children and servants in the true knowledge of God, and in the main principles of Christian Religion; which though

it be a most necessary and profitable duty to be performed of all, yet is it in these days exceedingly neglected of the most, as a thing needless and not belonging unto them. Of which neglect, these seem to be the chief causes; first, the profaneness of men's minds, and contempt of religion, which maketh them think this one thing so necessary in Christ's judgment, to be in theirs of all things most unnecessary: and that whereas knowledge in all other professions is required in some perfection, some little smattering or a bare show, is sufficient in the profession of Christianity; which notwithstanding as far excelleth them, as the soul the body, or heaven earth. Secondly, An erroneous judgment, whereby they persuade themselves, that though this knowledge be necessary for all, yet that the duty of instructing their family in it, belongeth not at all unto them, but unto the Ministers only. Thirdly, their ignorance which disableth them unto it, being such as the Apostle complaineth of, who when for the time they ought to be teachers, yet had need to be catechized themselves in the first principles of Religion, and to be fed with milk rather than strong meat. Which is accompanied with a carnal shame of bewraying it to their inferiors. Fourthly, A much more impious shame to be noted of those, who are as bad or worse than themselves, for men too precise and forward in things not pertaining unto them. The last and chiefest cause is worldly-mindedness, whereby men are wholly taken up with earthly affairs, so as they have neither leisure nor pleasure to follow spiritual exercises, which so far prevaieth with many, that they not only neglect this duty themselves, but also will not suffer those, who are under their charge, to be taught by others. First, because they would not have them more wise or religious then themselves. Secondly, because they imagine, that they would be less pliable to unjust courses, for the getting of unlawful gain; and that being more intent to God's service, they would become less diligent in the service of the earthly Mammon. Lastly, because they cannot endure, that any time should be spent in religious duties, as thinking all lost, which is not spent in worldly employments, and consecrated to their earthly Idol of gain and profit. Yea this duty of catechizing is not only neglected of household governors, but also of Ministers, not only such as are

either idle or insufficient to teach the people, but likewise of many who are otherwise able and diligent. And that first, because they consider not the profit and necessity of this excellent exercise. Secondly, because they suppose that it is not pleasing and plausible to the people. And lastly, because they think it too mean a subject for their great learning and eminent gifts. But let such in the fear of God consider, not what they are able to teach, but what the poor people, committed to their charge, are able to learn, and that they must like nurses, give unto their children, not the best and strongest meat, but that which they find by experience the fittest to nourish them. Let them remember Christ's charge to feed the tender Lambes, as well as the stronger sheep; and the Apostle Paul's practice and example, who chose rather to speak five words with understanding, that he might teach others, then ten thousand words in an unknown tongue; and fitted his speech unto those which were babes in Christ, and fed them with milk, and not with stronger meat, because they were not able to bear it; becoming unto the weak as weak, that he might gain the weak, and all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. Finally, that Solomon himself, who excelled in all learning and wisdom, stooped to the capacity of the meanest, and fitted his speech, that not only the wise in heart might increase in learning, but also that the simple might attain unto wisdom.

Sect. 4 - Reasons which may move all Governors to this duty of catechizing. First, because it is God's Commandment.

And thus have we showed the causes of the great neglect of this holy exercise. Let us in the next place consider of some reasons which may reform it, and persuade all sorts of men to put it in practice with more diligence. The which may be reduced unto two heads, as respecting either governors of families, and Ministers who are to give instruction, or inferiors in the family, as children and servants, and people in the congregation, that they may give themselves over to be instructed by them. The former sort may be persuaded by these

reasons. First, because it is God's Commandment, that parents and governors of families should teach and catechize their children and servants, not only instructing them in the knowledge of Christian Religion, but also requiring an account of them by way of questions and answers, how they have profited by their teaching, for the increasing of their knowledge. Thus the Lord requireth of the people of Israel, that they should not only themselves remember and lay up in their hearts his words and works which they had heard and seen, but also that they should teach them their sons, and their sons sons. And in another place: These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. So the Psalmist saith, that God established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded their fathers, that they should make them known unto their children, &c. But if parents neglect this duty, Ministers are tied to perform it, both by Christ's precept, who enjoined them to feed his Lambes as well as his Sheep, and also by his example, seeing his care extended to little children, whom he would have to come unto him; and also in his childhood submitted himself to this ordinance of God, though he were replenished with all divine wisdom, and more fit to teach, then to be taught of others, and sitting, as it is probable, among the cathecumanoi, which came to be catechized, heard the Doctors, and asked them questions. Now Christ's examples in holy duties are our instructions; according to that, I have given you an ensample, that you should do as I have done to you. The second reason is drawn from the love of parents towards their children, and of pastors towards their flock, which ought to extend unto the soul more then to the body, as being much the more excellent part. And therefore if they provide for their bodies all things necessary, as food, clothing, houses, lands; how much more should they be careful for the nourishment of their souls? Which if they neglect, they show plainly that their love is carnal, and but to the halves, loving only the worse part, or rather none at all: For, Godliness is the chiefest gain,

and is profitable both unto body and soul, for all things, having the promises of this life, and of that which is to come.

Sect. 5 - Other reasons enforcing the former duty.

The third reason is taken from the consideration of their natural proneness unto evil, even from the breast, as experience teacheth, which by wholesome and timely instruction is to be prevented; that being first seasoned with this precious liquor of true Religion, and saving knowledge, they may retain the taste and savor of it to the end of their days. According to Solomon's counsel; Train up (or as the word signifieth) Catechize a child in the way that he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it. Unto which, if we add their readiness to relapse into their natural corruptions; if by wholesome instructions they be not daily confirmed and strengthened in good courses; and how soon sin will grow to a custom, and bring them to a habit of wickedness, from which they can hardly afterwards be reclaimed; we shall easily understand the profit and necessity of this exercise. Fourthly, the desire that children and servants should perform their duties to their parents and governors, should make them careful in the first place to teach them Religion and the true fear of God. For if this be not the foundation, all other obedience is false and counterfeit, seeing they who yield it, are only tied unto it in the carnal bonds of fear and rewards, and therefore it quite ceaseth when they cease. Neither will any with an honest heart and good conscience perform it, if it rise not out of love and obedience towards God, but with respect of persons, self-love, and such other sinister and by-respects. Fifthly, the care which every Christian should have to propagate the Church of God, should move them to this duty, seeing God is thereby glorified, when as his Kingdom is enlarged and advanced: for as the Wise man saith, In the multitude of a people is the honor of a King. Now this is most reasonable, that God, who created our children, should be honored by our consecrating of them unto his service, and that we should re-deliver them unto him, who

first gave them unto us, seeing they are his by a double right, both of creation and redemption, and also challenged by him as his own right and heritage. Sixthly, this may move us unto this duty, if we consider that the time of youth is most seasonable for instruction; seeing then, like wax, they are most apt to receive all impressions of good or evil, and also to retain them when they are received. And therefore let it be the care of all governors, to stamp first God's seal upon their children, that thereby also they may be marked for the children of God, before Satan hath prevented them, by sealing them for his slaves, and stamping upon them the marks of perdition. Let them instruct them in the principles of true Religion, when as by their docible age they are most fit to learn, and most strong and able to retain what they have learned, in faithful memories; lest neglecting this duty, Satan and the world teach them in their school of impiety, all profaneness and wickedness; or if they incline at all to some Religion, do by their instruments seduce them from the truth, sow in their minds the seeds of errors, schism and heresies, and draw them away from God, by teaching them to offer unto him for his pure service, their own, or other men's inventions and traditions, will-worship, superstition and idolatry.

Sect. 6 - Examples of the faithful who have catechized their family.

Lastly, the examples of the faithful in all ages, who have been diligent in the performing of this duty, may persuade us unto it. Thus we read that Cain and Abel served God by sacrifices, which they could not have done, there being then no written Word for their direction, unless they had been instructed in God's true Religion by their parents. So Abraham is commended for this duty, from whom God would not hide his secret counsels, because he knew that he would command his children and his household after him, that they might keep the way of the Lord. Thus Solomon was instructed by David his father, and by Bathsheba his mother, from his tender youth, to his riper age, as himself professeth; I was my fathers son, tender and

only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live, &c. And we read that Jehoash the King was instructed from his tender youth in the knowledge of God, by his good uncle Jehoiada the Priest. So also in the New Testament, this duty was practiced; for there were two sorts of Catechumenoi, or such as were catechized; first, such as were adulti, and of ripe age, who were catechized in the principles of Christian Religion before they were baptized; as Theophilus, the Eunuch, Cornelius, and his household, Apollos, and many others, whereof these principles were called the doctrine of Baptisms. And the second sort born in the Church, who being in the Covenant, were baptized in their infancy, and after that catechized, and then confirmed by the imposition of hands, whereof the principles were called the doctrine of the imposition of hands, in the same place; because at their confirmation they first rendered an account of their faith. And thus Paul remembering Timothies unfeigned faith, saith, that it dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, of whom he maketh honorable mention, because they had instructed him from his youth in the doctrine of it. And therefore, if we would be numbered in the Calendar of the faithful, or be made happy in their rewards; let us follow their example, and as we have opportunity and convenient time, let us catechize and instruct in the principles of Christian Religion, all those that being capable of knowledge, are committed to our charge.

Sect. 7 - Reasons moving children to submit themselves to be catechized.

And these are the reasons which may persuade governors to perform this duty of Catechizing; unto which, we will add some others, which may move those who are under their government, to submit themselves willingly unto this Ordinance of God, to receive instruction from them, and attentively to hear them, carefully to treasure up in their hearts and memories what they have learned,

and cheerfully to render an account of it, when they are called thereunto. The which I thought necessary, in respect of the backwardness which is to be observed in most families and congregations amongst all sorts, not only nor chiefly among children in years, but especially such as being riper in age, are notwithstanding children in knowledge. The which is caused by their natural averseness to these religious duties, by the corruption of their judgments, persuading them that they are unnecessary, by the worldliness and profaneness of their hearts, which hindereth them from attending unto instruction, and consequently maketh them unwilling to be called to account, because they find themselves unable to answer and give any satisfaction to their teachers; by carnal pride, and proud bashfulness, which causeth them scornfully to cast off Christ's yoke, and contemptuously to refuse subjection unto his Ordinance, because they fear to be disgraced before others, for their ignorance and small profiting in the knowledge of Christian Religion; and finally, by the subtle malice of the devil, which casteth before them all discouragements which he can devise or raise against this profitable exercise, because he well knoweth, that it is a most powerful means to dispel the mists of ignorance, through which he misleadeth men to profaneness, heresy, hell, and destruction, and to enlighten men's minds with saving knowledge, to beat him from his throne, and to cast down the strong holds of sin, and to set up and establish in their hearts the gracious Kingdom of Jesus Christ, by which they shall be brought to all glory and heavenly happiness.

Sect. 8 - Reasons moving those which are of years to submit themselves to be catechized, if they be ignorant.

Now these reasons concern not only children in years, but also children in knowledge, though they be ancient in respect of age. The first whereof may be taken from the end of their creation and redemption, for they are created unto good works, which God hath ordained that they should walk in them; they are redeemed out of the

hands of their spiritual enemies, that they should serve God in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their lives; they are not their own, but bought with a price, that they might glorify their Redeemer in their souls and bodies. But none can truly serve the Lord, unless they know him, his will, and Word, from which they must not decline to the right hand nor to the left, and neither add anything to it, nor detract ought from it; for else through natural ignorance, they will (as our Savior chargeth the Samaritans) worship they know not what, and instead of his true service, offer unto him their own will-worship and inventions. Neither can we come to this knowledge, but by the means which God hath ordained, one of the chief whereof is this religious exercise. Secondly, we have vowed in our baptism, that we will fight under Christ's Banner against our spiritual enemies, which we cannot do without receiving a shameful overthrow, unless our Christian Armor be put on and fastened unto us with the girdle of verity, and unless we be trained up in this Christian warfare, and taught rightly to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Now if vows must be paid without delay, then how much more this which importeth us as much as our salvation? A third reason may be taken from God's love and fatherly care and providence watching over us, and preserving us from all perils and dangers in the time of our infancy and childhood, unto which as we were naturally most prone, so were we utterly unable to avoid them by our own providence, or to use any means to help ourselves. Which consideration should move us, as soon as we are come to knowledge and discretion, to testify our thankfulness by learning his ways, that we may walk in them, and thereby glorify him who hath so graciously preserved us. Fourthly, let us consider, that the Law was given, not only to the ancient and them of ripe age, but also to children and young men, that they might cleanse their ways by taking heed thereunto according to God's Word; which made Joshua to read it unto them all alike. And both old and young shall be called to give an account of their works and ways at the last day, according to that in the Revelation, I saw the dead, great and small, stand before God, and the books were opened, &c. and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in those books, according to their

works. And therefore the young as well as the old, must prepare themselves for their reckoning, and learn both what strength the Book of the Law hath to indite and condemn him, and how by the Gospel they may traverse this inditement, and be acquitted from that dreadful sentence of condemnation, by pleading full satisfaction by Jesus Christ. And therefore when his soul wallowing itself in carnal delights, saith unto him; Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; then let him remember, that for all these things God will bring him to judgment. Fifthly, consider that this age above all others, is most fit to receive and retain instruction and information in the ways of the Lord, as also reformation and amendment of our sinful courses. Which if it be deferred to riper age, they will be less able to learn the will and ways of God, to hold them in memory, or to obey and walk in them. For the faculties of the soul will be more enfeebled, and they distracted with earthly cares, and love of the world, ambition, covetousness, voluptuousness; they will then be more apt to content themselves with their ignorance, wherein they have been so long nuzzled; their passions will grow strong and violent, and custom of sinning laying fast hold on them, will pull them back from the school of piety, yea will make them openly to profess, that they are now too old to learn; by all which, who seeth not how desperately they hazard their salvation, who put off instruction, and neglect the means of it, in the time of their youth? And therefore let us hearken to the Wise man's counsel; and remember now our Creator in the days of our youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Sixthly, let us remember, that God would have first fruits offered unto him, as a type to teach us, that the prime of our age is an oblation wherein he chiefly delighteth; that our Savior was much pleased, when little children entertained him with their applause, Crying Hosanna to the Son of David; that God out of the mouth of babes and suckling's hath ordained strength, because of his enemies, that he might still the enemy and the avenger. Finally, that in the time of the law, they were enjoined to offer unto God the young and lusty, and not the old and lame, to

show that the Lord would have the prime of our age and strength consecrated to his service; although in the Gospel all are invited to the marriage Supper, the poor, maimed, halt and blind, because (so we bring with us the wedding garment) it is better in our age to come halting to the feast, and through the dimness of our sight, groping for the right way, then to frame worldly excuses, and absent ourselves altogether.

Sect. 9 - Of the great profit of this exercise of catechizing.

Lastly, let the profit and manifold benefits which accompany this duty, be an effectual means to persuade us unto it. For they only are saved who have faith, and they faith alone, who have knowledge, both which come by hearing, as the Apostle teacheth us, How shall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom, they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And this the Apostate Julian well knew, and therefore to root out the Church, he thought it the most effectual way, to put down Christian Schools, and Religious exercises, that being deprived of all means of knowledge, he might lead them in their ignorance which way he listed. Secondly, it is a notable means to free them from errors and heresies, when they are grounded in the knowledge of the truth, and the analogy of faith, that will serve them as a touchstone and rule, according to which doctrines must be examined; which whoso want, may easily be led even into fundamental errors. For as the Apostle saith, there must be heresies in the world, unto which men naturally are more inclined then unto the truth; and therefore we must not hand over head hearken unto every spirit, nor when we hear, judge of them according to our natural reason, but we must, as the Apostle John exhorteth us, try them whether they be of God or no, by bringing them to be examined by the touchstone of his Truth. The which we shall be utterly unable to do, if we be not acquainted with the Scriptures, and have no

knowledge of the main principles, and the analogy of faith contained in them. Where, by the way we may note the cause why Popery so much increaseth amongst us, namely, because for want of catechizing in many places, the people remain ignorant of the principles of Christian Religion, and so upon the alleging of any carnal reason, plausible to corrupted nature, they become an easy prey to the Priests and Jesuits. Thirdly, It helpeth notably to the hearing of Sermons with profit, both because being grounded in the principles and main parts of divinity, we shall be able to refer all things we hear to their heads, and also to examine Doctrines according to the analogy of Faith. For seeing there will be many false christs and antichrists, false prophets, false teachers, and ravenous wolves that will come in sheep's clothing; we must not receive all that is preached in a pulpit, but try all things, and take that only which is good. The which we cannot do, if we be unacquainted with the Scriptures, and destitute of the knowledge of the principles of Christian Religion. Where, by the way we may note the reason why most men, even in the chief Cities, and places where the Gospel hath been long preached, yea even such as make most sincere profession of Religion, are so void of all sound judgment in hearing Sermons, that they are more affected with the strength of the voice, then the powerfulness of arguments, look more after the manner, then after the matter, and to a ready and fluent speech, then soundness of Doctrine and faithful handling of the text. Why also they so little profit by their much hearing for their increase in knowledge, and strengthening of their faith, the sanctifying of their hearts, and walking in a settled course of a Christian life. Finally, why they with such earnestness, flock after new comers, and so easily hearken unto every new opinion, though the broacher of it have only a show of sanctity, and be quite destitute of all good learning or sound knowledge of Divinity; namely, because the people being ungrounded, and ignorant of the principles of Religion, are wholly unstayed and unsettled in their judgments, and wanting the spirit of discerning, are not possibly able to make any good choice. Fourthly, This exercise is most profitable for such as are weak in spiritual growth, and but babes in Christ, because it is the fittest food for their

Spiritual nourishment, seeing in respect of their weakness which maketh them unable to digest stronger meat, they would quickly be famished and fall into a deep consumption of all grace, if there were not prepared for them meats of such easy and light digestion. For stones (as we know) will do little children as much good as the whole loaf, they wanting strength to cut it, or teeth to chew it, and so also it is in the spiritual nourishment, the weaklings being as incapable of high mysteries, deep points of Divinity, and difficult and perplexed controversies, as of a speech uttered in a strange language. And therefore as it must be the teachers care and wisdom to prepare fit nourishment for those under their charge, and to feed babes in Christ with milk; or when they provide stronger meat for their sake who are of riper age, yet as much as they can, they must like loving nurses have also therein respect to their little ones, dividing and (as it were) chewing this more solid meat, and making it soft and easy with familiar similitudes, and plain examples, as our Savior taught his Disciples, not according to the greatness of his divine wisdom, but so as they were able to hear it: So on the other side, those which are children in knowledge, must chiefly affect that food which is fittest for their nourishment, and not out of foolish wantonness and vain curiosity, affect the hearing of learned discourses, high points of divinity and hidden mysteries, when as they are ignorant of the easy principles, as it is the custom of many simple people, who most applaud and magnify their teachers, when their speeches most exceed the pitch and reach of their shallow understanding. Fifthly, they shall by this exercise be enabled to give an account of their faith, not in some few points only, like smatterers, but in all which are substantial and fundamental. The which will be a notable encouragement to the profession of Christ and the true Religion, especially in the time of persecution, when we distinctly know what we hold and believe, and wherein we differ from our adversaries; the want whereof is a great hindrance to Christian apology, and a special means to make us to deny Christ before men; seeing the most are ashamed to make profession of that truth, whereof when they are examined, they can give no account; to suffer for that Religion which they cannot defend, or at least distinctly conceive, or to take upon

them like Christ's Champions to fight for the truth against the enemies of it, even to the shedding of their blood, when as they have no skill in handling the sword of the Spirit. Lastly, hereby they shall not only be informed in the ways of godliness, but also incited and enabled to walk in them; as we see in the example of Isaac, who by his fathers instruction, became obedient to the death; prayeth and meditateth in fields, and in all things followed his fathers steps. And of his servant likewise, who being trained up by Abraham, and catechized in the knowledge of God and his truth, carrieth himself religiously towards God, and faithfully towards his Master. And also of Solomon, who being taught by his father, to esteem and labor after, above all things, wisdom and understanding, afterwards when God putteth him to his choice, to ask and obtain whatsoever he would, he desireth an understanding heart, that he might judge the people, and discern between good and bad. Unto which we might add innumerable more examples, both of former and latter times; all which may serve as strong inducements, to persuade all weak Christians both young and old, to be diligent in this exercise, if, at least, they have any care to know God's will, or make any conscience of yielding obedience unto it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Of family duties, which respect wise and religious government.

Sect. 1 - What things are required unto wise government.

And these are the duties of governors in families, which respect instruction. The second main duty, is wise and religious government, whereby they are to move and draw their inferiors to put in practice, and to make a holy use of all which they teach them, in their lives

and conversations; unto which, some things are required in the persons of their governors, and some things in the administration of their government. In their persons diverse things are required. As first, wisdom and Christian prudence in all their courses, that they may not only guide themselves in their own ways, but be able also to give direction unto all that belong unto them. For that which the Apostle Peter requireth specially of husbands, doth generally belong unto all governors, that they dwell with their inferiors, according to knowledge, as being a principal means to gain from them due honor and authority. Secondly, that they be not light and vain in their carriage and government, but behave themselves in all things gravely, and with a kind of Christian Majesty and authority; according to the example of Job, who observed such gravity in his carriage, that when the young men saw him, they hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up; the Princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The which, as it gaineth authority to governors, so the contrary levity and lightness of behavior, doth expose their persons to scorn, and their government to neglect and contempt. Thirdly, there is required, that piety, justice, and sobriety, do shine in the whole course of their conversation, that so they may become examples unto their inferiors, of a holy, righteous and unblameable life, then the which, nothing is more powerful and effectual, to draw inferiors to imitation of those virtues which they observe in them. And therefore David intending a strict reformation of his house, beginneth first with himself, that he might be an example unto all the rest, and resolveth that he will behave himself wisely in a perfect way, and walk within his house with an upright heart, and then that he will banish out the wicked from his family, and entertain and countenance the religious and faithful of the land. Whereas contrariwise, if they take never so much pains in teaching them their duties, yet if they do not make their own lives examples of their rules, but run a contrary course in their practice, they shall not so much further them in the ways of godliness by their instructions, as discourage and hinder them by their bad example. Fourthly, they must not insult over their inferiors with tyrannical pride and cruelty, nor do all they may, by reason of their power and authority, to keep

them under, as base underlings, out of a fond and false opinion, raising the pitch of their absoluteness and greatness, out of their slavish dejection, who are under their government; but they must mix with their power and authority, parent-like love, brotherly humanity, and Christian mildness and modesty, that their inferiors may honor them as fathers, as well as fear them like Lord's, and may yield unto them, free, cheerful, and voluntary obedience, subjecting to their government, not only their bodies and outward actions, but also their hearts, wills, and inward affections. For if the hearts of Kings themselves must not be lifted up above their brethren, then much less should the hearts of inferior governors in families be thus exalted. Fifthly, they must govern in the Lord, as his Vice-gerents and Deputies, and chiefly aim therein at God's glory, remembering that from him they have all their authority, and that they exercise not their own, but the judgments of the Lord, according to the saying of good Jehoshaphat to his Judges; Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment. And this must make them chiefly to aim by their government, to contain their inferiors in the duties of piety and righteousness, that God may be glorified, both by themselves, and also by all those which are in the family. And finally, they must make it appear in all their government, that they do not wholly aim at their own particular and private profit, but also at their joint good; which is the chief cause why the Lord hath made them superiors unto others, not that they may serve their turn of them, and look no further; but that they may (like the head, the members of the body) govern them for their benefit. And this argument the Lord useth to persuade inferiors to honor their superiors, that it might go well with themselves, in the land which the Lord gave them. And the Apostle moveth them to do that which is good, upon the like reason, because their governors were the Ministers of God to them for good if they did well.

Sect. 2 - Of the justice and love which are required in government.

The things required unto the administration of their government, are justice, and love, the which must be tempered the one with the other, that love may moderate and sweeten justice, and justice may keep love impartial and upright, lest our actions savoring of nothing but justice, seem rigorous, and expose us to hatred; and love not guided nor backed by justice, degenerate into doting fondness, and so expose us to contempt; whereas both rightly mixed the one with the other, will cause reverence and obedience. The which mixture must be used in all our actions towards all under our government, although these virtues are to be exercised diversely, and the one to be more manifested then the other, according to occasion, time, persons, and deserts. For though we ought to love all, yet those especially who excel in God's graces, and profit most in all religious, Christian, and civil duties; and to such, our love must be most manifested, to encourage them to go on in their good courses, and to draw others to follow their example. The which was David's practice, as he professeth; who, though he were indifferently just towards all his subjects, yet his love exceeded towards the faithful of the land, and those which walked in a perfect way. But especially our love and justice must appear in our rewards and chastisements, which are the main bonds and very sinews of government. We must reward those who deserve well, partly by our words, commending their good actions, which is a great encouragement to well-doing, as the Apostle implieth, when he useth it as a reason to persuade inferiors to their duty; Do that which is good (saith he) and thou shalt have praise of the same; the which, our Savior will use to his servants at the last day; Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, &c. And partly by deeds, the which must savor both of justice, in giving them their due wages, and of love and bounty, by giving according to our ability, gifts, to encourage them in their well-deserving. Chastisements also must be used towards them, who will not otherwise be reclaimed from their faults, nor kept in due order, either in words only, by gentle or more sharp reproofs, according to the quality of the offense, or by stripes, when nothing else will serve. For otherwise we shall offend against God in neglecting (being his Deputies) to glorify him in his Justice; against

ourselves, by becoming accessory to their sins; against the parties offending, whom we reclaim not, but suffer them to go on in their wickedness to their destructions; against those of the same family, whom by this impunity we encourage to follow their ill example; and the whole society, which is hereby made obnoxious to God's Justice. But this correction is only good when it is necessary, being like a sharp salve and bitter potion, which none that are wise will use for wantonness. And therefore his counsel is good, which (as God himself implieth in the fifth Commandment) persuadeth a godly Matrone, that she should so govern her family and cherish it, as that she should rather seem their mother than their mistress; and draw from them reverence rather by loving benignity, than rigorous severity. For that obedience is always more faithful and acceptable, which floweth from love, than that which is extorted by fear. Yet if there be no other help, but that correction must be used as necessary; let us in it observe first, justice, both in making sure, that the fault is committed, and deserveth punishment, and that the punishment do not exceed the quality of the fault, which is to rage and revenge, rather than chastise for amendment. Secondly, It must be inflicted in love, which must appear by moderating the punishment, that it do not exceed necessity, respecting the parties reformation; and by the end which we propound in our corrections, which is the good of the party, in the amendment of his faults for the time to come, which we must always advance by joining admonition and good counsel with our chastisement, with promises of love and kind usage when as we find any reformation. Lastly, this love must appear in our patience and forbearance, not coming rashly and violently upon the party, but after we have tried in vain all other means. Nor in rage and anger, as though we came to take revenge; but temperately and quietly, slowly and with good advice, as propounding no other end but the parties amendment.

CHAPTER XXXII.

How we ought to behave ourselves in the estate of prosperity, that we may thrive in all spiritual graces.

Sect. 1 - What prosperity is, and how apt we are to abuse it through our corruption.

We are now come in the last place to consider how we ought to carry ourselves every day, in respect of those several estates and conditions of prosperity and adversity unto which God calleth us. The which having no certain and set time allotted unto them by God, (for we may diverse days together flourish in prosperity, or be as long cast down and humbled by troubles and afflictions, yea sometime, and that most commonly, have them intermingled the one with other, beginning the day with joy in our prosperous affairs, and ending it with sorrow and grief by reason of our crosses and calamities, or contrariwise have cause of mourning in the morning, and of rejoicing before the evening) therefore the duties which concern these several estates, cannot be limited to any set time, but must follow and accompany them, as it shall please God to give us occasion by the interchanging our diverse states and conditions the one with the other. Of which my purpose is to speak very briefly, though they be matters which greatly import the Christian life, because I have largely handled them already in my Christian Warfare. And first, for prosperity, which consisteth in the possession and fruition of all God's temporal blessings or many of them, as health, wealth, peace, plenty, liberty, fame, friendship, honors, pleasures, with wife, children, houses, lands of the best sort; they are in themselves God's good gifts, which he delighteth to bestow upon those that serve him, as the present pay and reward of their love and duty; and wherein he would have us to delight, praying for them when we want them, and praising him when we have them, as being in their own nature, and if they be rightly used, testimonies of God's love, and signs of his

gracious presence. But in respect of our corruption, this state is liable to much abuse, as not being absolutely good, but of an indifferent nature, in respect of that use which we make of it, remaining good to those that use it rightly, and degenerating into evil when it is abused. Unto which abuse we are naturally most prone, as every man may find, not only by general observation, but in his own lamentable experience; we being herein like unto small ships, which carrying too great a sail, are overturned in every tempest; or like those, who having ill stomachs and weak brains, are ready to surfeit of the best meats, upon the least fullness, and to be distempered and overtaken with drunkenness in the use of the best drinks, if they please their appetite, and take any more of them then will satisfy nature.

Sect. 2 - That we must be diligent, lest our prosperity become unto us an occasion of sin; and how this is to be done.

In which regard, prosperity, which is good in itself, becometh exceeding dangerous unto us, as being an ordinary and common means, both to occasion our falls into many sins, and to hinder our rising again by unfeigned repentance. In which regard, it greatly behooveth us, when we live in this estate, to think that we walk in slippery places, and as it were upon the narrow ridge of a steep hill, the descent on both sides being headlong and dangerous, in which, if we slide, we are ready to tumble by degrees into a gulf of wickedness. And consequently, as we desire to walk acceptably unto God, and tender our own salvation, we must with all care and circumspection look unto our footing, that we may be preserved from these fearful falls, and receive no hurt in this dangerous passage. To which purpose, I will propound some rules concerning the right carriage of ourselves in this estate, which if we observe, they will serve as some stays to keep us from slipping, and like rails on either side of a narrow bridge over a deep and dangerous river, preserve us from falling and sinking into the depths of sin and worldly wickedness. And to this purpose we are to look on the left hand with all care and

providence, that we stay ourselves, by shunning the abuse of our prosperity, and on the right hand with no less heedfulness, that we use it rightly and in a holy manner. For the first, our care must be, that we so use our worldly prosperity and temporal things, that they be not helps and inducements unto any sin. And to this end, let us often consider, that they are the blessings of God, which he hath bestowed upon us, to encourage us in his service; and therefore what a sin and shame is it, to take occasion by his bounty the more to displease him? To use them as the weapons of iniquity to fight on the devils side, against our Lord and Sovereign? And to abuse these benefits which are given us of God for comforts in our pilgrimage, as impediments which hinder us in our journey, and as pricks in our sides, to hasten our speed towards hell and destruction.

Sect. 3 - That in our prosperity we must take heed lest we forget God, that his blessings do not draw our hearts from him, and that we be not unthankful.

More especially let us take heed, that by these temporal blessings we be not made more forgetful of God, unto which vice we are naturally prone in the time of our prosperity, because, when we enjoy all we desire, and have need of nothing, we are not sensible that we want his help; nor so apt to remember him, that we may give him thanks for that we have, as to beg at his hands the things we want; as we see in the example of the Prodigal, who thought not on his father, when he was in prosperity, but when he is pinched with poverty, then he thinketh of returning unto him. Whereof it is, that the Lord so often warned the Israelites, that when they enjoyed ease and plenty in the Land of Promise, they should beware that they did not forget him: the which notwithstanding they neglected; for as the Prophet complaineth, As in their pastures, so were they filled, they were filled, and their hearts were exalted; therefore they have forgotten me. Which that we may not also do, let us often consider, that it is a foul shame for us to take occasion by these tokens of God's love the

sooner to forget him, which he hath purposely sent to put us in mind of his love and bounty towards us. Let us as often as we look upon them, remember, that they are not chiefly purchased by our own endeavors (for how many seek, and cannot enjoy them, who far exceed us in wit and industry?) but that we have them from God, and by his blessing upon our labors. Finally, let us often remember, that though we abound in these earthly things, yet they will not do us any good, unless God give his blessing in their use, and make them effectual to those ends for which he hath given them. Secondly, let us be careful when we abound with temporal blessings, that they do not draw our hearts from God, as they surely will, if we esteem them as our chief treasures, and in our affections dote too much upon them; according to that of the Apostle John; If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. To which end let us consider, that it is extreme folly to love the creature better than the Creator, seeing whatsoever beauty, goodness or excellency is in them, it is infinitely more in him, from whom they have it as a small drop out of the main Ocean. That it is horrible ingratitude and unkindness to love God's gifts better than the giver, and when as a gracious Bridegroom he sendeth them as love-tokens, or deputies to woo our hearts, we neglect him and dote upon his messengers. Thirdly, let us take heed, that by how much the Lord is more liberal in bestowing his benefits, that we be not by so much the more unthankful; which might seem a needless admonition, if we did not see by daily experience, that we are in our poverty more thankful for every small trifle, which relieveth our present necessities, then in our riches and abundance, when we have our wants supplied before they pinch us; that we are more ready to praise God for a little ease in a great sickness, then when we enjoy perfect health; and for a little sleep after much restless waking, then when we have long taken our natural and quiet repose, without any let, or the least disturbance. For we see the worth of God's blessings more in their want, then in their fruition, and the better we know them, the more thankful we are for them. Besides, we are apt to be made wanton by our prosperity, and to vex ourselves more in longing after superfluities, then others in the want of necessaries. And if we be crossed in these desires, and have not

our appetite satisfied to the full, we are ready ungratefully to forget all the good things which we enjoy, and to murmur and repine as if we had nothing. Which odious vice that we may avoid, let us consider when we find ourselves inclining unto it, how many good things we enjoy that others want, who better deserve them; that God is as sufficient and ready to give us what we want, as what we have, if in his wisdom and goodness he did see them fitting for us. That we endanger ourselves to be deprived of our present blessings, by doting so upon the things we have not, that we be unthankful for that we have; for God seeing that our discontents arise from wantonness rather than want, will wisely take away the greatest part of his benefits, that we may be more thankful for those that remain.

Sect. 4 - That in our prosperity we must beware of pride, security, and hardness of heart, licentiousness, and contempt of spiritual and heavenly things.

Fourthly, let us in our prosperity watch over ourselves, that we be not puffed up with pride, unto which this estate through our corruption maketh us prone, as we may see, not only in the examples of former times, as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, and of those wicked men, of whom the Psalmist speaketh, who being enclosed in their own fat, spake proudly with their mouth, and flourishing in all earthly abundance, put on pride as a chain about their necks; yea holy David and good Hezekiah were thus overtaken, and though in the time of their trouble they were meek and humble, yet were their hearts lifted up in their prosperity. The which, the experience of these times doth make too manifest, wherein not only mere worldlings, but even many of the faithful are tainted with this odious vice, by reason of their earthly abundance, and long prospering in their worldly desires. Which that we may prevent, let us consider, that we have nothing but what we have received, not as absolute gifts, but as our Masters goods, lent only unto us for our use, for which we stand indebted, and must give an account at the day of

Judgment; and what reason have we to be proud of our debts? That God so hateth this vice of pride, that he will rather withdraw from us his spiritual graces, and his gracious assistance in the time of temptation, that by falling into other sins we may be cured of this, and have our souls adorned with true humility; and therefore how much rather will he deprive us of temporal benefits, and things of far less value, then we should continue infected with this vice, which above all others he most abhorreth? And when the greatness of our gifts and possessions begin to puff us up, let us think, how we have employed them, and whether we have so increased and improved them for the glory of our Master, and good of our fellow servants, as that we may with cheerfulness present ourselves before God, when he calleth us to a reckoning. Finally, in our greatest plenty of earthly things, let us call to mind our spiritual wants, and how defective we are in sanctifying and saving graces, especially in our thankfulness unto God for these temporal benefits; and so our plenty in the one will not so much exalt us, as our defects in the other, which are much more excellent and necessary, will humble and abase us. Fifthly, when we enjoy prosperity, let us beware of security and hardness of heart, which is an ordinary effect that doth accompany it. For men are apt to flatter themselves in the assurance of God's love, when he causeth them to prosper in their courses, and giveth unto them these outward signs of his favor; and so to live in their sins with impenitence and hardness of heart, promising unto themselves impunity, and that all shall go well with them for the time to come. Thus David saith; because the wicked man's ways prospered, Therefore God's judgments were high above out of his sight, presuming that he should never be moved nor come into any danger. Yea he himself, as he confesseth, was thus overtaken with security, presuming in his prosperity, that he should never be moved. Which that we may avoid, let us consider, that temporal blessings are no infallible signs of God's love, seeing as the Wise man speaketh, they happen to all alike, and are more often and liberally bestowed upon God's enemies, who have their portion in this life, then upon his own children, for whom he reserveth the everlasting and heavenly inheritance; that there is a vicissitude and change of all these estates,

and nothing remaineth certain under the Sun; that the longer God deferreth, the more severely he will punish when he cometh, and the greater our blessings are, the greater shall be our plagues, if we abuse them to security and impenitence. Sixthly, let us take heed when we are in prosperity, that we do not abuse it to licentiousness and carnal liberty, unto which, men in this state are most prone, as the Histories of all times and daily experience teacheth. For who seeth not, that they who abound in wealth and worldly honors, do for the most part give themselves over to all voluptuous and sensual delights; as though God had sent them into the world, and had put into their hands such large wages of earthly blessings, that they should spend them and their precious time, in Hunting and Hawking, carding and dicing, courting, dancing and reveling, drinking, feasting, and such like carnal pleasures? Yea, who doth not perceive, that they often abuse them to injury and oppression, revenge, and all kinds of injustice, when they have to deal with their inferiors; abusing their power and authority unto tyranny, which they think never sufficiently manifested and magnified, till they have born down and trodden under foot, all that standeth in their way, right and reason, law, conscience, and common honesty? Which abuses that we may shun, let us remember often the main ends why God hath given us these worldly benefits above others, namely, that we might be better enabled, and become more forward to glorify him, to do more good unto our brethren, and abound in the works of mercy and Christian charity, and that we might have better means to serve him with cheerfulness, and thereby to further our own salvation. Of which ends, if we fail, God will either take these gifts from us, because we mis-spend them in vain, or else let us still keep them for a further and greater judgment. Let us think in our greatness, that there is a greater than we, who will one day call us to a reckoning, and fearfully revenge upon us the injuries of the oppressed, and the shameful abuse of our power and authority to injustice and cruelty. Seventhly, let us beware, that our prosperity be not an occasion unto us of the contempt and neglect of spiritual and heavenly things, which ordinarily happeneth unto those, who in their judgments too much esteem, and in their hearts immoderately affect these temporal

blessings, as we see in the example of those who were invited to the Kings Supper, Demas, Judas, and many others. To which purpose, let us often meditate on the excellency, profit, and necessity of God's saving graces, and the ineffable felicity of our heavenly inheritance, and how much these exceed the other. Let us also often consider of the dignity of our souls, and how much they exceed in excellency our corruptible bodies, that we may take more care to have them thrive in spiritual grace, and to rejoice in their assurance of future glory, then to glut our bodies with sensual delights, or to wax rich, and grow great in our earthly possessions. Let us remember that the time will come, that our spiritual grace, which worldlings so much contemn, will stand us in more stead, and bring unto our souls more sound comfort than all the wealth of the world, or Monarchy of the whole earth; and therefore that it is most extreme and sottish folly, so far to affect those flitting and fading vanities, as to neglect in the meantime these spiritual excellencies.

Sect. 5 - That in our prosperity we must beware of being slothful in God's service, and that worldly things do not become thorns and snares unto us.

Eighthly, let it be our care in the time of our prosperity, that we do not grow more sluggish and slothful in God's service, in Prayer, hearing the Word, Reading, Meditation; for the more we are taken up with our earthly employments, the less we mind these holy duties and religious exercises, as we see in the experience of many, who have been forward in them in their sickness, poverty, and mean estates, and wholly neglect them, or coldly, carelessly, and formally perform them, when they enjoy health, wealth, and worldly preferments. Yea, God's good Children oftentimes are herewith overtaken, having a great damp cast over their zeal and devotion by these worldly mists; as we see in good Martha herself, who by her worldly business was made more cold and careless in attending unto Christ. Which, that we may avoid, let us consider, that when we

abound with all worldly blessings, we stand more in need of spiritual helps, to keep us upright in our ways, and from falling into those sins, to which this prosperous state exposeth us. And that these earthly benefits being God's present wages, whereby he encourageth us to do him more diligent and faithful service, it is a shameful abuse of his bounty, to be made thereby more slothful and negligent. Ninthly, let us take heed in our prosperity, that these worldly things, through our overmuch affecting them, do not become thorns to choke in us the seed of God's Word, and hinder in us the growth of his spiritual graces, the which through our corruption they are apt to do, as our Savior teacheth us in the Parable of the Sower; partly by catching hold of us, and hindering us from going into the holy assemblies, as we see in the example of those, who being invited to the Kings Supper, pretended excuses and would not come; and of the Jews, who when God spake unto them in their prosperity, professed that they would not hearken unto him, nor obey his voice. And partly by distracting our minds and hearts when we are there, so as we cannot attend unto the things delivered; as we see in the example of the Jews, who, when the Prophet preached unto them, with their mouths made jests, and suffered their hearts to run after covetousness. Which that we may avoid, let us hold them in our hands, as ready to employ them in God's service, and for the good of our brethren, but not suffer them through carnal love to take rooting in our hearts, which is God's portion and fairest field, allotted to receive the seed of his Word, for the growth of spiritual graces. Or if the envious man hath sowed any of these tares and weeds in them, let us root them out with all care and diligence, before we go into the holy assemblies, that they may not choke in us that spiritual seed, nor hinder the growth of saving graces; and let us, as the Apostle exhorteth us, mortify our earthly lusts, and fly carnal concupiscence, when we desire to be furnished with God's graces, by the Ministry of the Word, and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.

Sect. 6 - That we must carefully arm ourselves against the temptations unto which this estate is endangered; and take heed that it hinder not our heavenly happiness.

Tenthly, let it be our care when we are in prosperity, to set a double watch over ourselves, that we be not overcome with those manifold temptations, unto which this estate doth chiefly expose us, as love of the world, earthly-mindedness, ambition, covetousness, voluptuousness, and the rest. To which end let us consider, that in these worldly thickets Satan cunningly layeth his most dangerous ambushments, to surprise us with his temptations at unawares; that they are his traps and snares, in which he entangleth many, and keepeth them in his slavery; and his usual baits, whereby he allureth us to come within the compass of his nets of perdition, unto which, who so stoop with a greedy appetite, fall into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown them in destruction. Finally, that they are his common wages, which he offereth as his hire, to draw men to serve him in the works of darkness, wherewith he hath prevailed with so many, that he thought it his strongest inducement to persuade our Savior Christ himself to yield unto him and do him service. And therefore as we desire to stand in the day of temptation, to prevent our foils, and would not hazard the eternal salvation of our souls, let us in our prosperity watch over ourselves, and also earnestly desire the Watchman of Israel to watch over us, that we may be preserved from all these dangers. Finally, let us, when we enjoy prosperity and temporal blessings, above all things carefully take heed, that they do not hinder our heavenly happiness, by being burdens on our shoulders, which will tire us in our journey thitherwards, and as the Camels bunch upon our backs, which will hinder us from entering into the straight gate. The which our care must be redoubled by the greatness of the danger, seeing it is a most hard thing for the same man to enjoy earth and heaven, to have temporal felicity in the full fruition of worldly things, and eternal happiness in God's Kingdom, to have the honors, riches, and pleasures of this life, and eternal glory, lasting riches, and heavenly joys in the life to come. For the Apostle telleth us, that not many wise

men after the flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble are called unto them; and our Savior hath taught us, that it is easier for a Camel to pass thorough the eye of a needle, then for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. For preventing of which danger, and the avoiding of this incomparable loss; let us use these earthly things, as though we used them not, or as not abusing them, making them to serve as helps in our pilgrimage to further us in our way, by employing them to all good uses; and when they begin through our carnal love to cling unto us, and to become heavy burdens to hinder us in our race, let us, as the Apostle exhorteth us, cast them off, that we may run more cheerfully, and parting with our superfluities for the relief of others necessities, let us retain only so much as may further us in our journey.

Sect. 7 - That we must not too highly esteem, nor too earnestly affect and seek after earthly things.

But especially, let us take heed, that we do not value them in our judgments, affect them in our hearts, nor seek after them in our actions and endeavors, more than spiritual graces and heavenly happiness; that we do not make Idols of them, by loving them more then God, taking more pains to get them, and more care to keep them, and more grief to lose them, then the assurance of his favor, or to carry ourselves acceptably in his sight; finally, though we do not utterly reject them from having some place in our hearts, yet let us beware, that we do not give them the chief seat, but let them have entertainment, according to their own rank and condition, as things indifferently good, and far short in excellency unto spiritual graces and heavenly glory; that though we possess them, yet we be not possessed of them, nor become their slaves, whereas God hath made us their Lord's and governors. And that we may not thus excessively esteem and immoderately love them, let us consider, that in themselves they deserve it not, being in comparison of grace and glory, of no worth; and though they were to others of some value, yet

not unto us who profess Christianity. In themselves they are in the former comparison to be lightly esteemed, and slightly affected, seeing they bring not unto us any absolute, true, and certain good, because in their own nature they have not in them any such degree of goodness, being vain and of no solidity, whereof it is that they do not satisfy those that have them, and not only unprofitable to their owners, for the chief and best uses and ends, but also mixed and distasted with many evils and miseries which do attend upon them. Or though they were good, yet we have no certainty, either in getting or keeping them, because both they and we are both momentary and mutable, and are every day in danger to be parted from one another. Yea so far are they from any absolute goodness, that through our corruption, by which we become apt to abuse them, they are causes, or at least occasions of much hurt; being provocations unto all sin, both against God, our neighbors, and ourselves, deriving unto us innumerable evils, both temporal, and those civil and spiritual, and also eternal, as hindering the fruition of heavenly happiness, and furthering and increasing everlasting punishments; or though they were good in themselves, and were not through our abuse occasions of these evils; yet they are not to be esteemed and affected in respect of us, who are but Pilgrims on earth, having only the use and benefit of them in our passage, and (as it were) in our Inn where we are to make but short abode; and Citizens of heaven, and heirs of those eternal joys and lasting happiness, which infinitely exceed all worldly things, in which, being our Country, we do expect durable riches and everlasting habitations. All which reasons I do here but briefly touch, and content myself with, namely, these general heads, because I have largely handled, and effectually pressed them as I was able, in my second part of the Christian Warfare.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

How we may rightly use the state of prosperity, so as it may be an help unto godliness.

Sect. 1 - That we must use God's temporal blessings as helps unto saving graces and spiritual duties.

But it is not sufficient, that we shun the abuses of prosperity and temporal blessings, unless we also know how we may rightly use them; the which use is far better than the things themselves, as furthering us unto the fruition of much more excellent benefits, both in this life and the life to come. The which, Solomon implieth, in making this use a second and more perfect gift of God, which he doth not, like the other, cast out in common to men of all sorts, but reserveth it as a special benefit for those that fear him; I know (saith he) that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life, and also that a man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of his labor; it is the gift of God. And therefore in the next place I will set down also some rules and cautions, whereby we may be directed in the right use of prosperity, and the temporal blessings which do accompany it. And first, we must use them as helps and effectual motives to stir us up to unfeigned thankfulness unto God that gave them. To which end, let us not sacrifice to our own nets, nor ascribe the praise of them to our wisdom and industry; but let us receive them at God's hands, as his gifts and blessings, that he may have the whole glory of them. Yea, let us consider that they are his free gifts, which he bestoweth of his mere grace and bounty, without any respect of our merits or worthiness, yea notwithstanding that we are less than the least of his mercies, and worthy rather of his judgments and punishments. That he hath given them abundantly unto us, and unto many other his dear children, with a sparing hand, and in a scant measure, who are far more worthy of them; that he requireth nothing in lieu of all his benefits, but that we return unto him the praise that is due unto him. And finally, that if we be truly thankful unto him for his gifts already received, he is ready to bestow far greater and better upon us, both in this world and the world to come. Secondly, we must use them as reasons to inflame our hearts

with true and fervent love towards God, and as fuel to nourish and increase this divine and holy flame; desiring to approve it to be sincere and unfeigned, by affecting the giver, better than the gifts, and by loving that also which he loveth, as his Word and will, spiritual grace, and new obedience unto his Commandments, our neighbors for his sake, who hath been so gracious and bountiful unto us above many others, and himself for his own sake, longing more after the full fruition of his glorious presence, then to enjoy all the contentment that the world can yield us. And to this end let us esteem all his temporal blessings which we have received at his hands, not simply in their own worth, but as pledges of his favor, and love-tokens which he hath sent us to testify his affection, as earnest pennies of a far greater bargain, and first fruits of our heavenly harvest. Thirdly, we must so use them, as that they may not be impediments, but helps and furtherance's in the service of God, and in advancing the means of his worship, becoming more zealous in all Religious duties out of our love towards him that so loveth us, more frequent and diligent in holy exercises, as having by reason of our plenty and prosperity, more leisure from worldly employments and better opportunities of performing them. More bountiful and liberal for the erecting of God's public worship, with all the means thereof, where they are wanting, and in furthering and advancing them, by giving all encouragement to God's Ministers, and all others who join with us in them, where they are already established. All which we shall the better do, if we do not set our hearts and affections more on them, then upon spiritual grace and eternal glory, or the means of deriving both unto us. If we would learn to esteem them, not in their own absolute worth, but as they are means and instruments, which most benefit us, when as they advance our chief and main ends, the glory of God, and our own salvation. If we would consider that they are God's present wages, which he graciously giveth unto us as temporary rewards of our imperfect service, not that they should pull us back in holy duties, but for our better encouragement, that we might serve so bountiful a Master with more cheerfulness. Finally, if we would remember that we shall at the day of Judgment give

account how we have employed our Lord's talents, for the advancement of his glory, and enabling of us for his service.

Sect. 2 - That we must use the blessings of prosperity for the common good of Church and Commonwealth.

Fourthly, if we would rightly use our prosperity and God's temporal blessings, we must therein, not only respect our own particular, but also the common good of the Church and Common wealth, and the private good of all our neighbors. The former, by paying cheerfully all seizements and tributes, which are lawfully imposed, all rights and duties which belong to all superiors in either of them, and by offering also our free-will oblation, and voluntary contributions towards any public service, out of our great plenty, either for the better effecting of it, or for the easing of those, who by reason of their weak estates are not so able as we to bear the burden. The latter, by exercising our bounty and Christian charity in alms-deeds, and in doing the works of mercy, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting and relieving the poor that are sick and imprisoned. To which end, let us consider that God hath given unto us our plenty and greater store, not as unto absolute Lord's, to spend it how we list, but as unto Stewards, for the good also of our fellow servants, who shall be called unto account, if we have been faithful in thus employing them, and have given to everyone in the household their due portion; that where God hath given much, there he will also require much, and that they who by his bounty have much goods and exceed in riches, do also much good (and as the Apostle speaketh) Be rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Finally, let us consider that they are not so much to be valued in their own excellency, or the present profit which they bring unto us, seeing these commodities have so many discommodities, that it is hard to say whether exceed; but as they are the great instruments of well-doing, and (as it were)

spacious fields, in which our bounty and charity are not confined in narrow limits, but may take large liberty to walk abroad, and to exercise themselves unto full contentment. Whereby as we are enabled to do good unto many, so most of all to ourselves; seeing for the present we purchase of them their best jewels at low rates, even their love, hearts, and fervent prayers, for some poor pittance of earthly trifles; and for the time to come, the Lord will infinitely reward of his mere grace and large bounty, these gifts of ours which he hath first given us, as though we were not Stewards but Owners, and in our own right had bestowed them, not so much upon the poor, as upon Jesus Christ himself, as he will before the Saints and Angels profess at the day of Judgment. The which excellent duty is so necessary unto the exercise of a godly life, and is so much neglected in this cold and uncharitable age, not only amongst gripple and greedy worldlings, who are ready rather to strip the poor, then to clothe them, and to pull the meat out of their mouths, by depriving them through oppression of their means, then to feed and nourish them; but even among professors of Religion, who seeming to make conscience of religious duties, are notwithstanding exceeding cold in their devotion and charity; that I would much more fully and effectually have insisted upon and pressed it, had I not already published a full Treatise of this argument.

Sect. 3 - Three other Cautions to be observed for the right use of prosperity.

Fifthly, unto the right use of prosperity and temporal benefits there is required, that we use them as pilgrims and strangers, and not as Citizens of the world; for so God's Saints have always acknowledged themselves, and that they had here no continuing city, but sought one to come. The consideration whereof must wean our hearts and affections from the immoderate love of the world and earthly vanities, and cause us to fix them on heaven and heavenly things, which is our country and place of residence, to fight against our

carnal lusts which fight against our souls; and to contemn and cast away whatsoever becometh an hindrance in our journey towards our heavenly home. And seeing we are Citizens of heaven, we must have our conversation there, seeking those things which are above, and not those which are beneath, and think that nothing more doth misbeseem us, then that being the children of God, and heirs apparent to his heavenly Kingdom, we should like base slaves spend our time and strength in the devils drudgery, and in toiling in the works of darkness and servitude of sin, for the contemptible wages of earthly vanities. Sixthly, we must use them not as durable and permanent riches and inheritances, but as things momentary and mutable, which are ready daily and hourly to leave us, and we them. And therefore our best course will be to use so these flitting vanities, as that they may further our assurance of our heavenly patrimony, which is permanent and everlasting; and as our Savior counselleth us, to make us friends of the Mammon of iniquity, by using them as helps and instruments to further us in the works of mercy, that when they are taken from us, and we from them, we may be received into heavenly habitations. Finally, if we would rightly use our prosperity and temporal blessings, we must not suffer our minds and hearts to rest upon them, but use them only as steps whereby we may mount up aloft in heavenly meditations and desires. As when we see any beauty or excellency in the creatures, to think how infinitely they exceed in the Creator from whom they have them; when we are ready with the Queen of Sheba to think ourselves happy in hearing the wisdom of an earthly Solomon, to raise our minds higher, and to think on their happiness, who attain unto the vision and fruition of God, and hear with ravishing admiration his all-knowing and infinite wisdom. When we are delighted with the society of God's Saints in earth, who like ourselves are full of imperfections, to take occasion hereby of meditating of that felicity we shall have in our heavenly fellowship, when both they and we shall be perfected in love and loveliness. When we take pleasure in our earthly prosperity, honors, and riches, mixed with many miseries, and are but God's common gifts, which he giveth in as great plenty to his slaves as to his sons, to his enemies as well as unto his friends, nor to rest in these worldly

delights, and to say with Peter in another case, It is good being here, but raise our minds and hearts by these occasions, to an higher pitch; thinking how incomparably greater our joy shall be, when we shall attain unto the full fruition of our heavenly happiness, which shall not be embittered with any misery, and to the inheritance which God hath prepared in peculiar for his Sons and Saints in whom he is chiefly delighted. And so shall we not dote in our worldly and carnal love, nor have our minds and hearts caught and entangled in this birdlime of worldly vanities; but use them only for present necessity and refreshing, that so we may again like Eagles leave the earth, and mount aloft in heavenly meditations and desires.

Sect. 4 - Of the right use of apparel.

And these things are generally required to the right use of our prosperity, and the temporal blessings which do accompany it. We might add some special directions concerning the right use of the chief of them. Amongst which the most ordinary and necessary, are food and apparel; of the former whereof I have spoken before, and therefore will only in some brief manner say something of the latter, of which I have entreated more largely in another place. And first let us know, that we must use our apparel to those right ends for which they were ordained, that is, for necessity of nature to cover our nakedness, and to keep us from the injuries of the weather, and for comeliness, ornament, and sober delight. In which respect those who profess Christianity, must carefully avoid in the use of their apparel, pride and vain glory, of which there is little cause, if we consider their original; which was to hide our shame, the fruit of our sin; that the richest robes are no special privileges belonging to the faithful, seeing Pagans and Heathens, worldly and wicked men and women do most exceed in them; and finally, that when we have made ourselves as brave as Solomon in all his royalty, yet the Lilies and flowers of the field will far excel us in their native beauty and bravery. And seeing they were given to cover our shame, hide our

nakedness, and to preserve us from the injuries of the weather, therefore do those fail of their end, who out of pride, vanity and wantonness, do use such as do discover them, namely, such women who lay open their naked breasts to public view, as ensigns of their own vanity, and alluring baits to draw others unto folly. Finally, seeing it was given for ornament, comeliness and honest delight, they offend on the contrary side, who being advanced to high places, fit not their apparel in some moderate sort to their rank and calling, but go in sordid and base clothes, out of a penurious mind, in a rich estate, to spare their purses and save charges. But of this I shall need to say little, being a rare fault in these days, wherein almost all offend, not only carnal worldlings, but also professors of Religion as much as they, in excessive bravery above their callings. But seeing there are extremes on both sides, what rules can be given for the observing of the mean? Surely no particular rules of direction are expressed in the Scriptures, only we are to frame our directions from some generals, as that we must in all these things use Christian frugality and sobriety, modesty and prudence. As first, in respect of the materials of our apparel, we must not be excessive in cost, nor go more richly than becometh our place and calling, but be herein frugal in our expenses, that we may have to bestow upon better uses. Neither do I know how they will answer it before God, who being as Stewards entrusted with God's talents, do spend them for the most part in superfluous cost about their own apparel, and let many of their fellow servants perish for want of clothing to cover their nakedness. In respect of the form, we ought to use Christian sobriety and modesty, abstaining from such habits and fashions as are vain and fantastical, light and garish, the which is forbidden by the Apostle Peter to Christian Matrons. Secondly, from such as belong not to our sex, as for the man to be womanish, or the woman mannish in their apparel; which tendeth to make the one effeminate, the other impudent, and both of them wanton, lascivious and luxurious; and is therefore expressly forbidden in the Word of God, as a horrible abomination in his sight. Thirdly, we must abstain from strange attire, whether it be such as is strange, in respect of diverse Countries; in which regard we ought not (as it is the common custom

of our people) to imitate the fashions of other nations, which sin being also brought into fashion, is scarce observed, but yet so great in God's sight, that he threateneth to punish it, even in Princes themselves and Kings children, and all others that clothe themselves in strange apparel; or whether it be strange in respect of our profession; as when those that profess Religion, and that they are Citizens of the new Jerusalem, conform themselves to the vain, fantastical, and garish fashions of the most profane worldlings, who are mere strangers from the Common-wealth of Israel, which is so ordinary in these days, that men cannot, and (I fear) God will not, when he cometh to visit, put any difference between the one and the other. Finally, we must observe Christian prudence in the fashions of our apparel, the property whereof is to be choice in choosing them, and then constant in keeping them. In which respect, we are, as much as we can, to avoid the common abuse of changing fashions, almost as oft as the Moon, which is a notable sign, not only of pride and vain-glory; but also of vanity and extreme folly, which is the mother of lightness and inconstancy; seeing men often change, because they have not wit to choose the best, or having chosen it, do want wit to keep their choice. The which is the more to be abhorred, and (as much as may be) to be reformed amongst Christians, in respect of the needless cost and great damage which this often change of fashions bringeth, not only on particular persons, but even upon our whole Country and Common-wealth: I say as much as may be; seeing they can be but amongst the last that come into these fashions, the stream of this corruption being so violent, that it carrieth all with it, making them to be pointed at with the finger, and derided as odd and fantastical, who keep a fashion that all have left. In which regard it were much to be wished, that this great abuse of apparel, both for matter and form, which cannot be amended by any private persons, might be reformed by public authority and general consent of the whole Estates.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

How we ought to behave ourselves in the estate of affliction, so as we may profit thereby in all saving graces.

Sect. 1 - What afflictions are, and the diverse kinds of them.

But adversity and afflictions take up no less a part of the Christian man's life, seeing there is no day passeth, which bringeth not with it some crosses and miseries; Man being born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. In which respect, it is necessary that we add some directions for the well-carrying of ourselves in this estate. By afflictions, I understand all miseries incident unto this life, which are the fruits of sin, and sent of God, either as punishments upon the wicked, to satisfy the justice of a severe Judge, or as chastisements inflicted upon the faithful, by the hand of a gracious Father, for their correction and amendment. All things also which cross our desires, and do molest and grieve us, either in their own nature, or in our opinion and conceit, which are as innumerable in their multitude, and intolerable in their supposed weight, as those which are so in deed and truth. Afflictions that have some true existence, are of diverse kinds; first, public, as wars, plague, famine, ill government in Magistrates, rebellion and disobedience in subjects, open persecution for the profession of the Truth, suppressing of the Ministry, and the light of the Gospel and such like. Secondly, such as fall out in societies between us and others; as unfaithful dealing and fraudulent courses, used by those who commerce with us, wrongs and oppressions, hard censures and ill reports, discourtesy and unkindness from neighbors and friends, with many others of like nature. Thirdly, such as are domestical and in our own families; as disobedience and unruliness, unthriftiness and untowardness; want of love and duty in our children; crossness and frowardness, riot and wastefulness, negligence and unfaithfulness in servants, ill success in our worldly business, damage and hurt in household commodities and the rest. Finally, such as are personal, as sores and sicknesses, poverty and want of necessaries, exile, imprisonment, shame, contempt, loss of goods or friends, with innumerable others which are daily incident to the life of man.

Sect. 2 - How we ought to prepare ourselves before afflictions come, that we may be able to bear them with patience when they come.

In which estate of adversity and afflictions, accompanied with such innumerable evils and miseries of all kinds, if we would rightly and as we ought, carry and demean ourselves so as we should receive no damage to our spiritual estate, nor hindrance to our salvation; yea for the present, make our troubles and griefs more easy and tolerable; there are some things to be done before they happen, and some things when they have already light upon us. Before we are to labor in mortifying and subduing of our inordinate affections and unruly passions, that they may become in all things subject to the will of God, and in the denying of ourselves and our own wills, that we may in all estates submit our persons, goods, and lives to his good pleasure, and so take up our cross and follow Christ. More especially, we must seek to moderate our fear, which aggravates our griefs, and is oftentimes more troublesome than the evil feared; confine our unlimited hopes, which when they are crossed, as much afflict us, as the loss of those comforts which we truly enjoy; stint our desires according to the necessity of nature, and not leave them to the liberty of inordinate concupiscence; bridle and subdue our rash anger, which oppresses us with weights of our own making, and maketh a mountain of every Mole-hill; mortify our melancholic discontent by a true faith, which will persuade us that that estate is best for us, in which God hath placed us; pull down our pride and haughtiness of spirit, which is one chief cause of impatience, murmuring and repining under the cross; as though we were worse dealt with than we deserve; cast away all emulation in prosperity, which in our afflictions will vex us as much in the sight of others rising, as in the sense of our own fall. Finally, we must not in our prosperity be excessive in our joy, for then in our adversity we will be as immoderate in our grief, lighting by so much the more heavily in our down-fall of sorrow, by how much we fell higher from the top of joy. Secondly, we must not fain afflictions unto ourselves, nor make those

things become crosses by a false conceit, which others would esteem comforts and benefits. We must not become miserable by thinking ourselves so, nor make unto ourselves burdens by a false apprehension, when as God doth not impose any upon us. Thirdly, we must not by fear anticipate our grief, nor make ourselves miserable before our time, by pulling crosses presently upon us, through a fearful and cowardly expectation, which either would never happen, or not of a long season. Fourthly, though we must not anticipate them by fear, nor make ourselves presently miserable, because we suppose we shall be so in the time to come, yet we must by wise and Christian providence foresee them before they happen, not only that we may use all good means to prevent them, but if they must needs befall us, that we may be prepared and so armed with patience, that they may not hurt us. For that which is (it may be) fabulously reported of the Cockatrice, is here rightly moralized; If we see them first by a wise and working providence, they will lose all their vigor and venom, die and do us no harm; but if they first reflect upon us their malignant eyes, before we discern their approaching, they will hurt and kill our souls with their poisonous influences. Fifthly, we must not in our prosperity set our hearts and affections upon any worldly things or temporal benefits; for they who immoderately love them when they have them, will grieve as immoderately when they lose them; and if we look upon them as fee-simples and perpetuities, we shall be more impatient in our sorrow when we are turned out of them as tenants at will. Sixthly, we must not either contemn afflictions before they assault us, nor yet conceive that they are so strong and irresistible, that it is in vain to oppose their fury. For a contemned enemy, though weak, getteth an easy conquest, because we being unprepared, he findeth no resistance. And he that is possessed with too much fear, out of an opinion of his enemies strength and his own weakness, is ready to fly or yield before the skirmish; And therefore as we must not securely presume of victory, in confidence of our own strength and our enemies weakness; so must we be bold and courageous in the assurance of God's assistance, and as the Apostle speaketh, neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of him. Lastly,

we must take heed, that we do not willfully run into afflictions, but use all lawful means to prevent them before they come, or to be freed from them when they are inflicted. For he that loveth danger, shall perish in it, and he that voluntarily when he needeth not, layeth a cross upon his own shoulders; hath no promise that God will take it off. We must drink of this bitter cup, but it is only when our heavenly Father doth put it into our hands, otherwise we cannot say that we are chastised by him, but that we scourge ourselves with whips of our own making, like the Lyon which is said to provoke himself to anger, when there is none to hurt him, by beating himself with his own tail. And as we must not voluntarily take crosses upon us when we may lawfully avoid them; so may we not lie under them still, when God giveth us lawful means to be freed from them; but as we are to pray that we may not be led into temptation, so also that we may be delivered from evil.

Sect. 3 - That we must bear our afflictions with patience, and what things are required hereunto.

And these are the rules which are to be observed before afflictions befall us. In our afflictions, the main duty to be performed, is, that we bear them with patience, which is that passive obedience whereby we submit ourselves unto God's will, with all meekness, humility, and contentation in all estates, bearing his fatherly chastisements quietly, constantly, and willingly, till he deliver us, and give unto us lawful means to be freed from our afflictions. So that if we would rightly demean ourselves in the time of our troubles, we must bear them with patience, unto which is required, first, obedience, humility, and contentation, whereby we meekly submit ourselves unto God's good pleasure to be chastised of him, and to bear that cross which he imposeth, saying with Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good unto him; and with David, Here I am, let him do unto me, as it seemeth good in his eyes; and with our Savior Christ; Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Secondly, that we bear our cross

quietly, with David, not opening our mouths to murmur and mutter, because it is the Lord that hath imposed it, and professing with Job, that we will lay our hands upon our mouths, keep silence, and speak no more. And howsoever we may and ought to grieve moderately in our afflictions, as being the chastisements of our heavenly Father, for our sins, which the Apostle telleth us we must not despise, yet we must labor as much as may be, to be free from tumultuous passion, from repining against God's providence, or raging against the inferior means of our afflictions, which are but as rods in his hands; imitating as near as we can the example of our Savior Christ, who was brought out as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so opened he not his mouth. Thirdly, there is required constancy, whereby we resolve to bear our burden so long, till God who laid it upon us, do put to his helping hand and take it off; that is, we must not use unlawful means to shift it from us, nor murmur against God's providence whilst it lieth heavy upon us, but hold out to bear it with all patience, till God give us lawful means to be eased of it. Which that we may do, we must, after one assault is past, prepare ourselves for another, and like good Pilots in a storm, after we have broken many billows, we are not to be secure, but still be in readiness expecting others, never ceasing our care and diligence till, we be safely arrived in the Haven of rest. And this our Savior hath warned us of, when he saith, that he who will be his Disciple, must take up his cross daily and follow him; And the Apostle James would not have our patience, only to begin well, but to have her perfect work and lack nothing. Lastly, there is required to this patience, that we bear our afflictions willingly and cheerfully; not because we can do no otherwise, but with all alacrity and readiness, as being sent of God, who by his wisdom and power can; and in respect of his goodness and truth, will dispose of them for our good. And this our cheerfulness must show itself in our readiness to praise and magnify God's Name: not so much in regard of the afflictions themselves (though in respect of that greater measure, which our sins have deserved, we have in our greatest afflictions just cause to bless God with Job, and with the Church to acknowledge the mercies of the Lord, in that we are not utterly consumed) as in regard of his

wisdom, goodness, and truth, whereby he causeth them to work together for the best, and to serve as means to further our salvation. And this the Apostle Peter requireth, that if any man suffer as a Christian, he should not be ashamed, but glorify God on this behalf. The which was practiced by Paul and Silas, who when they were cast into the dungeon, and after they were cruelly whipped, put into the stocks, bore all with patience, and expressed their thankfulness by singing of Psalms. Secondly, our cheerfulness must show itself, by our spiritual rejoicing and joy in the holy Ghost; not in respect of our afflictions themselves, which in their own nature, or as they are fruits of sin, do justly bring with them grief and mourning, but in respect of the fruits and benefits, which through God's infinite wisdom and goodness, they bring unto us in this life and the life to come. And in this regard our Savior willeth his Disciples to rejoice in their persecutions, because their reward was great in heaven. The which they accordingly performed, rejoicing when they were beat at the commandment of the Council, because they were thought worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ's Name. Unto which high degrees of patience, though we cannot attain in any perfection, yet must we labor and strive after them, and though we cannot hit the mark of perfection, yet we must shoot as near it as we can, being in the meantime sorry for our wants and infirmities; and using all good means whereby they may be supplied.

Sect. 4 - Of the means of patience, first, because God is the Author of all our afflictions.

Now the chief means whereby we may attain unto patience in our tribulations, are principally two; the first, is fervent and effectual prayer; according to that of the Apostle James; If any of you lack wisdom, (that is, to bear the cross of which he there speaketh) let him ask it of God, which giveth to men liberally, reproaching none, and it shall be given him. For it is God alone who doth comfort us in all our tribulations. He is the God of patience and consolation, the

Father of mercies, and God of all comforts, by whose wisdom directing us, and power assisting us, we are able to do all things, and preserved from sinking under the heaviest afflictions. The second help and means of working patience in afflictions, is meditation upon such reasons as may cause and begin it where it is not, and increase it where it is already begun. And these concern either the enduring of the cross, or the end and issue. The former are simple, or comparative. The simple reasons arise either from the causes, which are efficient or final, or from the subject and adjuncts of our afflictions. And first, in our meditations we are to consider, that God himself is chief cause and principal Author of all our afflictions, whatsoever be the means and instruments. The which may confirm our patience, and comfort us in our afflictions, seeing they must needs be good and just, as coming from him who is the chief Goodness in himself, and the Author and fountain of all goodness which is in the creatures. Secondly, that he hath not only in some general manner in his eternal counsel preordained our afflictions, and left all the rest to be disposed by chance and fortune, but that he specially ordereth and ruleth them with his most wise, just, and gracious providence, both in respect of their manner, measure, and continuance, making the ends of all inferior causes to serve for his supreme ends, which are his glory and our salvation. Thirdly, that the meritorious causes of all our afflictions are our sins, which are so many and grievous, that our greatest afflictions are far less and lighter, then by our sins we have justly deserved. Fourthly, that our afflictions are not signs of God's hatred, nor the punishments of a just Judge, but the chastisements and corrections of a gracious Father; and that they proceed from his mere love; the which appeareth, first, in the measure of our afflictions, both in respect of their quantity and time of continuance. For he hath appointed a measure which cannot be exceeded, and this quantity is small and light; and how long also they shall last and continue, the which time is short and momentary, in comparison of that super-excellent and eternal weight of glory which they shall cause unto us. Yea he so measureth our afflictions unto us, as that they do not exceed our ability to endure them; seeing he is always ready to lessen our

burden, or to increase our strength that we may be able to bear it. Neither doth the Lord take delight in our smart, to inflict upon us more than is needful, but measureth our afflictions, not according to desert, but so much only as is necessary for his own glory and our salvation.

Sect. 4 - That our afflictions tend to the setting forth of God's glory.

Fifthly, let us also consider the ends of our afflictions, which God propoundeth unto them, wherein his great love shineth and appeareth. The first and chief whereof, is his own glory, seeing he manifesteth his power and goodness, by assisting us in our afflictions, and by taking occasion thereby to show and try his spiritual graces which he hath bestowed upon us; the which should comfort us in all our troubles, seeing God hereby vouchsafeth us this high privilege to be instruments of his glory. The second end, is the good both of our neighbors and ourselves. They receive much good by our afflictions; seeing they learn by our example to fear God in his judgments, and are restrained from the same sins which they see corrected in us. Secondly, as we are ensamples of God's graces shining in this fiery trial, and also through our infirmities of human frailty, that seeing God's perfection in our imperfections, and his power and wisdom in our folly and weakness, they may take occasion to glorify him. Thirdly, because by our afflictions we are made more compassionate and more able and ready to comfort others, with those consolations wherewith ourselves have been comforted. The which also should make us patient in our troubles, yea even to be thankful, and greatly to rejoice, in that God useth us as means and instruments of our neighbors good, whom we ought to love as ourselves, and as much as in us lieth, to help them in all things which may further their salvation.

Sect. 5 - That God useth our afflictions as means of our own good.

Secondly let us consider, that the Lord useth our afflictions as notable means of our own good, and of deriving unto us many singular benefits, both in respect of this life and the life to come. For first he useth them for trials, for the discovery of those spiritual graces which he hath given us; not unto himself, who knowing all things, needeth no such helps, but unto us and others, that he may be glorified in them, and take occasion thereby to glorify us, by crowning his gifts, when by this trial they are approved, and may also edify those who observe them in us, and move them to follow our good example. And likewise for the making known of our infirmities and corruptions, that we may be truly humbled in the sight and sense of them. In which regard, our greatest trials not exceeding our strength, as God hath promised, should bring unto us an answerable measure of sound comfort, seeing they are assured signs unto us of the greatest measure of saving graces in us. Secondly, he useth them as effectual means to further our conversion, fitting and preparing us thereby for the more diligent hearing of the Word, and so working in us by both joined together, true contrition and humiliation. Thirdly, he useth them as special means to prevent sin, and to preserve us from falling into it; and also to mortify and subdue those corruptions, by all good means, which adhere and cleave unto us; as pride, carnal concupiscence, self-love, and love of the world. The which should greatly increase our patience, and comfort us in afflictions: for if we are willing to endure so much, to be eased of bodily and temporal evil, how much more should we cheerfully endure any afflictions, to be freed from those which are spiritual and everlasting, as the Apostle reasoneth? Fourthly, he useth them as notable helps to increase in us all his spiritual graces; as saving knowledge and remembrance of God, a lively faith, unfeigned repentance, firm affiance, hope, love, fear, patience, and humility, both by making us more careful in the use of the means whereby they are begun and increased in us, and by exercising them with these trials: And also to bring forth the fruits of these graces by new obedience, prayer, and more zealous performance of all other duties

of his service. Finally, by our afflictions, the Lord also maketh us more forward to embrace all virtues, and to perform all Christian duties, which concern both our neighbors and ourselves. For whereas prosperity usually encourageth men to wrong and oppression, affliction being sanctified unto us, is a notable motive to persuade us to carry ourselves justly in all our actions; to be merciful and compassionate towards others in their miseries; and to be meek, humble and courteous towards all men. So also they increase the knowledge of ourselves, our courage, Christian fortitude and strength to bear our crosses and miseries, as being the spiritual exercise of these graces, and finally our temperance, sobriety, modesty, chastity, as it were easy to show, if we could here insist in these particulars. In respect also of the life to come, the Lord by our affliction deriveth much good unto us, using them as effectual means, to preserve us from condemnation, and to further our eternal glory and happiness, both by assuring us of these joys (they serving as signs of our adoption and salvation) and by fitting and preparing us by them for his heavenly Kingdom, by making them to serve as a way to bring us thither, and to keep us from wandering in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Yea, he maketh them to serve as means to increase our glory and heavenly joys, seeing, according to the measure of our afflictions, he giveth unto us an answerable measure of his graces, that we may be able to bear them, and according to the measure of our graces, he proportioneth our glory and future happiness.

Sect. 6 - That this world is a place destinated to afflictions and trials.

From the subject place of our afflictions also, we may confirm our patience, and increase our comfort. For God hath appointed us in this world to suffer afflictions, and to inherit happiness in the life to come; he hath made it for a place of trial and temptation, preparation and spiritual exercise; not for a Paradise of delight, but for a pilgrimage, and therefore we must look for pilgrims

entertainment; for a place, not of triumph, but of warfare, and therefore we must expect conflicts, and the hard usage of poor Soldiers. Again, we may comfort ourselves by considering the adjuncts of our afflictions, as their necessity, for we are preordained unto them, as being necessary for the effecting the great work of our salvation, and therefore it is in vain to struggle with them, seeing thereby we may gale our necks, but not shake off our yoke, their manifold profit, of which I have spoken, their shortness of continuance, and lightness in respect of that weight of glory, which they shall cause unto us. Finally, we may be comforted by considering the fellowship and assistance which we have in all our afflictions, for we have more with us than are against us; as innumerable numbers of holy Angels which pitch their tents about us, and watch over us to keep us safe in all our ways; Jesus Christ also, who as our yokefellow beareth greatest weight, and as our Head communicateth with us in all our griefs, and assisteth us in our crosses and calamities; and God himself who is all-sufficient, and no less ready and able to uphold us with the one hand, than to wrestle with us, and load us with the other.

Sect. 7 - That all the faithful have been partakers of the like, or greater afflictions with us.

And these are the comforts which arise out of a simple consideration of our afflictions; besides which, there are others which may be raised by comparing our lesser afflictions, with those greater which others have and shall suffer. For as the Scriptures foretell these afflictions of the faithful, so they show that it hath always been their portion to bear them; yea, look for the most part how much they have excelled in God's graces, and so much they have exceeded in the measure of their afflictions, as we may observe in the examples of Adam, Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Paul, and many others. But especially we may comfort ourselves in our greatest afflictions, by considering how light and small they are, in

comparison of those grievous punishments, which Christ the Son of God's love did suffer for us both in his life and death. All which he suffered being just and innocent, for our sins, leaving us an example who are his members, to follow his steps in the same way that leadeth to happiness; seeing God hath preordained those to be like Christ in his sufferings, who shall be like unto him in glory. Finally, we may comfort ourselves, by comparing our afflictions with the punishments of the wicked, from which Christ hath freed us; seeing theirs are intolerable, but ours light and easy; theirs everlasting, but ours short and momentary; notwithstanding that our own consciences will tell us, that our sins, both in their quantity and quality, number and weight, have much exceeded many of theirs. And lastly, by comparing them with our future joys and heavenly happiness, in which respect the Apostle telleth, that the afflictions of this present world, are not worthy the glory that shall be revealed: for they are (as he saith in another place) light and momentary, but they shall cause unto us a far most excellent, and an eternal weight of glory.

Sect. 8 - Comforts arising from the good issue of all our afflictions.

And thus we may comfort ourselves with present consolations whilst we endure the cross. Besides which, there are others which arise from their issue and end, and from our assurance which we have of our deliverance out of our afflictions, in that time which is most fit and seasonable for God's glory and our salvation; seeing we have his promise for it, who is faithful and true, good and gracious unto all that trust in him. And in the meantime he is present with us to hear, help, and relieve us, who is most wise and all-sufficient, taking notice of all our troubles, and knowing how to deliver us in due time. Now if the Lord for causes best known to himself, deferreth to hear, help, and deliver us, we must wait his leisure, and use all good means to strengthen our faith, hope, and patience, by meditating on his gracious promises, and on their truth and infallibility, on his infinite

wisdom, which knoweth better than we when our deliverance is most seasonable, and his omnipotent power and all sufficiency, whereby he is able to effect it when he pleaseth. By considering also that God usually deferreth to help those, whom he hath most strengthened in grace, and who are most dear unto him, but never wholly failed to perform his promises at last to those who have waited upon him. Finally, that he deferreth to deliver us for the furthering of our eternal good and salvation; and that he waiteth upon us to save and deliver us in the fittest time; and therefore there is great reason that we should wait upon him. And these are the means for the strengthening of our faith, hope, and patience, when God deferreth to deliver us, which respect himself and his dealing with us; besides which there are others that respect ourselves, which is, first that we often renew our repentance, without which, we can have no hope of help and deliverance. Secondly, that we renew our faith in God's promises, the which is the condition of the Covenant of grace between God and us, whereby he hath assured us of them. Thirdly, that we humbly submit ourselves to God's good pleasure, which is one main end why God correcteth us, unto which when he hath attained, he will cease his chastisements, and deliver us from our afflictions. Fourthly, that we trust in God at all times, both in the presence, and absence of inferior means. Fifthly, we must be frequent and fervent in Prayer; and lastly, when we are freed from any afflictions, we must be thankful, and render unto God praise and thanksgiving. And thus with as much brevity as I could, I have set down how we are to carry ourselves in the time of our afflictions; if any need or desire to have these heads and main points more fully and largely handled, I refer them to the third part of my Christian Warfare, where I purposely have entreated of this subject.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of those Christian duties which are to be performed in the Evening
and Night.

Sect. 1 - That the Evening must not be spent in sloth and idleness.

Having entreated of those Christian duties belonging to the day; it now followeth that we set down some directions how we are to behave ourselves when the day is ended. And these are such as concern our carriage in the Evening, before we go to rest; or afterwards, when we are laid in our beds. In the Evening, if we be not taken up with the duties of our callings, wherein in the day we were employed (as it is the case of many, whose states, trades, and necessary occasions require the continuance of their labors) we must not upon the cessation of our pains, think ourselves at full liberty to think, speak, and do what we list (as it is the practice of many, who when they cannot work any longer in their callings, spend their long Evenings in the winter season, either in sloth and idleness, or in unlawful gaming, or in vain, fruitless, and oftentimes hurtful and unsavory communication, by traducing their absent neighbors, and blemishing their credits with slanders or uncharitable truths, or corrupting those that are present, by light and wanton discourses) but we must be careful of spending our precious time in some meditations, speeches, and actions which are profitable for ourselves, and for the edification of those that are in our company and society. For though it may be very lawful, and sometime necessary, after our wearisome businesses are dispatched, to take some liberty, and to spend some convenient time in resting of our bodies, or refreshing our minds with some honest recreations; yet me thinks it is too much, that so great a part of our time should be so employed; seeing our lives are so short and uncertain, and our affairs of much greater weight and importance, which tend mainly to the advancement of God's glory and our own salvation, being so many, might with much more profit and true comfort challenge unto them a great part of this time. In which regard, though I would not prescribe laws to bind the consciences of my brethren, but leave unto them their liberty to be guided with Christian prudence, yet I would, as in

other things, so herein also give my advice; namely, that they would improve this time to the best, as becometh wise redeemers of it, so as they may give some good account of it unto God when he calleth them unto it; and not think that he hath given unto them the comfortable warmth of the fire, to make them freeze harder in the dregs of sin, nor the light of their candles, that they should act by them the works of darkness, but that he bestoweth upon these corporal comforts, that they might be furtherance's unto their souls in the spiritual growth, using such good exercises as may tend to the enlightening of their minds in the knowledge of God and his will, and may warm their hearts with true and fervent zeal in the loving and embracing of them.

Sect. 2 - Of the Evening exercises, as Meditation, reading, and Christian conferences.

And first, it were fit that some little part of this time, after the surceasing of our labors were spent in some short meditation, wherein we are to recount and recall to our remembrance the special favors and mercies of God, which in the day past he hath vouchsafed unto us, either in delivering us from dangers corporal or spiritual, of sin or of punishment, or in bestowing upon us real and positive benefits, as his blessing upon our labors, whereby they have prospered under our hands, the comfort of his creatures, the love and assistance of our friends, and such like: lifting up our hearts unto God in the acknowledgement of these benefits, and rendering unto him such thanks and praise as is due unto him. Secondly, as we have best opportunity, both in respect of our leisure and our company, it were good to spend some part of this time in reading of the Scriptures, or other holy and religious writings, the Histories of the Church, or some such Civil and Moral Books and Stories, as may make us grow in grace and spiritual wisdom, or at least, in honest prudence, whereby we may be directed for the better carriage of ourselves in the affairs of this life, by adding unto our own

knowledge the wisdom of others, and the experience of former times. Thirdly, as occasion serveth, it is good to spend some part of this time in Christian conferences, either with our friends and familiars that accompany us, or with those of our own family, husbands, wives, children, servants, laboring in our speeches to build up one another in all saving grace, and to be mutually bettered in the more clear understanding of the truth, more hearty embracing it in our hearts and affections, and the more zealous and fruitful practice of it in our lives. But though I chiefly commend these Christian and religious conferences, yet would I not be so taken, as though I meant hereby to exclude all others, for it is lawful also to spend some of our time in civil discourses, and about the affairs of this life, the duties of our callings, our worldly estates, the disposing and ordering of our business, or any other subject not idle, unprofitable, or sinful, which present occasion shall offer unto us as most seasonable. Only I would advise, that we do not (as it is the common custom amongst the most) spend our time so wholly about these, as that we do thereby exclude the other, which in their nature are much more excellent, and for our use far more profitable and necessary. Lastly, we must spend some part of this time in praising God by singing of Psalms, as our company and occasions will give us opportunity; but above all other exercises, we must constantly, either before or after Supper (as in our discretion we see best and fittest for the assembling of our company) pray with our families, as before we gave direction for the like exercise in the Morning; Of both which, my purpose is (God assisting) to set down some forms in the end of this Work, for the direction and benefit of weaker Christians.

Sect. 3 - Duties to be done at our going to bed.

And these are the duties which are to be performed in the evening. In the night we are also to watch over our thoughts and actions, that they may in some sort be suitable to those in the day, and that in all of them we may carry ourselves so as becometh Christians. And in

this regard there are some duties to be performed at our going to bed, and some in the rest of the night. At our going to bed we are generally to consider, that we are still in the sight and presence of God, who seeth our down-lying and our uprising, and searcheth our most secret actions, yea even our hearts and reins. And that there is also a guard of holy Angels, who are appointed by our great Lord, to pitch their tents about us, and to watch over us, that they may preserve us from all perils and dangers, unto which we are, waking and sleeping, continually subject. In regard of which glorious and holy presence, we are as carefully and conscionably to behave ourselves in all Christian duties, as if all the world should look upon us. The first whereof is, that at our lying down, when all things being quiet about us, and we freed from all worldly distractions, we spend some little time in holy meditations, calling to our remembrance, and examining our conversation, how we have behaved ourselves in the performance of all Christian duties required of us in the day past, of which we have before spoken. As first, how we have performed those general duties which belong to every day and all parts of it. Whether and in what manner we have renewed our covenant with God, by renewing of our faith and repentance. How we have sought the Lord our God, by consecrating ourselves wholly both in our souls and bodies unto his worship and service; and have labored to make him our own in and through Christ, and to recover our right in him, which we had lost in Adam. How we have profited in the saving knowledge of him, and in our adhering unto him with our hearts and affections, how our sweet communion with him hath been increased, and the comfortable fellowship of his holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts sealed and assured in us; and how we have endeavored to have and hold his face and favor in Jesus Christ. Whether we have kept the whole Armor of God fast buckled unto us; and if we have failed herein, then in what graces we have found greatest defect. How we have endeavored to arm ourselves against all sin, and what new strength we have gathered to withstand and mortify our corruptions, especially those unto which we are naturally most inclined; and with what desire and resolution we have embraced all virtue, and labored to perform all Christian duties unto God, our neighbors and

ourselves. Whether we have rightly disposed our hearts, tongues and actions, so as they might in all things be conformable to the Law of God. How we have submitted ourselves in all things to God's will and pleasure, and resigned our souls, bodies, and states to be governed and guided by his wise providence, without murmuring and repining. Finally, whether we have been frequent and fervent in pouring forth our souls in prayer upon all good occasions, desiring the things we need, and praising him for those benefits which we have received.

Sect. 4 - That we must examine ourselves, how we have spent the day past.

So likewise we may examine ourselves, how we have performed those duties which belong to the particular parts of the day; As whether we did awake with God, and offered unto him our morning sacrifice of prayer and meditation; with what faithfulness we have walked in the duties of our callings, and how therein we have jointly aimed at God's glory, and the good of our neighbors, together with our own profit; whether we have done the duties of them in the obedience and love of God, and have performed our earthly duties, with heavenly minds and affections. Whether we have rightly used our recreations, refreshing our bodies and minds with lawful sports, in a good manner, to right ends, with observation of the rules and cautions required in them, especially in respect of their time, that we have not been over-lavish to the thrusting out, but rather fitting ourselves for better exercises. How we have carried ourselves in receiving of our food, blessing it by prayer and thanksgiving, and using it with temperance and sobriety, so as we have thereby been better fitted for God's service. Whether we have rightly used our solitariness, spending our time neither idly nor unprofitably: and how we have behaved ourselves in our society, both in our choice of good company, and in performing with them all Christian duties of piety, Justice, and civil honesty, for the mutual good of one another. How

we have performed duties belonging to the family, and what care we have had, that not only ourselves, but also those who are under our charge should serve the Lord. How we have carried ourselves in our prosperity, by praising God for it, and by so using it, as that we might be the better enabled to glorify him, and to perform all good duties to our neighbors; and how also we have profited by our afflictions and chastisements, for the drawing of us nearer unto God in all holy and righteous duties, and the weaning of our hearts and affections from the love of the world. The which examination we should not think too tedious and laborious, if at least we be in our health and strength, and not disabled thereunto by our weakness, infirmities, and unaptness to take our rest, if at the first it be but a little disturbed; in which case if our employments will afford unto us any fit leisure and opportunity, it were good to allot some short time unto this exercise before our going to bed, seeing if we be once accustomed unto it, we shall perform it, at least in those points which are most necessary for our own particular, with great facility and in a little time. Yea in truth if we would but consider how far some of the Heathens themselves have proceeded in this duty, and what singular fruits and benefits arise from it, we might well be ashamed who profess Christianity, of our great neglect, and be moved to spare some little time from our sleep, when as we may improve it to so much spiritual profit and advantage. I use (saith Seneca) this authority, and daily plead my cause with myself. When the light is taken away, and my wife being acquainted with my custom, holdeth her peace, I examine with myself the whole day past, and review all that I have said or done. I hide nothing from mine own scrutiny, I pass by nothing; for why should I fear anything, by reason of my errors, when as I can say; See that thou doest it no more, and for this time I will pardon thee. And the same counsel he giveth to his friend Lucilius: Convince thyself (saith he) as much as thou canst, search into thyself. First, execute the office of an accuser, then, of a Judge, and lastly, of a mediator to crave pardon; and sometime find out thyself. For he willingly erreth, who knoweth not his error, and too much loveth himself, who will have others err, that his error may lie hid. By which exercise we should receive singular profit: For hereby we should preserve our

souls and hearts in a thriving estate, when we do like wise Merchants and shopkeepers, examine them and search over our consciences (as it were) our books of accounts, to see whether we have gained or lost in our spiritual trading, by examining what we have received, and what we have laid out: which if we would do, we should not easily be cast behind hand, when as we prevent our errors, and use means to repair our losses in their first beginnings, nor (as many are) be bankrupted in our estates at unawares for want of care to examine them. We should sleep much more sweetly and securely, when as we have so composed and set straight our reckonings, as that we need not to fear though the great Judge should before morning call us to an account. In which regard, the same Author commendeth this exercise. The mind (saith he) is daily to be called to an account. Sextius used at the end of the day, and when he retired himself to rest; to examine his mind. What evil of thine hast thou cured? What vice hast thou withstood? In what art thou better, that anger will cease or be more moderate; which knoweth that it shall not escape the censure of an impartial Judge? What therefore is more excellent than this custom of examining every day? How sweet is that sleep which followeth the review of ourselves? How quiet, sound and free; when the mind is commended or admonished, and as a watchman and secret censurer of itself, doth judge of its own manners? We should also preserve our hearts in their purity and soundness, if not from all infirmities and corruptions, yet at least from deep putrefaction and the festering sores of sin, when as we cure the wounds being yet green, and cast out sin by repentance, as soon as it is first entered, not suffering it to lodge and sleep with us, no not one night. We should hereby keep our spiritual state well settled, so as it would not easily be shaken, or at least overthrown with the assaults of the enemies of our salvation, when as we constantly look to our Christian Armor, and watching over our hearts, as our chief forts, repair the breaches as soon as they are made. Finally, we shall prevent carnal security and hardness of heart, when we examine ourselves daily; and be better fitted and prepared for the day of death and Judgment, when as we keep our accounts even, and have our books of reckonings between God and our consciences made up and

in continual readiness. For he may soon clear his accounts with his Master at the years end, who like a faithful and diligent Factor, doth make all reckonings straight at the end of every day.

Sect. 5 - Meditations at our first lying down.

Besides this examination, there are also other Meditations very profitable; as to call to our remembrance God's manifold blessings and benefits bestowed upon us the day past, respecting our souls, bodies, and states; in that he hath preserved us from innumerable evils, with which many others have been overtaken; for continuing unto us still the acceptable time and day of salvation, and suffering us with so much patience to continue in this life, that we may make our calling and election sure, notwithstanding our manifold and grievous sins; for giving unto us some poor desires and endeavors to do him service, and to accept of it in Christ, though in itself full of wants and imperfections. Especially, if we have in any measure performed the former duties of the daily exercise, we must not forget to render unto God the praise and glory due unto him for it, by the gracious assistance of whose holy Spirit, we, who of ourselves, are not able so much as to think a good thought, have been enabled unto them. So likewise it is requisite, that at our lying down we call our sins to our remembrance, the duties which we have omitted, or corruptly performed, and the vices which we have committed, and though through God's mercy we have been preserved from grosser sins, yet we must not think ourselves so excused, but call to mind our frailties and infirmities, for which, God in his righteous judgment might condemn us. Our sloth and backwardness to good duties, our coldness, weariness, and many distractions in God's service, our excess in mirth or sorrow, the neglect of our Christian watch over our thoughts, senses, words and works; our idleness or unprofitableness, pride, self-love, unjust anger, sinister conceits, and unjust censures of our neighbors, and such like. In the sight and sense whereof, we must truly humble our souls before God by unfeigned repentance,

and earnestly beg in Christ's Name mercy and forgiveness. Finally, it is profitable then to remember our mortality and mutability, death and Judgment; that we who now go well to bed, may shortly be cast upon the bed of sickness, and we that now live, may within a while be imprisoned under the arrest of death; yea, let us not look upon it as a thing far off, but approaching at the threshold, and ready to knock at the door, and think that this very night, as well as another, may be the time when God by sickness and death will summon us to appear before his Tribunal. And if in respect of thy health and strength this seemeth unlikely, consider that it hath been the case of many before thee; and that which befalleth any, may happen to all. In which regard, let us not dare to sleep, till through Christ we are at peace with God, have made our accounts even by pleading Christ's satisfaction and full payment, and have our pardon in our hands to show, sealed to all the faithful with his blood, and to us in particular, by his holy Spirit and a lively faith, applying the fruit and benefit of his death unto us. And then resigning our souls and bodies into the hands of him who is a faithful Savior, and able to keep safe whatsoever is entrusted unto him, we may with David, lying down in peace, take our rest; because it is he only that maketh us dwell in safety.

Sect. 6 - Duties to be done in the night. And first, Prayer and Thanksgiving.

In the night also there are other duties to be performed; for even then we must seek the Lord, according to the example of the Church, which professeth, that with her soul she desired the Lord in the night, and that with her Spirit within her she would seek him early. So the Spouse in the Canticles; By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth. And the Prophet David was careful even in the night to approve himself unto God, by performing these religious exercises; I have (saith he) remembered thy Name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law. And this the Lord requireth of us, as

being Lord both of night and day, according to that of the Psalmist; The day is thine, and the night also is thine. And will be served as with our whole hearts, so with our whole time, seeing he is the God of our salvation, who day and night preserveth us, and multiplieth his blessings upon us, whereby he encourageth us to do him service. Yea, even in the night the Lord goeth in his visitation to see how we carry ourselves, and will call us to account, either to reward us if we do well, or to punish us if we neglect our duty; as David showeth by his own experience; Thou hast proved my heart (saith he) thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing. And therefore we must in the night approve our hearts and actions unto him; and not think that the darkness giveth us any privilege to do the works of darkness; seeing, as the Psalmist speaketh; The darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to him. Now the duties of the night do consist chiefly in Prayer and Meditation. For when we awake out of sleep, we must not suffer our minds to rove after worldly vanities, nor our hearts to be fixed upon them, but as we are to esteem the Lord, and spiritual and heavenly things our chief treasure, so our hearts and minds at our first awaking must be exercised about them, as their chief joy and comfort. And first, we must lift them up unto God in prayer, according to the example of holy David, who professeth, that in the night his song should be with him, and his prayer unto the God of his life. And again; O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. The which is chiefly to be done, when the hand of God is heavy upon us by some grievous affliction, because then being freed from all worldly distractions, we may with greatest zeal and fervency of Spirit, pour forth our souls before God for help and deliverance. And thus David in his great extremity calleth upon God day and night; O my God (saith he) I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season I am not silent. So the afflicted Church and people of God, in their heart cried unto the Lord; O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night; give thyself no rest, let not the apple of thine eyes cease. Arise, cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches, pour out thine heart like water before the

face of the Lord; lift up thine hands towards him, for the life of the young children that faint for hunger in the top of every street. And our Savior Christ himself in his bitter agony, made choice of the night, as the fittest time for those powerful and effectual prayers which he made for himself and his Church unto God his Father. Whereby we learn, that when we have suits of great importance, which we would solicit with all earnestness and importunity, the night is a fit time to commend them unto God in our fervent prayers. Yea even at ordinary times, if there be any special suite which we would make unto God, either for the assistance of his holy Spirit, for the mortifying of some strong corruption which cleaveth unto us, or the pardon of any sin, which hath lately wounded our consciences, or for the obtaining of some special grace, wherein we find ourselves most defective, or for deliverance from some imminent danger; it is most profitable that at our first waking we presently pitch upon them, and in some short Prayer and earnest desire of the heart, offer up our suites unto God in the mediation of Jesus Christ. And as we are thus in the night to pray for the things we want, so also ought we to praise and give thanks unto God for his gifts and blessings already received; according to the example of David, who did not content himself to show forth God's loving kindness in the morning, but also his faithfulness in the night. The which duty, upon extraordinary occasions, must be extraordinarily performed, and in some set and solemn manner; as when our hearts are ravished with the apprehension of God's mercy and bounty, after the receiving of some special and singular benefit; as we see also in David's practice, who at midnight did rise to give thanks unto the Lord, as he professeth. The which his night-songs as they were his solace in the time of his flourishing prosperity, so the remembrance of them were his chief comfort in his deepest distress, as being infallible signs of God's love, and his own integrity. For when his afflictions both of body and mind were so great, that he had no manner of consolation in his present sense and feeling, he calleth to remembrance his songs in the night, and the sweet visitations of God's holy Spirit in these spiritual exercises. Which example let us learn to imitate; and if no other occasion come presently to our minds, yet at least let us when we

awake, lift up our souls unto God, praising him for his gracious preservation hitherto, and our quiet rest, and commending our souls and bodies into his gracious protection for the rest of the night, desiring the continuance of his favor for our preservation, and of our quiet sleep, for the refreshing and strengthening of our frail and weak bodies.

Sect. 7 - Meditations fit for the night.

The other duty is meditation, in which we are to exercise our minds after a holy and religious manner, when we cannot, or list not to sleep, and not suffer them to range and rove after idle or hurtful vanities, which will not bring unto us any profit. The subject matter of which our meditation may be diverse, according to our several occasions and estates. As first and principally we must call God to our remembrance, and meditate on his saving attributes, his infinite love, mercy, goodness and bounty towards us, wherein holy David took singular comfort and delight: My soul (saith he) shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. Secondly, we may make some part of the Word of God, the subject of our meditation, as David also did, whose eyes prevented the night-watches, that he might meditate in God's Word. The which he maketh a special note of a blessed man, that he taketh such delight in the Law of God, that he meditateth therein day and night. And thus we may take occasion to think of the purity and perfection of the Law, what exact righteousness it requireth, and how far we come short of this perfection, that so we may be humbled in the sight of our own corruptions and imperfections; or of the excellency of the Gospel, and of the gracious promises therein contained, applying them by a lively faith unto ourselves, that our hearts thereby may be replenished, and even ravished with the sweet comforts of God's holy Spirit, or of God's manifold blessings bestowed upon us, especially the day past, and

the singular privileges which we have through Jesus Christ; of which we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. Or finally, we may think of some texts of Scripture, which have some similitude with our present estate. As that it is now high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer then when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light: let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, &c. And again, Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. But ye brethren are not in darkness, that the day of the Lord should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, &c. Finally, we may from present occasions have good matter ministered unto us for our meditations; as from the terror of darkness, we may think how much more fearful is the spiritual darkness of sin, from which the Lord hath graciously delivered us, leaving innumerable others to live and die in it; and that horrible estate of the wicked, who are cast into utter darkness, unto whom the light shall never appear, nor the Sun of righteousness ever shine, to bring unto them any joy and comfort; and so take occasion of praising the Lord for freeing us from these fears; and notwithstanding our unworthiness, for causing the light of truth and salvation to shine unto us rather than to them. So from our awaking out of sleep, we may take occasion to think of our awaking out of the sleep of death at the day of Judgment; and from the crowing of the Cock, of the loud and shrill sound of the last Trumpet, whereby being raised from the dead, we shall be summoned to appear before God's Tribunal, to give an account of all that we have done in the flesh, either good or evil; that so night and day we may prepare ourselves for Christ's coming, and be still in readiness to give up our reckonings. Finally, as we are not much to regard our dreams, in respect of any guess to be made thereby of any future things; so are we not utterly to neglect them in regard of other uses. For we may not only by them guess at the temperature of our bodies, and our

natural disposition in respect thereof, and unto what sins we are most inclined; but also we may take occasion from them of good meditations; as to think of our own frailty and corruption, when we find and feel that carnal concupiscence, even in our sleep, hath wrought in us, and caused either such dreams as are wanton and lascivious, or choleric, provoking us to revenge: and on the other side, to meditate on God's mercy and goodness, if we have had any dreams that savor of virtue and Religion, who by his Spirit hath sanctified our minds and hearts, which of themselves are not able naturally to think a good thought, or to conceive a good desire.

Sect. 8 - That the profit of these duties will far exceed the pains.

Now if any object, that though these duties are good and commendable, yet they are hard and difficult, and that it bringeth great weariness thus to serve God both day and night in these spiritual and religious exercises: unto such I dare promise, that their profit will far exceed their pains; and their spiritual joy and comfort, will abundantly recompense that carnal distaste which our corrupt flesh causeth in them. For if our minds and hearts be thus continually night and day taken up for God's use in these religious exercises, it will be a notable means to keep out Satan and his suggestions from entering and taking possession; as they easily will, if they be swept clean and empty of good meditations and desires. For they who are idle and do nothing, are at the next step to doing ill; and if we be not employed in the service of God, the devil will take us up like masterless men, and hire us with the wages of sinful pleasures, to spend our time and strength in the works of darkness. Secondly, if they be thus replenished with good meditations at our lying down, it will be a notable means to preserve us from vain, idle and sinful dreams, and contrariwise dispose us even in our sleep to good thoughts and cogitations. Thirdly, if we thus keep them well-ordered at our going to bed, and throughout the whole night, we shall with much more ease and pleasure keep them in this state the day following, and have them apt and ready unto the well-performance of all good duties. For as those Ovens are easily heat in

the morning, in which we baked in the night; and the fire soon kindled when we rise, which we well raked up and covered when we went to bed; so if we be thus exercised overnight, we shall find the spiritual warmth thereof, making us able and active for all good duties in the morning, and by adding some new fuel unto this holy fire, we shall with much facility and comfort cause it to burn and blaze out in all Christian and religious duties. Finally, if with the five wise virgins we thus keep our lamps trimmed night and day, being always in readiness, we shall not need to fear the sudden approaching of the Bridegroom; but at the least noise of his coming we shall rise to meet him, and so entering with him into the marriage Chamber of heavenly happiness, we shall there eternally solace ourselves in the fruition of his love, and those ravishing joys which he hath prepared for us.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

That we must moderate our sleep, and not spend too much time in sloth and sluggishness.

Sect. 1 - That this moderation is commanded in the Scriptures, and the contrary sloth condemned.

And these are the duties of the night, which are to be performed whilst we are waking. In respect of sleep, our duty is that we use it with moderation, not satisfying thereby our carnal and sluggish concupiscence, but taking only so much as is fit and necessary to satisfy nature, that we may be more strong and vigorous, active and able to perform all Christian and civil duties. Of which there can be given no certain rule, on more than of the measure of meats and drinks; for as one man's stomach requireth more, and another's less:

so one man's body, for the preserving of health and strength, needeth sleep in a greater, and another's in a lesser and shorter proportion; as youth more than age, those of a melancholic complexion less than those of a sanguine or phlegmatic, and the weak and sickly more than the strong and healthy. Yet generally we may say thus much, that as in other things, so in this, nature is content with a little, in comparison of that which satisfieth the carnal appetite. That our sleep ought to be moderate and convenient, and (as Clemens speaketh) masculine and manly, and not effeminate and luxurious, not a solution and weakening, but only a remission of the body, and therefore not to be taken for sloth and idleness, but for the better enabling us for action and employment. For as the same Author saith, A sleeping man is of no worth, no more than he that liveth not. Neither must we measure our sleep according to our business, taking too much because we have nothing to do; for a true Christian will never want employment, either for the good of his neighbor or himself, of his soul or body; and therefore howsoever upon some weighty occasion a man may abridge himself of his ordinary measure, yet ought he not to exceed and spend his time, which is so precious, in sloth and laziness, upon pretense that he wanteth employment; nor sleep any longer then is sufficient for the refreshing of his body, that it may serve his soul as a fit instrument for virtuous and civil actions. For sleep was ordained not to serve our lust, but for the repairing and cheering of the spirits, and refreshing of the body: and therefore we must not out of a slothful humor, take so much as may dull the spirits, and make the body more lumpish and heavy. For as there is a sinful excess in eating and drinking, so also in sleeping, when as we exceed that which nature requireth; and therefore as it were an ill excuse for gluttony and drunkenness, to say that we sit eating and drinking more than enough, because we have no other business; so is it alike absurd, to spend our precious time in slothful and excessive sleeping, because we want other employment; seeing as one saith, There is no part of our lives more desperately perisheth, then that which is deputed to excessive sleep. Which that we may avoid, let us consider, how the holy Ghost disgraceth the sluggard in the Scriptures. For first he maketh him more foolish and

brutish then the silly Ant, and therefore (as it were) putteth him to school to learn of her, that he might become wiser; Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. Secondly, rousing him up from his sleep; How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? He bringeth him, like one half drunk, answering in imperfect and broken sentences, and begging for a little more sleep, as the drunkard for more drink, when as already he hath had too much. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. Thirdly, he showeth that he is unprofitable and good for nothing, and ready to pretend frivolous and foolish excuses, when as he is persuaded to any good action, saying, There is a Lyon in the way, and that which is more ridiculous, a lion in the streets, as though the City were a Wilderness, and the houses dens for wild beasts. That like the door upon the hinges, he turneth and tumbleth upon his bed, and cannot be drawn from it by any persuasion, no more than the door from the hooks by much pulling and tugging; yea that he is so besotted on his sloth, that he had rather forgo his meat, then take any pains to eat it: for he hideth his hand in his bosom, and it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. The which his folly is so much the more desperate, because in all this he applaudeth his own wisdom; for the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, then seven men that can render a reason. Secondly, let us consider, that the holy Ghost forbiddeth this sluggish sloth; Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober; for they that sleep, sleep in the night, &c. Which howsoever it is to be understood principally of the spiritual sleep of security, that by this Allegory and similitude the Apostle implieth, that Christians ought not now so much to addict themselves to sloth and sleep, as before their conversion; because they have far better employments for the spending of their time; besides that, corporal sluggishness is a means, and also an effect of carnal security, even as the bodily watchfulness and sobriety is a means of the spiritual. And thus our Savior Christ by like implication condemneth it in the Parable of the foolish Virgins, who spent that time in sleeping, which should have been bestowed in furnishing and preparing themselves to meet the Bridegroom; and directly reproveth it in his Apostles, when even in the night, the ordinary

time of rest, they were overtaken of sleep, when as the weighty occasions which presently pressed them, and the special commandment of our Savior required, that they should give themselves to watching and prayer.

Sect. 2 - The manifold evils which excessive sleep bringeth.

Thirdly, consider the manifold evils which it bringeth upon us; for first, like a sly and cunning thief it robbeth us of our time, which is our most precious jewel, and when it is lost, cannot be recovered; yea even of that part of time which is chief and principal, the prime of the morning, which is fittest for spiritual exercises, as prayer, reading and meditation, and also for the civil duties of our callings. It maketh likewise that which remaineth, less serviceable and profitable for any good use; for when our strength is repaired by moderate rest, excessive sleep weakeneth us again, making our bodies heavy and lumpish, and less able and active for any good employment; and as we consumed the fore-part of the morning in drowsy sleeping, so the latter part in lazy stretching and slothful yawning, making us sluggish with too much sleeping, as the drunkard becometh more dry with too much drinking. And when the spirits are refreshed and quickened with moderate sleep, by that which is excessive they become dull again, and being drowned and stupefied with slothful vapors, they are made unfit instruments to the soul for any good actions and employments. Whereby we are notably hindered both in the duties of God's service, and in the duties of our callings, not only because it consumeth much of our time, which should be spent in them, but also greatly disableth us in that which remaineth, when we set ourselves to pray, hear the Word, read, meditate, or any civil duties which belong unto us. Finally, this excessive sleeping is exceeding hurtful both for our souls, bodies and states; for it hurteth the brain, dulleth the wit, and much impaireth the memory, making all these faculties unfit for their functions and operations. It breedeth obstructions and superfluous humors, and so filleth the body with

innumerable diseases. It impoverisheth the estate, and bringeth them who immoderately use it (if they be of mean condition) to beggary and penury; and much disableth those who are wealthy, to the works of mercy and Christian charity. And on this mischief accompanying sloth and sluggishness, the Wise Solomon much insisteth: For he telleth the sluggard, that by his sleeping, and slumbering, and his folding of his hands together, poverty should come upon him as one that travaileth, who still approacheth though he cometh but slowly, and his want like an armed man, which cannot possibly be resisted by one that lieth naked in his bed. So else-where he saith; that the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; that because he will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing, and so in the chief time of others plenty, he through his sloth shall pine in penury. Finally, that as he shall have an empty famished belly, so also a cold and tottered back, for drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags, whereas they which have a vigilant eye and diligent hand, clothe both themselves and those that belong unto them with purple and scarlet, as he showeth in the example of the virtuous housewife. Neither is this sluggish sleepiness less pernicious to our spiritual estate, seeing it bringeth the soul also to beggary and to penurious want of all saving graces, by taking up the time wherein we should trade and traffic for them in spiritual exercises, of which it causeth an utter neglect, or a short and slubbering performance, because it scarce leaveth sufficient time for the necessary dispatch of such important business as doth belong to our place and calling. For no sooner is the sluggard out of his bed, but even half unready he choppeth upon his worldly employments, and utterly neglecting prayer, meditation and all spiritual exercises, he thinketh himself sufficiently excused, because he is scanted of time, and called away by some that attend his rising, or by the importunity of his own affairs; though he have voluntarily by his sloth brought himself into these straights, and might easily have escaped them, and had time enough both for religious exercises and his worldly business, yea even for the benefiting of his neighbors that need his help, if he would not have consumed so much in superfluous sleep.

Sect. 3 - That the expense of our time in sloth, is displeasing unto God; and how this is to be avoided.

But let us know that this wasteful expense of our precious time in sloth and sluggishness, is very displeasing to God, who hath lent it unto us that we should spend it in his service; and that this account will not well pass at the day of Judgment, when God shall find it written in the book of our consciences, so much time consumed in superfluous sleep, and so little employed in the necessary duties of God's service, prayer, reading, hearing, meditation; in the religious duties which we owe to our charge and family, or in the works of charity and mercy, help and comfort which we are bound to perform unto one another, as being children of the same Father, and fellow members of the same body. At which day fearful will the estate be of those nice wantons and idle sluggards, who divide the morning between sloth and pride, having scarce time, after they are risen out of their beds, to paint and dress themselves before they come to dinner, utterly neglecting all duties of God's service, and the honest labors of a lawful calling. But it was not my purpose to have touched their abuses, who have learned to out-face all that admonish them, and to put off all that can be said, with some merry jest or scornful smile, like the fool, laughing with great jollity when they are going to the stocks, and are ready to be called to the bar, and carried out to execution; but only to admonish those who desire to lead a Christian life, that they avoid such wasteful expenses of precious time, consuming those good hours in superfluous sleep, which being well employed, would make them rich in grace, and thrice happy in this life and the World to come. Which whosoever would do, they must carefully observe these two rules; first, they must be temperate in their meats and drinks, as being a notable means to preserve us from excessive sleep and sloth, and to make us watchful unto all Christian duties, which is the reason why in the Scriptures they are conjoined; Be sober and watch, because as sobriety is a cause of vigilancy, so excess in meats and drinks is the common cause of excess in sleep.

And this help Clemens propoundeth: Let not (saith he) our meats oppress, but rather lighten us, that as much as may be, our sleep may not hurt us, as those that swim are oppressed, when heavy burdens are fastened upon them. The second rule is, that we do not suffer an ill custom of lying long in bed, to bring a habit of sloth upon us, which is almost as hard to break, as to alter nature. Or if we have already yielded unto it, our best course is, to dis-use ourselves from it by little and little, and so attain by degrees to a contrary habit. For as the stomach which is inured to hot waters, is still craving them, and becometh such a slug, that it will digest nothing without these helps, whereas those that use them not, never need them; so if we accustom ourselves to immoderate sleep, we shall turn superfluity into a kind of necessity, and with Solomon's sluggard, be still craving for more, when as already we have taken too much; whereas if as soon as we feel our spirits refreshed, and our strength repaired with moderate rest, we would shake off sloth, and rising betimes, set ourselves about some good employment, nature would be easily satisfied, and would never pull us back when we are willing to rise.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Of those Christian and religious duties which we ought to perform on the Lord's Day, for the sanctifying of it.

Sect. 1 - That if we would sanctify the Lord's Day, we must prepare for it before it cometh.

Besides the duties of a godly life which are every day to be performed, of which we have already spoken, there are others which more specially belong to the Lord's Day, of which we are now to entreat. For howsoever we ought to devote ourselves in the whole

course of our lives to God's service, yet this Day is to be set apart, and consecrated wholly after a peculiar manner to God's immediate worship, so as we may not in any part thereof do the duties of our callings, or any of our own works, which tend to the advancing of our worldly ends. Whereof I will speak the more briefly, because I have in part touched already the main points and sum of the fourth Commandment, and because also diverse of my learned and godly Brethren have excellently labored in this Argument; leaving nothing for me after their plentiful harvest, but some few gleanings, unless I would pick out of their sheaves, and say the same things again which they have better said already. And yet because my desire is, that this Treatise should be perfect in all its parts, I will briefly speak of these duties, and give some directions for the spending of this Day in such a manner, as may be acceptable unto God, and profitable for the enriching of our souls with all spiritual graces, and the assuring and furthering of our salvation. And first, if we would rightly sanctify the Lord's Day when it cometh, there is required beforehand a due preparation; neither can any action of weight and worth be well performed, which is suddenly and rashly undertaken; and scarce ever thought on before it be attempted, especially if there be much and mighty opposition, which will be never wanting in these religious duties, that so nearly concern our salvation, till we come to keep a perpetual Sabbath in God's Kingdom, seeing our spiritual and malicious enemies, the devil, world, and our own flesh, leave no means unassayed, which may make all God's holy ordinances unprofitable unto us.

Sect. 2 - Of our general preparation in the whole week.

Now this preparation is either general or more special. The general, is in the whole week before, by performing those Christian and religious duties, of which I have formerly entreated. For if the heart be kept continually in good plight and order, seasoned with the love of piety, and settled in a good course, then the duties of the Lord's

Day will be easy and familiar, sweet and delightful. And as he that keepeth himself in breath by running every day, holdeth out well when he is put to his best speed, and runneth that race for the getting of the Garland; whereas he who taketh his ease, is pursy and short-winded, and running with much pain and difficulty, tireth before he come to the goal; so if we would every day inure ourselves to run our spiritual race, in the performance of all holy duties, we should find ourselves long-winded, active, and able to hold out, when as on the Lord's Day we are put (as it were) to our best speed, for the obtaining of the Garland of grace, and Crown of glory: whereas if we spend the week in slothful ease, and pamper ourselves to the full with sensual delights; If we give our hearts liberty to range after worldly vanities, and fix them wholly upon earthly pleasures and profits; if we let our tongues loose to discourse only of sensual and terrene affairs, and never acquaint them with the language of Canaan; and if all our actions being suitable to them both, are wholly employed about temporary objects; then shall we find it impossible on the Lord's day to withdraw them from their common haunt; seeing for want of use, religious exercises will be tedious and unpleasant unto us, and though we with some force bring them to holy duties, yet finding no taste nor delight in them, they will ever and anon steal away, or violently break from us, and rove and range after worldly vanities.

Sect. 3 - Of special preparation to be used in the Evening before the Lord's Day.

The more special preparation is to be used on the evening before the Lord's Day, wherein two things are to be performed. First, we must remove all impediments which might hinder us in our rest and the sanctifying of it: and secondly, we must use the helps which may further us in these holy duties. The main hindrances which must be removed, are two, worldliness, and wickedness. By the former I understand our earthly and ordinary business, worldly cares and cogitations, which if they keep possession in our hearts, they will

choke the seed of God's Word, distract us in our prayers and meditations, and make all holy exercises cold, formal, and unprofitable unto us. For the preventing whereof it is much to be desired, that we would (as much as in us lieth, and so far forth as will stand with the necessary duties of our callings) so order and dispose of all our worldly businesses, as that they might be wholly dispatched and settled betimes on the Saturday, whereby we should not only be preserved from encroaching upon the Lord's Day (as it is the practice of many) for the effecting of our worldly affairs, which through our negligence and forgetfulness being left undone, do then press upon us as works of necessity, but also we should have hereby convenient leisure, and fit time for our better preparation unto all those holy and religious duties, which the next day are to be performed. And this is to keep our foot from the Sabbath, namely, from treading upon God's holy ground, and entering rashly upon his right, when as we appoint and set apart an interim of time between our worldly affairs, and those holy duties of the Lord's Day, as it were certain bounds between us and the Mount, to keep us from violating God's Commandment, wherein we are to wean and sequester our hearts from all worldly things, that they may be wholly intent unto holy exercises. In which regard the ancient practice of the Church was very commendable, (and consequently the neglect thereof to be lamented) which ordained that all laboring men, both in husbandry and trades, should give over their work betimes upon Saturday in the afternoon, and resort to the Church, that their bodies being refreshed by rest, and their minds prepared by prayer and meditation, they might be the better enabled to perform the public and solemn duties of God's service the Day following. The which being now neglected, and both Masters and servants taken up with their laborious business, later for the most part, that night than any other in the week, with watching and weariness they are made altogether unfit to perform God's worship, their hearts being full fraught with their worldly affairs, not having had so much leisure as to take a farewell of them; and their heads so drowsy and heavy, that they cannot hold them up from nodding and sleeping, even in that time which is allotted to divine exercises.

Sect. 4 - That in our preparation we must purge ourselves from all sinful corruption.

And as we must thus in our preparation purge our hearts from worldliness, so must we with no less care cleanse them from all sinful wickedness. To which purpose we must search and examine them, if no sins lie lurking in them unrepented of, especially such as most hinder our profiting by the public Ministry, as wrath and maliciousness, (and chiefly against our teachers) filthiness, dissimulation, hypocrisy, prejudice and forestalled opinions, voluptuousness, covetousness, worldliness, and such like. And yet more particularly we must call to our remembrance what sins we have committed the week past, and seriously repent of them; lest continuing in our wicked courses, and cherishing our sins, (as it were) in our bosoms, when we present ourselves before God, they move him to abhor us, and our sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving, and to give us over to be further hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: whereof it will follow, that our hearts becoming fat, our ears heavy, and our eyes shut, we shall hear, and not understand, and see, but not perceive, that we might be healed and converted. And this the Lord required of the Israelites, that they should first wash them, and make them clean, (namely, in turning from their sins by unfeigned repentance) and then approach and come unto him. The which was typically signified by that commandment of washing their clothes, before the giving of the Law; answerable unto which, is the sanctifying and purging of our hearts by faith and repentance from all pollution of sin, before we approach into God's presence to receive his Word. For he will not turn unto us, nor by his gracious promises assure us of his favor, till we turn from our sins; nor suffer the precious liquor of his Word to be corrupted and spoiled, by pouring it into our hearts, whilst they continue in their pollution and uncleanness. Neither are we fit to receive the ambassage of our reconciliation, till we have made our peace with him. For if having offended our brother, we may not approach unto the Altar to offer

our gift, till we have first sought to be reconciled unto him; then much less may we presume to offer unto God any religious service, until first by our unfeigned repentance, we have made our peace with him. And if our fallow grounds must be prepared and plowed up before they be sowed, then must we in like manner plow up the fallow grounds of our hearts, as the Prophet exhorteth, before they can be fit to receive the seed of God's Word.

Sect. 5 - That in our preparation we must use all helps which may further us in the sanctifying of the Lord's Day.

Secondly, we must in this preparation use all helps, which may further us in the sanctification of the Lord's Day; as namely, those common means of prayer, reading the Word, and other holy writings, meditation, &c: and more especially we must work as much as may be, longing desires in our hearts after the Lord's Day, that therein we may come into God's holy assemblies, and be made partakers of his holy ordinances; and that we may truly say with David; My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. And again, As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. O when shall I come and appear before God? For if we expect it not with desire, we shall not greatly rejoice in the fruition; if it be not our longing before it approach, it will not when we enjoy it, be our delight. Now to stir up these longing desires after it, we must meditate on the excellency of this Day above all others, seeing God hath consecrated it unto his worship and service as his own peculiar, drawing nearer unto us in all visible signs of his presence, and admitting us to come nearer unto him than at other times. Let us think on the spiritual beauty and bravery of God's House, and of his holy Assemblies graced and adorned with his special favors, and with the light of his countenance, which infinitely excelleth the Sun in brightness and comfort, whereby the Church becometh fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an army

with banners: with which spiritual beauty being wrapped up and ravished, let us cry out with David; O how amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God, &c. A day in thy Courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of my God, then to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Let us meditate on the singular privileges which the Lord on this Day imparteth unto us with a liberal hand, admitting us into his Chamber of presence, and communicating himself unto us, by giving us free liberty to speak unto him about all our wants and grievances, and to offer unto him our suits and petitions, with a gracious promise that he will hear and grant them; yea into his Council chamber, where he imparteth unto us all his secrets, and the chief counsels of his Kingdom; and not only causeth the great Charter of our peace, and manifold privileges, to be read and expounded unto us, but also sealeth it by his Sacraments for our own peculiar use. Finally, let us consider of the manifold benefits which the Lord on that Day communicateth unto us. For it is God's Festival, wherein he nourisheth our souls unto life eternal, if we bring a good appetite to this spiritual banquet. It is his great Seal Day, wherein he signeth and sealeth unto us a general pardon for all our sins, and all our spiritual evidences of our heavenly inheritance, both by the privy Signet of his Spirit, and the great Seal of his Sacraments. It is the Day of God's largesse, wherein he bountifully bestoweth upon us the inestimable riches of his spiritual graces; and the day of mustering and training his soldiers in the spiritual warfare, wherein he armeth them at all points with the spiritual armor, and infuseth into them such strength and courage, that they become invincible, and obtain victory over their spiritual enemies. Finally, it is God's market Day, wherein he freely offereth all such wares as are needful for us, without money; and to store us with all provision which shall be necessary for the preserving of our spiritual life, the whole week following. And who would not long after such a market, wherein is assured gain without loss? Who would not beforehand think of all his wants, which he may have supplied so easily and good cheap? And rather than by forgetting them, to live in penury and misery, who

would not, before he cometh to this market, seriously consider of his wants? Take sure notice of them, and rather than fail by forgetfulness, put them into his Writing-Tables, for the better strengthening of his memory, that so when he cometh to this spiritual market, he may make provision of what he chiefly needeth, and not be to seek when he is to make his bargain?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

That the whole Lord's Day must be consecrated unto him, first, by resting on it from all labor and from sin.

Sect. 1 - That we must spend the whole Day in religious exercises.

And these are the duties which are to be performed in our preparation. In the Day itself the main duty is, that we consecrate it as an holy Rest unto God's worship and service; and not in a part only, as it is the practice of many, who think that they have done all required of them, if they have spent some few hours in the public service of God, consuming all the rest of the Day about their own affairs which respect their pleasure or profit; but we must spend the whole Day in holy and religious exercises. For the Lord requireth at our hands, that we remember to keep holy, not some few hours only, but the whole seventh Day; and as he alloweth unto us for our own affairs; not some hours only of every day in the week, but the whole six days: so he reserveth unto himself for his service such a Day as he granteth unto us. In which regard we shall deal deceitfully and ungratefully with God, if we use a double measure in sharing out the time, a shorter in allotting a Day to his service, and a longer for our own worldly employments. But as he alloweth unto us six days, consisting of 24. hours, so we are not to curtail his Day, and to

shorten him of his due, but to allow unto his service a Day of like length and continuance, seeing God hath made a plain bargain with us, that he will have a whole Day for his service, as well as we six for our own employments. And therefore as we would think that our hired laborer should deal deceitfully with us, if being hired for a week to do our work, he should labor in our business some few hours every day, and spend all the rest of his time in his own affairs: so will God think of us, if we deal with him after the same manner; neither is it a less odious crime in his eyes to clip his precious time, when we come to pay unto him his due tribute, which he hath given unto us in full weight and measure; then it is unto our Prince, if we offer unto him for payment clipped coin, when we have received it good and currant out of his Mint. And if such a subject deserveth to be hanged and quartered though he payeth his tribute, because he hath paid it in clipped coin; how shall they escape unpunished, who deal no less deceitfully with God himself? Besides, as God requireth, so we profess, that we sanctify a day unto him; and therefore if having consecrated the whole, we do with Ananias keep back a part for our own use, and justify our action, that we have done all we promised, we shall both rob God of his right, and by lying unto the holy Ghost, make ourselves liable to the like punishment. Again, such a Day as God observed for his Rest, we must according to his example keep for ours; but he rested from all his labors a whole seventh Day, after he had finished his works, and created nothing anew; and therefore we must rest from our works a whole day, and not a part only. Moreover, as God rested the seventh Day, so he is said to have sanctified it, that is, to have dedicated and consecrated it as holy unto his service. Now as things consecrated to holy uses may not be recalled and reversed in whole or in part, without sacrilegious profanation, because they are no longer in our power, but God's right; so cannot we without theft and sacrilege, take from God, voluntarily and willfully, any part of that time which is consecrated to his service. Finally, the duties of the Sabbath are so manifold and important, as the hearing and reading of the Word, prayer both public and private, meditation on that which we have heard, and upon the works of creation, holy conference, and such like; that the

whole day were too short, though it were altogether spent in these religious exercises; and if they be rightly performed as they should be, they will leave us little time for any other employments. Yea, so far ought we to be from imagining that any part of the Day may lawfully be spent about our own business, that we must not think the night itself exempted from divine service and religious duties; for as the six days which God hath allowed us for our own works are natural, consisting of a night as well as of a day, and contain in them full 24. hours, according to that in Genesis, The evening and the morning were the first day; so the Lord's Day containeth in it the like proportion of time, and therefore ought to be wholly spent in the duties of God's service, as far forth as will stand with charity and necessity of nature. As we see in the example of David, who in the Psalm appointed for the Sabbath, professeth, that it is a good thing to show forth God's loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness in the night; and in Paul, who continued the exercises of Religion, as the preaching and hearing of the Word, and administration of the Sacrament when he was at Troas, even until the break of day which though it were extraordinary in respect of those times of persecution, yet it teacheth us, that the night following the Lord's Day is a part of it, and as it may in like cases be allotted to the public duties of God's service, so ordinarily we should perform in some part of it pious duties of like nature, and in the rest, compose ourselves to sleep in such a Christian and holy manner by prayer and meditation, that even as much as may be, our imaginations and dreams may retain some relish and savor of our former religious exercises. Where, by the way we may note, that as the Christian Sabbath is to begin at the dawning of the day, because it was instituted in remembrance of Christ's Resurrection, who was that Sun of righteousness, who brought light and life unto us, by performing and finishing that great work of our Redemption, and not over-night like the Jews Sabbath, which was ordained to put them in mind of the work of Creation; and the rather, because it was fit that there should, upon these diverse reasons, be a difference between their Sabbath and ours; so also it is to continue to the dawning of the next day, as we have formerly showed by Paul's example.

Sect. 2 - That we must rest from our own works on the Lord's Day.

And thus we see the time of the Lord's Day how long it is to continue: now we are to speak of the duties which ought to be performed in it. And these are all comprised in these two things; first, in observing a Rest, and secondly, in keeping it holy, or in sanctifying this Rest unto God's service. The Rest consisteth in the forbearing, or not doing of our own works, but only in cases of necessity, and when the sanctification of the Lord's Day requireth them, as duties tending to the advancing of God's service, or such works of mercy and Christian charity, as belong to this Day; as the study and pains of the Minister, the travel of the people to places of divine worship, visiting and helping of the sick and distressed, confounding of contentions, and making peace between neighbors, feeding and tending of cattle, and such like. Where, by our own works I understand all our thoughts, words and actions, which simply or chiefly tend to our own profit or pleasure. As first, the works of our callings, of all kinds whatsoever, as all works of husbandry, even in the time of harvest, buying and selling, carrying of burdens, traveling, and such like. Secondly, all kinds of recreations which are not necessary for the preserving of health and life, and tend not to the better fitting and enabling of us for religious duties, but to sensual and carnal delight. Of which sort are walking abroad that we may take the air, or that we may confer one with another, or meditate on the creatures, some bodily exercise in course of physic to refresh the body, and in some cases music, not only vocal by singing of Psalms, which is a duty of the Sabbath, but also on instruments, when as it is used, not for carnal and sensual delight, but to refresh our spirits, and quicken our dull and drowsy hearts and minds, that they may with more cheerfulness return unto the performance of religious and holy duties; in which cases there may at sometimes be the same use of these recreations, (so they be in moderation, in an holy manner, and to these ends) which is of physic, meats and drinks. But from all other recreations which tend only to carnal and sensual delight, we must wholly abstain; first,

because the Lord expressly forbiddeth us to do our own pleasure on his holy Day, and contrariwise commandeth us to call his Sabbath our delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and that we should honor him, nor doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasures, nor speaking our own words. Secondly, because they are our own works, from all kinds whereof God's Commandment restraineth us, that we may be wholly devoted to the service of God, and the means which enable us thereunto: yea, they may in some sort be called more our own works, then the works of our callings, because these are more expressly commanded, and are ordinarily more necessary, and more directly tend to God's service then the other; for it is possible to live and serve God without these recreations, but not unless we walk in the duties of our callings. And therefore if these be forbidden on the Lord's Day, then much more the other which are of less use and necessity. Finally, because these worldly recreations do more dangerously and cunningly wind into our hearts, steal them away from holy duties, and distract us in God's service, then the duties of our callings, the works and labors whereof we do not love for themselves, but only as they are means of deriving pleasure or profit unto us, whereas we love these sensual pleasures for themselves, and oftentimes so dote upon them, that we neglect our worldly profit; yea the service of God itself, and the eternal salvation of our souls, that we may enjoy them.

Sect. 3 - That on the Lord's Day we must abstain from carnal recreations.

Now if any object, that to deprive us of these recreations, is to take away all the joy and comfort of our lives; to this I answer, that it is an objection which altogether misbeseemeth a Christian. For howsoever Infidels and carnal worldlings may rejoice chiefly in them, as having no greater cause of joy and comfort; yet it ought not to be so with the faithful, who should chiefly rejoice in the Lord, and in the pledges and testimonies of his love and favor, in their Communion with him,

who is their summum bonum, and chief happiness, and the visible signs of his gracious presence; unto which spiritual joy David exhorteth; Delight thy self in the Lord, and he shall give the desires of thine heart. Of which, he in many places propoundeth himself as an example for our imitation. Secondly, if we be spiritually, and not carnally and worldly-minded, we may make the Lord's Day itself our delight, as he requireth, which if we do, then we shall indeed find sweet delight in the Lord. For what greater delight can there be to a Christian, then to praise God by singing of Psalms, who hath been so good and gracious unto us? Then to hear the Word, whereby God assureth us of his favor, and of the pardon of our sins, and receive the Sacrament, whereby it is sealed and assured unto us? Then to feast our souls at this spiritual banquet, and afterwards meditate on, and peruse our spiritual evidences, whereby the assurance of heavenly happiness is conveyed unto us? Then to be assured that we are redeemed out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, and restored to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God? Then to solace ourselves in the sweet society of Christ our Bridegroom in his Banqueting-house, and to be stayed and comforted with his flagons of wine, apples, and kind embracements? Which spiritual joys if we relish not, what doth it but argue a carnal taste and appetite, which we ought to bewail and mortify, and not feed and cherish it with vain sports and worldly recreations, which is to strengthen the flesh against the Spirit, and to put weapons into it hands, whereby it will mortally stab and wound us? But what then, shall our servants have no time of recreation, who have wrought hard all the week? I answer, To them that are wearied with labor, the rest of the Lord's Day is the best and fittest recreation for the refreshing of their bodies; and if they be spiritually-minded, the exercises of the Sabbath before spoken of, are the best recreations for the cheering of the heart and mind. For who can reasonably think when a man is tired with the weeks labor, that violent exercises which are required to many recreations, and bodily labor to the most, should recreate a man more, then an holy and religious rest, hearing the Word, singing of Psalms, holy conferences, and such like, if carnal love did not take away all appetite from these, and supply spirits and strength for the

achieving of the other? Yea, but we must take our servants as they are, and have some respect to human frailty and infirmity; and though we may persuade them to delight in spiritual exercises, yet in the meantime, till they be alike spiritually-minded with us, we must give them liberty to use those recreations wherein they take pleasure. Well, let it be so, yet is it necessary that the Lord's Day must be the time allotted to these sports? Will we lay sacrilegious hands upon this Day which he hath appropriated unto his service, and convert it to our own use and pleasure? And whereas being chief Lord of persons and times, he might have reserved six days for himself, and allowed but one unto us, now that he hath dealt thus graciously and bountifully with us, as to appropriate but one for his own worship, and leave six for our business, shall we think that one too much, and ungratefully encroach upon it? And holding all in Kings service saving a seventh part which is reserved as an acknowledgement of our Sovereigns bounty, who gave us freely all the rest, shall we grudge and repine to pay this due tribute, and greedily seize all into our hands by a false tenure? Finally, shall we think six days too little for those businesses which tend to the good of our bodies, and our momentary estates, and shall we think one too much to be employed for the good of our own, and our servants souls, and for the furthering and assuring of our own and their everlasting salvation? Rather therefore if recreations be necessary for our servants, let us allot some of our own time in the six days for this use, then rob the Lord of any part of his Day, unto which we have no right; and not conclude with this childish, yet devilish sophistry, That seeing of necessity they must have some time for their sports, therefore it must be on the Lord's Day, rather than any of our own. As if we would say, They must needs have some money to spend on their pleasures, and therefore to get it, they must rob by the high-way, or pick other men's purses, but not have a penny of our allowance. Now if those recreations, which at other times are lawful, or of indifferent nature, be on the Lord's Day forbidden as unlawful; then what shall we say of such as are at no time lawful, but simply evil and wicked? In which notwithstanding many that profess Christianity, spend a great part of the Lord's Day, as if they would consecrate a feast to Bacchus or

Venus, yea the Devil himself, whose works they are, rather than unto God, who being pure and holy, condemneth and abhorreth these fruits of the flesh, and works of darkness as odious and abominable.

Sect. 4 - That we must rest from sin of all kinds on the Lord's Day.

Thirdly, our care must principally be on the Lord's Day to abstain from all sin, which above all others is to be esteemed the most servile work, seeing the committing thereof is the base service of the devil, and our own carnal lusts. In which regard, as we must at all times avoid it, so especially on the Lord's Day, which is a holy rest, consecrated to his worship and service, seeing we cannot offer unto him a greater indignity, then to serve the devil in the works of darkness, when we should serve him in the exercises of piety and Religion. And as we are carefully and conscionably to avoid all kinds of sin, so those principally wherewith the Lord's Day is most ordinarily profaned, which being the sins of the times and Country, will by the contagion of evil example, most easily poison and infect us, if we do not warily avoid them. Among these, we may number proud and laborious curiosity in decking and adorning of the body, which doth so wholly take up the time of some, especially of the weaker sex, that they have scarce any leisure for any spiritual exercises, whereby they should privately serve God, and prepare themselves for his public worship in the Congregation. Secondly, excessive and unnecessary feasting, especially of our equals, by which, servants ordinarily are more toiled, then on any other day in the week, and so wholly taken up with these businesses, that they can seldom come to the House of God to do him service. So that as David sometime seemed to envy the happiness of the Sparrows and Swallows, which had that liberty of coming into the Tabernacle which he wanted: so have these poor Cooks and servants cause, not only to envy them, but even their Masters Hawkes and Dogs, which accompany them to the House of God, when as they, whose souls are no less precious then their Governors, and purchased at as high a

rate, even the inestimable price of Christ's Blood, are constrained to stay at home with hungry and starved souls, for want of spiritual food, that they may provide superfluity and abundance of corporal meat for the pampering of the flesh. And with this excessive cheer we may also reckon immoderate eating and drinking of ordinary meats and drinks; for as surfeiting and drunkenness are never seasonable, but are always unlawful, and to be shunned as works of the flesh; so above all other times upon the Lord's Day, as being not only in themselves sinful, and works of darkness, but also notable impediments, which disable us unto all holy duties, whilst oppressing the heart, surcharging the stomach, and filling the head with drowsy fumes, they make us more fit to sleep, then either to pray, or hear, or meditate, or to perform any other duty of God's service. And unto these we may add dispatching of slight businesses, which are thought scarce worth the while upon the week days, as unnecessary journeys, and idle visitations, casting up our accounts, and setting our reckonings straight, carrying home of work done the week before, giving directions and instructions to our servants for the dispatching of their business the week following, and such like.

Sect. 5 - That we must not think our own thoughts on the Lord's Day.

Fourthly, we must refrain (as much as in us lieth) from thinking our own thoughts on the Lord's Day, that is, not only such as are sinful and wicked, vain and good for nothing at any time, but those also which are worldly and about our earthly affairs, which may be lawful on other days. For the Lord requireth not the outward man, and external actions alone to be consecrated to his service, but chiefly and principally the mind and the heart, in which, above all other parts he delighteth. And he forbiddeth us to walk in our own ways and pleasures on his Holy-day, which is to be referred to our thoughts as well as to our outward actions, seeing we delight in the one as well as the other. In which regard we must use our best endeavor, to sequester our minds and hearts from all worldly and

earthly things, that they may be wholly exercised in spiritual and heavenly Meditations. And as it is unlawful to think and meditate on earthly things on the Lord's Day; so also to spend any part of this time allotted unto holy and religious duties, in the reading and studying of profane Books, and such writings as are merely civil and human, as the Story of the times, and Histories of the Commonwealth, liberal Arts and Sciences, and such like, which may make us more wise to the world, but not to God; fit us for earthly employments, but neither furnish us with spiritual grace, nor yet further our heavenly happiness. Finally, as we must abstain from thinking our own thoughts, and doing our own works on the Lord's Day, so also from speaking of our own words, as the Lord requireth. By which we are to understand all discourses which are merely worldly and about earthly things, more than charity and necessity requireth; all idle and frivolous talk, of which, if we must give account, though it have been uttered at ordinary times, how much more upon the Lord's Day, when as our tongues, (which as David calleth them, should be our glory, to glorify God by uttering his praises) are employed in sounding out our own froth and fooleries? All speeches about our worldly pleasures and profits, or about things impertinent, as other men's affairs, news and novelties which do not concern us, especially in respect of our spiritual estate and condition, which we ought chiefly and solely to respect on this Day.

Sect. 6 - That we must not do the Lord's works after our own manner.

And these are the works which we must leave undone on the Lord's Day; from which as we must abstain, as the matter of our employments, so also from doing the Lord's works after our own manner. Neither is it enough that we refrain from all sinful and worldly actions, and do the duties which God requireth of us, seeing if we do them not in that sort and manner as he requireth; that is, spiritually, holily, zealously, and religiously, with upright hearts and

good consciences, we make them no better than profane and servile works, which God will reject as odious and abominable. For if we worship the Lord only with the outward man, and not with our hearts and souls, with the lips alone, and not in Spirit and Truth, in show and hypocrisy after a formal, cold, and careless manner, and not with upright hearts, substantially and zealously, he will demand of us as of the Jews, Who hath required these things at your hands? He will complain of us as of them; This people draw near unto me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. He will censure our service, as he did their sacrifices; He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered Swines blood: and he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an Idol. And though we pray, and preach, and hear, yea even work miracles in Christ's Name, yet if we do them not in a right manner, he will reject us at the day of Judgment, and exclude us from his heavenly joys, as being no better than workers of iniquity.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

That we must sanctify our rest, by consecrating it to the duties of God's service.

Sect. 1 - That we must rise betimes on the Lord's Day.

And thus much concerning the rest, and things from which we must abstain on the Lord's Day; The second thing to be considered, is the sanctifying of this rest, by consecrating it unto those duties of God's service, which upon this day he requireth of us. For it is not sufficient, that we refrain from working, and do nothing, seeing our beasts do this as well as we, but we must make it a holy rest, abstaining from our own works, that we may do the works of God. In which regard it is called, not only a Sabbath, and day of rest, but God's Sabbath and Holy-day, wherein he enjoineth us to do him service. And if he abhorreth idleness at all times, and condemneth

the neglect of our own works in all the rest of the week, then much more if we be idle upon his Day, and spend that time which he hath allotted to his own service, in sloth and idleness. Neither doth the Lord simply require a rest for its own sake (seeing in itself it is less profitable and acceptable then action and labor) but as being a sanctified rest, it is a means to fit us for his service, which is the end of it, unto which if we attain not, it is vain and unprofitable, yea wicked and sinful. Now the duties of God's service, whereby this rest is sanctified, are either private or public; the which, because they are interchangeably mixed with one another, therefore I will observe a mixed method in handling of them. The first private duty, is, that we awake and rise as timely this day to do God service (and if we be Governors of families, that we cause those who are under our charge to do the like) as we do (or ought to do) on any of the week days to do our own works. Yea, seeing God's works are of much greater weight and worth, then our own, and our spiritual gain of grace, and means of furthering the salvation of our souls, and our everlasting happiness in the life to come, are incomparably more excellent then earthly riches and delights, therefore as we are watchful on the week days to pursue these, and are willing to abridge ourselves of our ordinary sleep, when we have any good opportunity offered for the compassing of them; so should we herein exceed on the Lord's Day, wherein we have such good means offered of enriching our souls with the spiritual treasures of God's saving graces, and of attaining unto the assurance of our heavenly joys, and those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore; so far forth as the frailty and infirmity of nature will suffer, and not disable us through drowsiness, caused by want of sufficient sleep, unto the public duties of God's service. And therefore far be it from us that profess Christianity, to imitate the practice of carnal worldlings, who rise betimes upon the week days to go about their own business; but when the Lord's Day cometh, lie long in bed, and (as they say) take up their penny-worths of sleep, in which they were scanted by their earthly employments, because they think it an idle time, wherein they have nothing to do, saving to make themselves ready and go to Church; but rather, according to our profession, let us imitate the

example of our Savior Christ, who did awake betimes to do the works of God, rising before day to pray, and afterwards preaching in the Synagogue.

Sect. 2 - Of meditations fit to be used on the Lord's Day.

Secondly, being awakened out of sleep, we must in the first place settle ourselves to perform those religious and holy duties belonging to every morning, of which we have formerly spoken, but with these differences; first, that we respect in them the Lord's Day, and make special application of them unto that present occasion. And secondly, that we do in an extraordinary manner stir up ourselves to perform them with more ardent zeal, and greater devotion than at any other time. For example, we must awake with God, and in our first thoughts set him before us, and ourselves in his presence, that we may in a special manner perform the peculiar duties of his service, which that Day above others he requireth of us. And first, we must devoutly lift up our hearts and souls to praise his holy Name, for preserving us the whole week and night past from all perils and dangers, continuing still unto us, life, liberty, and all good means and opportunities, whereby we are enabled yet once again to sanctify his Sabbath, by performing unto him the duties of his service; earnestly desiring the continuance of his favor, and the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, to guide and lead us throughout the day following, that we may therein carry ourselves in such an holy and religious manner, as that all the service which we perform unto him, may be pleasing and acceptable in his sight, and may wholly tend to the advancement of his glory, the edification of our brethren, the enriching of our souls with all spiritual graces, and the furthering and assuring of our salvation. After which short Prayer, we are to spend some time in holy meditation, the subject and matter whereof may be the infinite and inestimable love and mercies of God, innumerable ways showed unto us, but especially in giving unto us his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, to die for our sins, and as

this Day to arise again for our justification. In which, we may enlarge ourselves as time and leisure will serve, by calling to our remembrance the particular parts of Christ's Passion, as his miseries and afflictions in the whole course of his life, his betraying and apprehension, his haling to the Judgment seat of mortal men, who was the Sovereign Judge of heaven and earth, his accusing and condemning, who was innocent, that he might acquit us who are malefactors. Also how he was railed and spit upon, scourged and tormented, clothed with purple and crowned with thorns, scorned and derided, numbered among the wicked, and crucified between two thieves, died the death, the bitter, ignominious, and cursed death of the Cross; and in his soul bore and endured for our sakes the anger of God, much more heavy and intolerable than all his other sufferings, which made him in that his bitter agony to sweat water and blood, and to cry out upon the Cross; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Unto which, we may add in our meditations the manifold and exceeding fruits and benefits of his death and resurrection redounding unto us, that so we may not only be stirred up to unfeigned thankfulness unto God the Father, who hath of his mere love given his Son, even when we were strangers and enemies, to do all this for us; and to God the Son, who hath, being equal with his Father, thus humbled himself to work the great work of our Redemption; and to God the holy Spirit, for applying the fruits and benefits of Christ's passion and resurrection unto us, making them effectual for our justification and salvation: but also having our hearts inflamed with the apprehension of this their love, we may be moved hereby to love them again, and be made zealous in their service, thinking nothing enough which we can do, to glorify them who have been so good and gracious unto us. We are to meditate also on our sins which we have fallen into, especially since the last Lord's Day, either in the omission or imperfect performance of good duties, or in the commission of evil that we may seriously bewail and repent of them, before we present ourselves in the holy assemblies, to perform the public duties of God's service. Seeing he will be honored in all that draw near unto him, either in his mercy, by forgiving the sins of the repentant, or in his justice, by punishing those that

continue in their impenitency. So also we are to examine and search out those sins and corruptions, unto which our frail nature is most inclined, and wherewith we have been most often overtaken, that so going into God's spiritual armory, we may fit ourselves with such weapons as may defend and strengthen us against them; and get such wholesome preservatives, as may keep us from being tainted and infected, after our recovery, with the like contagious poison. We are likewise to examine our wants, and in what graces of God's holy Spirit we are most defective, and in what holy duties we are most backward and sluggish, that so we may supply our defects when we come into this spiritual market, by applying such doctrines and instructions, admonitions and exhortations, as shall be most fitting for this purpose.

Sect. 3 - Of Prayer, Thanksgiving, and reading the Scriptures privately on the Lord's Day.

After some time spent in these and such like meditations, we are in the next place to perform the duty of private prayer, which is to be fitted to the Lord's Day. For prostrating ourselves before the Throne of grace, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, we are to confess and acknowledge, as our other sins, so those especially whereby we have offended God in respect of his Sabbaths, and the duties of his service; as our original corruption, whereby we have utterly disabled ourselves, in all the powers and parts of our souls and bodies, to all holy duties and religious worship, and become apt and prone to the contrary sins; and our actual transgressions, whereby we have broken all God's Commandments, especially those which respect his Sabbaths and service; as the profaning of his holy Day by utter neglect of all holy duties, or by imperfect performance of them, want of preparation, of reverence and attention, faith and fervency of spirit in hearing the Word, and calling upon God's name, want of care in laying it up in our hearts and memories, and practicing it in our lives, &c. And thus as in our Complaints we are to bewail other

wants, so those especially which make us unfit to perform any acceptable service unto God; and in our petitions, as we are to beg other gifts and graces whereof we stand in need, so those above others, which enable us to the better sanctification of the Lord's Day, in performing unto him his spiritual worship; as hungering and thirsting after the means of God's glory, and our salvation, prepared hearts, and good consciences, faith, and fervency of spirit, reverence and attention in hearing the Word; and God's blessing and assistance of his holy Spirit unto his Minister and Ambassador, that he may speak the Word powerfully and profitably, as to all the Congregation whereof we are members, so unto us especially for our edification and building up in all spiritual grace; the mortification of our special vices and corruptions, the increasing of our virtues, and confirming of our strength, unto the performance of all Christian and holy duties, wherein as yet we are most defective. And finally, in our praises and thanksgiving we are to magnify God's holy Name, as for all his blessings and benefits, so for those especially which respect this Day; As the giving of Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Redeemer, and causing this Sun of righteousness to arise and shine unto us; the continuance of his Sabbaths, and the light of his Gospel, wherein he revealeth unto us his holy will concerning our salvation, and the means whereby we may attain unto it: the peace, liberty and safety which we enjoy, together with his spiritual favors, for granting unto us his Word and Sacraments, and making them in some measure effectual by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, for the begetting and increasing of our faith, and the work of Sanctification in us, and the like. With prayer we must also, as leisure and opportunity serveth, join the reading of some fit portion of holy Scriptures, for the better seasoning of our hearts, and settling of our affections upon holy things, for the inflaming of them with the love of God's Law, and with longing desires after the public means of our salvation. With which private exercises when we have prepared ourselves, we must, if we be governors of families, use all good means for the fitting and preparing of our children and servants for the public service of God; not thinking it enough for those that have the charge of others, to perform private duties by themselves, unless

they cause their inferiors also to join with them. But especially, before we go to the Church, we must call them all together unto prayer, wherein, after the confession of our sins, and earnest petition for all necessary graces, we are to desire the assistance of God's holy Spirit, for the sanctifying and preparing of the whole family, that they may in some acceptable manner perform all good duties which belong to the Sanctification of the Lord's Day. Neither must we (as many do) think it sufficient, that we bring our families to God's service, nor neglect the duty of private prayer, because it is to be performed publicly in the Congregation, and so cause one duty to shoulder and thrust out another, but we must join them together, seeing the private service of God is not only on his holy Day acceptable in itself, but a notable and necessary means to fit and prepare us for the right performance of his public worship. In which respect, as we must be careful that the public service do not exclude the private, either morning or evening; so much more, that the private do not hinder the public: but we must so order and dispose of these family-exercises, as that they may be finished in seasonable time, and not hinder us from coming to the beginning of public prayer with the residue of God's people.

Sect. 4 - Duties to be performed when we are going to the Church.

After all which duties performed in the family, we are, when we are ready to go unto the Church, or when we are in the way, to spend that time in holy Meditations, thinking with ourselves that we are going, not upon some slight or ordinary business, but to present ourselves in the glorious presence of the great King of heaven and earth, who being infinite in all holiness and perfection, and a God of such pure and piercing eyes, that he seeth not only our outward actions, but searcheth the heart and reins, hateth and abhorreth all impurity and corruption, dissimulation and hypocrisy, all cold, formal and negligent service, and will be worshipped of us in spirit and truth. Let us call to mind that we are going, not to confer with

our companions, or with mortal men, not much superior unto us, but to speak and make our suits to God's supreme and most glorious Majesty, and to hear him speaking unto us by his Ambassadors, in whose presence the heavens are unclean, and the blessed Angels hide their faces. And that not about ordinary and slight matters, but such weighty and important business, as no less concerneth us, then the eternal salvation or damnation of our bodies and souls. Finally, that we are going about such affairs as will (according as we dispatch them) make us much better or worse. For, the Word shall prosper, to the achieving of that end, for which God sends it, and shall never return in vain; either it will soften us like wax, or harden us like clay; either it will be God's strong power to our salvation, and the savor of life unto life, or the savor of death unto death, for our deeper condemnation, and by performing this duty in hearing of it, we shall be nearer heaven or hell. And having with these and such like meditations brought ourselves to the place of divine worship, let us enter into it with all fear and reverence, as into God's own House and place of his glorious presence; saying with Jacob, Surely the Lord is in this place; how dreadful is this place? This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

CHAPTER XL.

Of the public duties of God's service on the Lord's Day.

Sect. 1 - That we must join with the Congregation in all the duties of God's service.

And thus having placed ourselves in God's holy Assembly, we are to join with them in all duties of God's service, with unanimity of heart, and uniformity in action and gesture, as becometh those that profess

themselves to be of the same communion of Saints; carefully avoiding the proud, superstitious and ignorant practice of those, who in God's public service make a rent in the Congregation, reading of a book when others are praying, and praying privately to themselves, when they should join with the rest of the people in the hearing of God's Word. First then, when the Minister prayeth, we are to join with him as being our spokes-man, who in our name, as well as his own, maketh known our suits unto God, and returneth unto him praise and thanksgiving for all his benefits. In which regard, we are to accompany him in this holy exercise, with such reverence and attention, zeal and devotion, faith and fervency of spirit, as if his tongue were the interpreter of our hearts. But of the duties of prayer I have spoken before, and therefore here pass them over. Secondly, we must apply ourselves to hear the Word diligently and attentively, when it is read unto us by God's Minister, not slighting it over as a duty of small moment, which we may as well perform at home; seeing this ministerial reading in the Congregation, is more effectual for our spiritual good, then our private reading; even as a Sermon preached, is more powerful and effectual then a Sermon read, because these public means are God's holy ordinances, the which he accompanieth with his grace and holy Spirit, infusing by them more virtue and vigor into those who rightly use them, then by private exercises.

Sect. 2 - Of our hearing of the Word, and what is required unto it.

The third duty is, that we carefully and diligently hear the Word of God preached unto us, with all reverence and attention, alacrity and cheerfulness, faith, humility, and a good conscience. First, we must hear the Word with all reverence and fear; and to this purpose we must remember that we are in God's sight and presence, who taketh notice of all our carriage and behavior. Secondly, considering that the Minister speaketh not in his own name, but as God's Ambassador, we must hear that which he speaketh, not as the word

of a mortal man, but as it is indeed the Word of the ever living God, whereby one day we shall be justified or condemned. Moreover, we must hear it with all attention; and not suffer our eyes to rove, and our minds and hearts to be carried away with wandering thoughts, but our eyes must be fastened upon the Preacher, as the eyes of our Savior Christ's hearers were upon him; and like them, we must hang upon his lips, as the child upon his mothers breasts, to suck from them the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow up thereby. Neither must we want only affect the froth of human wit and eloquence, but the pure and powerful Word of God which is able to save our souls; not such flashes and idle conceits as tickle the ear, but never pierce the heart; and work a present delight, but neither inform the judgment, nor reform the affections, but sound doctrine, and wholesome nourishment. For no more is the Minister bound to preach the Word in the demonstration of the Spirit and power, plainly and profitably, then the people to hunger after the sincere milk of the Word, and the wholesome food of their souls, which is fit to nourish them unto everlasting life. Thirdly, we must hear the Word with alacrity and cheerfulness, seeing as the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, so a cheerful receiver and hearer, and in all duties especially requireth the service of the heart. The which we shall the better do, if we consider that the Word is the spiritual seed whereby we are regenerate and begotten unto God, the food of our souls which preserveth spiritual strength, and nourisheth them to life eternal, the light that guideth us in the way of salvation, the physic that cureth us of our corruptions, the means of working in us all spiritual graces, and of assuring unto us everlasting happiness. Fourthly, we must bring faith to the hearing of God's Word, without which it will profit us nothing, as the Apostle speaketh. By which faith we do not only steadfastly believe those things which are soundly delivered out of God's Word, but also effectually apply them unto ourselves for our own particular use, as if they were spoken to none but us. And thus we must apply the threatening's of the Law for our humiliation, that we may escape God's Judgments, instructions for our information, admonitions and reprehensions for our repentance and amendment; counsels for our direction, and

consolations for our comfort. By which application we make the food of our souls our peculiar nourishment, for the begetting and increasing of all God's graces in us. Fifthly, we must hear the Word with humility, submitting ourselves unto it as God's ordinance and Scepter of his Kingdom, to be ruled and governed, directed and instructed, admonished and reprov'd by it, that so it may be mighty in us to cast down the strong holds of sin, and to make way for God's graces against all oppositions of carnal reason, and proud will. Finally, we must hear with a good conscience, propounding unto ourselves in this religious duty, the glory of God as our main end, that knowing his will, we may serve him, in yielding unto it entire and sincere obedience; and next unto it, our own salvation, by being edified thereby in our most holy faith, and more and more enriched with all sanctifying and saving graces. And to the end that we may daily profit in attaining unto these ends, we must labor not only to conceive and understand what we hear, but also to apply it unto our own use for the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, and not to hear it as an unprofitable discourse, suffering it to go out at the one ear, as it cometh in at the other, but to lay it up in faithful memories, that we may bring forth the fruits of it in our lives and conversations. To which end we must carefully observe the Preachers method and order; as the coherence of his Text with that which went before, and followeth after, the main drift and scope of the holy Ghost in that Scripture, the explication and meaning of the words; the division of the Text into its several parts and branches; the main points of doctrine which are gathered out of them severally and in order, how they are proved by Scriptures, or reasons grounded on them, illustrated by similitudes, and enforced by exhortations. And finally, the uses which are raised out of them, for confutation of errors, admonition, reprehension or consolation: or if this method be not observed (which ordinarily is most profitable in a mixed and vulgar auditory) but the main point in the Text is handled by way of common place; then are we to observe his definitions of the virtue, vice, or other thing handled, the causes, effects and common affections, the subject place, the time, and other adjuncts, the dissentanies and contraries, the distribution of the whole into the

parts, or of the general into the specials, and how every branch is followed, proved, illustrated and applied. Or if the Sermon want method, or we skill to conceive it, or memory to retain it, (for it sometime happeneth, that method which is the chief help of memory, through too much curiosity and multiplicity of divisions is a means to confound it) yet let us at least observe those things that are delivered, which we knew not before, for the increasing of our knowledge, and bettering of our judgment, what vices are reprov'd, or virtues commended, with the reasons and illustrations of them both, what hath most convinced our consciences, what hath been well pressed and wrought effectually upon our hearts and affections, for the withdrawing of them from any sin, their inflaming with the love of anything that is good, and the stirring of them up to the embracing and practicing of any Christian and holy duty.

Sect. 3 - That we must stay in the Church from the beginning to the end of the Sermon.

The last duty in hearing is, that we continue from the beginning of the Sermon to the end, and as we are to come with the first, so we must not (as the manner of many is) depart, till all the exercises of Religion being fully concluded, the whole Assembly be dismissed. For as it is great unmannerliness at a solemn feast, to rise before the table is taken away, unless it be in case of sickness, weakness, or some important business; so they which depart from this spiritual Feast before it be ended, are either very unmannerly and void of due reverence and respect of God's presence, and his holy guests, and if they be not troubled with bodily infirmities, do show the sickness of their souls, when their spiritual appetite is so queasy, that they loath their nourishment, or that they think the employment which they go about, of greater weight, or at least much more necessary, then the feeding of their souls with this spiritual Manna, and using the means of their salvation. Neither must we haste away after the Sermon is ended, as though we would rush out of prison as soon as the door is

opened; but we must stay still, that we may join with the Minister and the Congregation in prayer and thanksgiving, if any be (as there ought to be) after the concluding of the Sermon; seeing as in receiving our corporal food, so also in the spiritual, we have as just cause and occasion of praising God for benefits received, as of praying for his blessing upon them before we received them. But if it be omitted, we must supply this defect in respect of our own particular, by lifting up our hearts unto God, praising him for causing the light of his Gospel to shine still unto us, and for all the wholesome instructions, admonitions, reproofs, and consolations which he hath graciously at that time imparted unto us. And if there be a Psalm sung, we must join with the Congregation, praising the Lord with mind and voice, and making melody unto him with our hearts: which being ended, we must expect the blessing of God pronounced by the mouth of his Minister, with all reverence and devotion, esteeming it of great efficacy, as if God himself did bless us by them. For so we read, that God appointing Aaron to pronounce such a blessing upon the people, saith, that he should hereby put his name upon them, and he himself also would bless them. And therefore being of such importance, we must not, through over-much haste, leave it behind us as a needless complement.

Sect. 4 - Of our duty in receiving the Lord's Supper.

And if the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be administered, having duly prepared ourselves, we are to communicate with the rest of the Congregation; and not unmannerly depart from this holy Feast, being invited, when we see it set upon the Lord's Table. For it is a part of God's public service, which is not left as arbitrary at our choice, to do, or leave undone, but expressly enjoined by our Savior, Do this in remembrance of me. It is a notable means of confirming and increasing our faith, being the Lord's Seal, wherewith he hath ratified his Covenant of grace and salvation with us; the which being often shaken with temptations, and wounded and weakened with our

sins, needeth often to be strengthened and renewed. It is the badge and livery whereby we are known to be God's servants; and therefore coming to do him service, we ought not to cast it off, when the rest of the family put it on. It is a testification of our thankfulness to God and his Christ, for all their benefits, especially that great work of our Redemption; and a profession of our faith, that we rest upon the mercies of God, and the death and merits of Christ for our justification and salvation, which we are not to neglect when others perform it, but to take all good occasions of testifying our faith, love, and thankfulness unto them. It is a notable means to put us in mind of Christ's death, and to apply all the fruits and benefits thereof unto ourselves, when as we see him crucified, his body broken, and his blood poured out before our eyes. It is the Sacrament of our union with Christ, and communion one with another, wherein we are knit together in the bond of love, and make profession that we are fellow-members of the same body whereof Christ Jesus is the Head; whereof if we refuse to communicate, having no good and necessary ground for it, we shall make a rent in the body, and deny the communion and profession of our love one with another.

Sect. 5 - Of our duties to be performed when Baptism is administered.

So likewise if the Sacrament of Baptism be administered, we are not to depart, before this holy action be finished, but to continue in the Congregation, not as idle spectators, but as being tied hereby to perform diverse Christian duties both unto God, ourselves, and the party baptized. In respect of God, we are to stay the administration of this Sacrament, that we may show our reverence to his holy ordinances, and glorify his blessed Name, for granting unto his Church and us, the use of them. Secondly, in respect of ourselves, that we may renew our Covenant with God, by calling it afresh to our remembrance, together with his sweet mercies, and gracious promises in Jesus Christ; and also our own vow and covenant which

we have made with him in our Baptism, that we may renew our resolutions and endeavors to perform it daily in more perfection, and in the meantime take occasion upon our slips and failings to bewail our wants and imperfections. That we may also call to mind what fruits we have found of our Baptism, and whether we have felt the virtue of Christ Jesus his death effectual for the mortification of our sinful corruptions, and of his Resurrection for our spiritual quickening unto newness of life. Lastly, in respect of the party baptized we ought to stay, that we may perform unto him such Christian duties as God requireth. First, to commend him unto God by our prayers, that he may be truly regenerate, engrafted into the body of Christ as a lively member, and so made partaker of his death, merits, and all his benefits. Secondly, that we may, as free-men of this Christian Corporation by our presence, give our assent to his outward admission into the Congregation. And finally, that we may, with the rest of the people, join in praising and giving thanks unto God in his behalf, for admitting him as a new member into the communion of Saints, and entertaining him for a servant of his own family. All which duties we neglect, if we depart before the celebration of the Sacrament, and as much as in us lieth, make them utterly void by our ill example; for if all should do as we do (as everyone may think such liberty belongeth unto him, which he seeth taken by another) there should not any at all be left to perform them. The last action which is to be performed at our departing out of the Congregation (or before, if the custom be so) is, that if there be any collections for the poor, we contribute towards them, according to our ability, and their necessity, and that with a willing and cheerful mind, knowing that with these sacrifices God is well pleased; that what is thus given, is lent unto the Lord, who will bountifully repay it in this world, and the world to come; and given to Christ himself in his poor members, who of his free and mere grace, will reward these works of mercy, with an heavenly and everlasting inheritance in his Kingdom. And these are the public duties of God's worship and service, which we ought to perform in the Congregation on his Day: And that not only in the morning (with which some content themselves) but we must renew them, or the most of them in the

afternoon; as Prayer, hearing the Word, and singing of Psalms, &c. seeing God even in the time of the Law would have an evening, as well as morning sacrifice offered unto him, and therefore will not have his service more negligently performed in this greater light of the Gospel, wherein he affordeth us more plentiful means of our salvation. For the performance of which duties I shall not need to give any other directions, then those which I have before set down for the morning exercise.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of such duties as are to be performed on the Lord's Day, after our coming from the Church.

Sect. 1 - That we must meditate upon that which we have heard.

And these are the public duties of God's service, which we are to perform on his Holy-day. The private duties are diverse. The first is, that at our coming home we meditate upon those things which we have heard, and not only carefully recall them to our remembrance, that they may be imprinted in our memories, but also apply them unto our own use, for the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, and the reforming of our lives and conversations, purposing with a full resolution, that we will put in practice whatsoever we have learned, both in the forsaking of those vices and sins which we have heard condemned, and the embracing and performing of those virtues and Christian duties which have been commended unto us. For if we do not thus make it our own, and (as it were) cover this holy seed of God's Word in the furrows of our hearts, the devil will steal it away, as the birds do the seed that falleth by the high way, and make it altogether unfruitful, so that after much hearing we shall still remain children in knowledge, and in the spiritual growth of grace and godliness, and like riven and leaking vessels, retain little or nothing of this precious liquor, because it runneth out as fast as it cometh in. Secondly, with this Meditation we are to join fervent and effectual prayer, desiring God's blessing upon that which we have heard, whereby it may be made effectual for his glory and our own salvation; and the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, to bring home not only to our memories, but also to our hearts and consciences, those things which we have heard and learned, that we may, as occasion serveth, fruitfully practice them in the whole course of our lives; concluding these our prayers with praise and thanksgiving unto God for this gracious liberty, in enjoining his

Sabbaths, and in them the exercises of Religion and means of our salvation.

Sect. 2 - Of family exercises after we are come from the Church.

At our meals we are to spend the time in such holy and religious conferences, as may be no less profitable for the cheering and refreshing of our souls, then our corporal food for the nourishment of our bodies; and in the performance of such other Christian duties tending to piety and God's service, as before we prescribed for other days, which upon the Lord's Day, above all the rest, ought to be done with greatest zeal and devotion; which being finished, it is good to sing a Psalm to God's praise, and to read one or more Chapters of the holy Scriptures. After which Christian exercises, we may, if time will permit, confer together of those things which we have heard and learned at the forenoons Sermon, and by causing everyone (as it were) to offer his shot, to make up the whole reckoning, one remembering what another hath forgotten, and he again supplying that wherein the other is defective, whereby it will come to pass, that whatsoever any one hath gathered of these spiritual treasures, shall not only be more firmly locked up and deeply imprinted in his own memory, but shall also serve as a common stock for the enriching of the whole company. And this being done, we are then again by Prayer and Meditation, to prepare ourselves for the well performing of God's public service in the evening exercise, as we did in the forenoon; which being finished in that holy and religious manner before prescribed, and afterwards by some meditation recalled to our remembrance for our own private use, it will be profitable for governors of families to call together their children and servants, and either by strength of their memories, or help of their Notes taken of the Sermon, to repeat as near as they can what hath been delivered, that so the things not marked may be better observed, and that which was forgotten may be recalled, and by this repetition may more surely be engraven in the memory. Sometimes also it will be fit

and necessary to prevent negligence in the younger sort, that the governors of the family do examine them, and require of them an account of that which they have heard, that they may see how they have profited by the public Ministry. For if they think it necessary that they should give them an account of their worldly business, or how they have laid out their moneys when they have sent them to the Market; then much more should they examine them what spiritual Markets they have made for the good of their souls, and how much they have gained by the use of God's holy Ordinances, for the enriching of them with the treasures of knowledge. In all which, the Master of the family must show much love and patience, commending those who answer well, and bearing with the infirmities of such as are of meaner capacities and weaker memories, when they see that they do their best, and do not fail through gross negligence, that they may not, by being shamed and disgraced, be altogether discouraged in these religious exercises. To which purpose, they must make the best they can of their imperfect answers, by enlarging and perfecting them, and supplying that in which they are defective. And on the other side, the inferiors must show themselves tractable and teachable, and with willingness and cheerfulness submit themselves unto God's holy Ordinances, that they may profit by these exercises, and increase more and more in the knowledge of God and his will.

Sect. 3 - Of other private duties to be done on the Lord's Day.

After the finishing of which family exercises, we are to spend the rest of the time before Supper in other Christian duties, as in visiting and comforting those that be sick or in any other great affliction, and ministering unto their necessities if they stand in need of our help. In making peace and friendship between those who are at variance, by compounding the differences which are between them. In meditating upon the great Book of the creatures, and observing in them the infinite and admirable wisdom and goodness, power and providence

of our gracious God, that we may take occasion to render unto him the glory and praise of his own works, when we see their wonderful variety and comely order, their qualities and forms, their beauty and excellency, their use and profit for the service of man. Observing likewise in them, such good properties as are worthy our imitation, and be ashamed that they should exceed us in them, who have the use of reason, and so many religious helps and means; and their ill properties, that we may avoid them; taking occasion thereby to be humbled in the remembrance of our fall from our created purity and integrity, as being the principal cause of all their defects and imperfections. So also we may in this respect make good use of the Creatures, when by them we take occasion of some spiritual Meditation: As when we see their beauty, to think how infinitely beautiful he is that created them; when we consider how delightful and profitable they are unto man, to conceive thereby what surpassing excellencies God hath prepared for his own Children in his Kingdom of Glory; when we observe how serviceable they are to man, to think how much more diligent we should be in serving our great Lord and Master, who hath given both to them and us our birth and being. More particularly, when we behold the earth whereof we were made, let us take occasion to think of our own baseness, and that we shall be resolved into earth again; when we see the flowers of the field, let us think of the momentary mutability of worldly prosperity, and of our own mortality, who are like unto them; when we look upon the Suns glorious brightness, let us take occasion thereby to think of God's glorious Majesty, and of the glory and brightness of the Saints in heaven, who shall far exceed it. Of which, we have our Savior Christ an example for our imitation, who took occasion from corporal bread and water, to discourse of the spiritual Manna and Waters of life; from a worldly feast, to speak of a spiritual banquet, and of the living waters of his grace and holy Spirit, given to all that believe in him. And this is a fit and profitable exercise on the Lord's Day commended unto us by the Scriptures, and practice of the Church, as hereby it appeareth, in that the Psalm, which was specially appointed for the Sabbath, containeth in it for the most part a Meditation upon the works of God.

Sect. 4 - That the evening must be spent on religious exercises.

In the evening of the Lord's Day we are not to surcease our Christian and religious exercises, but after we have at supper refreshed our bodies with the use of God's creatures, and our souls with holy conferences, we are to spend some time in singing of Psalms, and in reading the Scriptures, or other religious and profitable writings. After which duties performed, all in the family ought to join together in hearty and effectual prayer (not thinking themselves excused from private duties, because they have been at the public exercises of Religion) wherein as we are to acknowledge other sins and imperfections, so those especially we have showed the day past in our cold, formal, weak, and negligent performance of the duties of God's service. And as we are to crave other blessings, so especially that the Lord by his grace and holy Spirit will bless unto us the means of our salvation, and Ministry of his Word, whereof we have been partakers on that Day, writing the things we have learned in our memories and hearts, and enabling us to put them in practice, and to make use of them in the whole course of our lives. And finally, as we are to praise God for all his other mercies, so particularly for giving us time to sanctify his Sabbaths, and suffering us to enjoy the blessed light of his Word and Gospel, for granting us liberty with such peace and safety, to tread in his Courts, and to make our suits and supplications known unto him, with assurance to have them heard and granted. And thus having finished this holy exercise, and the time of sleep approaching, we must prepare ourselves thereunto with such religious Meditations, as on other days were prescribed, the which at this time are to be done with extraordinary zeal and devotion; and so commending our souls and bodies into the hands of God, we are to desire him that he will watch over and sanctify us so with his grace and holy Spirit, that we may spend the night also in an holy Rest, being freed from worldly, carnal, and sinful dreams, and having our phantasies and thoughts, our hearts and affections, both sleeping and waking, taken up and exercised in good and godly

Meditations: And that he will so season our hearts with the savor of the Days religious exercises, that even in sleep our dreams may relish of their sweetness, and when we awake, our thoughts and Meditations may be wholly taken up and exercised about such holy things, as tend chiefly to the glory of God, and the everlasting salvation of our souls.

Sect. 5 - That we must perform all our service to God in integrity and sincerity of heart.

And these are the duties which ought to be done on the Lord's Day; which if we would perform after a right manner, so as they may be acceptable unto God; then our care must be, that howsoever we have many wants and imperfections in our best and most religious service, yet that we do perform it with integrity and sincerity of heart, laboring and striving to the uttermost of our power, to do all that which God hath commanded, and as near as we can in that manner, and according to all other circumstances as he requireth, being heartily grieved in our souls when we fail, that we can do them no better. For example, though we find in us natural averseness to the strict keeping of God's Day holy, and much dullness and spiritual deadness in the duties of God's service; yet if our hearts be upright with God, we will labor to make his Day our delight, and to consecrate it wholly as an holy Rest unto his worship, with all alacrity and cheerfulness as he requireth; and we will strive to find such spiritual sweetness in holy and religious duties, as may make us to delight much more in them, then in our ordinary food, when we come unto it with hungry appetites. And finding our corruptions so hanging upon us, that we fail much in satisfying our holy desires, we will heartily bewail our averseness and untowardness, our drowsiness and weariness in holy duties, and seeing our frailties and infirmities, will resolve to labor after more perfection. Again, howsoever through forgetfulness, negligence, or other distractions, we may omit some of those duties before prescribed, for the

spending of the Lord's Day, yet if our hearts be upright before God, we will not bless and please ourselves in this negligence; but endeavor in some sort to perform them all as we are able, without omitting any of them; As both the private and public means of God's worship, Prayer, Meditation, hearing, reading, singing Psalms, holy conferences and the rest, so far forth as God granteth unto us time and opportunity. And if we have through forgetfulness or negligence omitted any, we will be unfeignedly sorry for it, and purpose amendment for the time to come. Furthermore if we sanctify this Day with integrity of heart, then will we consecrate the whole Day to this holy Rest as God hath appointed, and not abridge him of any part of his due, or voluntarily spend any hour of the Day in profane and worldly exercises. And howsoever we may through our frailty and corruption be often overtaken, thinking our own thoughts, speaking our own words, and doing sometime our own works on the Lord's Day, yet if our hearts be upright before God, we will not please ourselves in this profanation, but our hearts smiting us for it, we will repent, make humble confession of it among our other sins, and earnestly desire to be freed, not only from guilt and punishment of it by God's gracious pardon, but also from the corruption itself for the time to come by his grace and holy Spirit. Finally, having labored to perform these duties of the Lord's Day in the greatest perfection we are able, and having in some poor measure satisfied ourselves in them; yet if our hearts be upright with God, we will not be proud of anything which we have done, nor exalt ourselves above others which we think come short of us, but we will humbly praise God for that which we have received, and ascribe all that is good in us to his free grace and holy Spirit; yea, we will easily discern and acknowledge our best actions stained with so many corruptions, and mingled with so many imperfections, that when we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable servants, who are sufficiently rewarded if we be not punished.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

Containing in it the properties of a godly life, and of all the duties which are required unto it.

CHAPTER I.

That all duties universally of a godly life, must be performed in sincerity and integrity of heart.

Sect. 1 - Of that universal and total obedience which is required.

Having showed what the godly life is, and the duties which are required unto it generally in the whole course of our conversation, and more specially those which belong unto every day, it now followeth, according to that order which we have propounded, that we entreat of the properties of this Christian life, and the duties belonging to it, which may serve as marks and signs, whereby we may know them, and also distinguish them from all other which are false and counterfeit. All which may be referred to two heads, the first sort, respecting the duties themselves, the other our manner of doing them, and that both in respect of the action, and also the time of their continuance. The first property respecting the duties themselves, or the matter and form of them, is Universality; for God being the universal Creator, preserver, and Sovereign Lord of all things, will have us wholly taken up in performing of all duties of his service, and requireth of us universal and total obedience, both in respect of the subject and object of it. In respect of the subject or person that performeth it, the Lord requireth the obedience, not of some few or many parts alone, but of the whole man, internally in the soul, and all the faculties of it, especially the heart and will; and externally, in all the powers and parts of the body, and chiefly our tongues and speeches, and our works and actions. Internally, God enjoineth us to serve him in the duties of a godly life, with all our hearts and souls, which is that wherein he chiefly delighteth, and without which, all outward actions, be they never so formal and glorious, are vain and worthless, yea loathsome and odious in his

sight. And hereunto there are two things required, which are so like and near in nature, that they are commonly taken the one for the other, but yet (as I take it) they may be distinguished, though never severed.

Sect. 2 - Of integrity and sincerity.

The first is integrity, whereby we serve the Lord in all Christian duties with our whole hearts, according to God's Commandment; Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. The which David performed, as he professeth: With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy Commandments. Unto which is opposed, serving God by the halves, lamely and haltingly, dividing our hearts between him and his enemies, the devil, Idols, and the earthly Mammon; like the Israelites which halted between God and Baal, the true Jehovah, and Idols of the Heathens, and the Samaritans, who feared the Lord, and served their own gods. And of such the Prophet Hosea complaineth; Their heart (saith he) is divided; namely, between the true Jehovah, and their Idols. And the Apostle James calleth them double-minded, who are unstable in all their ways, one while offering unto God some formal service, and another while serving the world, and their own lusts. And as they have double hearts, so also double tongues, speaking vanity to their neighbors with flattering lips, and with an heart and an heart, or a double heart. The second is sincerity and uprightness of heart, without any mixture of guile and falsehood, when as we worship God in simplicity, truth, and singleness of heart, and in performing the duties of his service, do lay aside all carnal, worldly and by-respects, and do them only in conscience of his Commandment, and out of a desire to glorify him by our obedience to his holy will, seeking him therein with our whole hearts, and not ourselves and our own worldly ends, like servile mercenaries, who serve their masters, not out of any love they bear him, but only for their own gain and advantage. Unto which is opposed dissimulation and hypocrisy; which maketh men to content themselves with

outward shows, which have no substance; with outward profession, without all sound practice; with a dead carcass of Religion, without the soul of sincerity, or any virtue and vigor appearing in their actions; and with a formal, false and counterfeit service in the outward man, without any substance or truth in the inward parts.

Sect. 3 - Reasons moving us to embrace integrity and sincerity. 1. Because the Lord chiefly loveth and delighteth in it.

Now because these two are never severed, neither in the subject, nor in our practice, I will not disjoin them in my discourse; but will show, first, the reasons which may move us to perform all our service unto God, and the duties of a godly life with integrity and sincerity; and then the means whereby we may attain unto it. For the former, we are to embrace this integrity and sincerity, truth and uprightness of heart in all duties of a godly life, because the Lord chiefly loveth and delighteth in them, preferring them much before all outward duties, seem they never so glorious. For he loveth truth in the inward parts, and esteemeth it far above all legal sacrifices, and therefore after all they are abrogated and abolished, retaineth it still in all duties of his service. And as David also speaketh in another place; He trieth the heart, and hath pleasure in uprightness. Neither doth he see as man seeth; for man looketh to the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh upon the heart. Whereof it is, that he chiefly requireth this integrity and sincerity in all his service; Thou shalt keep his Statutes and Judgments with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. So Joshua: Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth. And Samuel; Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, and with all your heart. And this God requireth of Abraham, Walk before me, and be upright: And David of his son Solomon; Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. And finally, our Savior faith, that he requireth it of all who offer to do him any service, that as he is a Spirit, so also they should worship in spirit and in truth. And as we must generally observe it in all God's worship, so in all the parts and duties of it: For we must call upon God in sincerity and truth, if we desire that he should hear us; we must with

David, Praise God with uprightness of heart; and, in singing Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, we must not chiefly respect the vocal tune, but make melody unto the Lord with our hearts, as the Apostle speaketh. We must keep unto God the spiritual Passover, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We must do the works of mercy, and give our alms with our hearts, as well as with our hands, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver: And in a word, whatsoever duty we perform unto others, we must do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. On the other side, he condemneth dissimulation and hypocrisy, as vices which are most loathsome and odious unto him: yea so much doth the Lord abhor it, that in the Law he forbiddeth the very signs and shows of it. He would have no leaven in his Passover, nor their garments made of linsey-woolsey, nor their fields plowed with an Ox and an Ass, nor sown with seeds of diverse kinds; not that God cared for these things, but to show, under these types and shadows, how much he detesteth all hypocrisy and double-dealing.

Sect. 4 - That our imperfect obedience is accepted of God, if it be done in sincerity and integrity.

Secondly, this may move us to embrace integrity and sincerity, because the Lord so highly esteemeth it, that he accepteth of our obedience as perfect which springeth from it, though it be stained with much corruption, and joined with many imperfections. Whereof it is, that in the Scriptures integrity and perfection are promiscuously put the one for the other; and those are said to have been perfect before God, who in simplicity and uprightness of heart labored after perfection, and served God in sincerity and truth; as Noah, Abraham, Job, David, Asa, Zacharias and Elizabeth, though they had many corruptions and imperfections, which in the Scriptures are recorded of them. And contrariwise the best graces, or rather the most glorious shows of them, and the most resplendent and formal actions which are not joined with it, are no better at the best then glorious sins in God's sight: whereof it is that the Lord specially requireth in all our graces and virtuous actions, that they be in sincerity and

truth, without dissimulation and hypocrisy. So that wisdom which is from above, is without hypocrisy and dissimulation, though carnal men think them most wise who most excel in it. Our faith must be unfeigned, and so must our repentance also, and with our whole heart; and not like Ahab's, in outward show only, dissembled and disguised. Our love must not be in speech and tongue only, but in deed and truth: we must call upon God in truth and sincerity, or else our prayers will be but mere lip-labor, which God will not hear or regard. And therefore David useth his sincerity in praying, as an argument to persuade the Lord to give him audience; Give ear (saith he) unto my prayers, which go not out of feigned lips. And Hezekiah his integrity of life, as a reason to move him for the repealing of the sentence of death, and prolonging of his days. Remember now, O Lord, (saith he) I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, &c. Finally, our preaching must not be deceitful, like those which make Merchandise of the Word; but as of sincerity, of God, and in the sight of God. And our hearing likewise of the Word, must be in sincerity, as in God's presence, and as those that hear the Word, not of man, but of God. For otherwise our seeming graces and virtuous actions, like beautiful pictures which want life, spirit and motion, are not substantial in God's sight, but shows and shadows only, if integrity and sincerity be wanting, not looking unto God's glory, or showing any love and obedience unto him, but only unto our worldly and carnal ends and by-respects of our own pleasure, profit or preferment.

Sect. 5 - That the soundness of all graces and holy duties consisteth in the sincerity of them.

Thirdly, we must perform all holy duties of a godly life in sincerity and integrity, because otherwise we cannot approve ourselves for sound Christians accepted of God, what outward show soever we make; nor our badges and signs of Christianity such, as will give unto us any assurance that we are in the Covenant of grace: for as the Apostle saith, He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew which is

one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God. And though such duties as are done in hypocrisy, may get the applause of men, and gain their praises, causing them who do them to be magnified and extolled; yet God no further regardeth them, then to vilify, condemn and punish them; For he seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh but to the outward appearance; but God looketh unto the heart: In which regard, that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God, as our Savior speaketh.

Sect. 6 - Of the rewards of sincerity and integrity.

Fourthly, because the Lord doth richly reward this integrity and sincerity, with the blessings of this life, and that which is to come: For the Lord is a Sun and a Shield, he will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. In this life he multiplieth all his favors upon them who serve him in sincerity and truth. For, he is good unto them which are clean in heart. And to such he limiteth all his gracious promises, which he performeth unto them upon this condition only. So he promiseth unto the Kings of Israel and Judah, that he will confirm their Kingdom unto them, and their posterity after them, if they would walk before him in truth, with all their heart, and with all their soul. Whereof it is that Solomon affirmeth, that the Lord kept Covenant, and showed mercy unto his servants that walked before him with all their hearts. And therefore Hezekiah entreateth God to perform this promise unto him and his posterity, grounding his faith on his observing this condition, seeing he had walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart. So God is near unto them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth; and will save and deliver them from all perils and dangers, and out of the hands of all their enemies: For he saveth the upright in heart, as David affirmeth. And so Solomon saith, that the righteousness of the upright shall deliver them; which maketh them bold and confident as Lions in perilous times, as elsewhere he speaketh. In the life to come, God also crowneth the sincere and upright service of the faithful with joy and

happiness: for he giveth not only grace in this life, but glory also in the life to come, to those that walk uprightly. And such shall here dwell in his Tabernacle, and hereafter in the Mountain of his holiness. So Solomon saith, that he who walketh uprightly, shall be saved: and David affirmeth, that the upright shall dwell in God's presence: and our Savior Christ saith, that they shall be blessed in the vision and fruition of God, which is the height and perfection of our heavenly happiness. And therefore seeing this integrity and sincerity is such a precious treasure, as maketh us both happy and blessed here, and in the world to come; it is no marvel if the faithful have always esteemed it as their chiefest and choicest Jewel, preferring it before all earthly things, yea even life itself; as we see in the example of Job, who patiently suffered himself to be stripped of all his worldly substance, but clasped so fast to his integrity, when his wife and friends would have pulled it from him, that he would not leave his hold to the very death; God forbid (saith he) that I should justify you, (to wit, whilst you go about to censure and condemn me of dissimulation and hypocrisy) till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go, my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live. If then we delight in that wherein God chiefly delighteth, and will do that which he requireth, and flee from that which he abhorreth; if we would have ourselves and our service accepted of him as perfect, which notwithstanding are full of imperfections and corruptions: If we would have any true saving grace, or perform any Christian duty pleasing unto God; if we would be numbered amongst sound Christians, or would enjoy any of God's blessings in this world, or in the world to come, then let us labor daily in the use of all good means whereby we may attain unto this sincerity and integrity of heart, and perform all the duties of God's service and of a godly life in uprightness and truth.

CHAPTER II.

Of the means whereby we may attain unto integrity and sincerity.

Sect. 1 - The first means is, to set God before our eyes, and ourselves in his presence.

Now the means hereof are diverse. First, we must set God before our eyes, and ourselves in his presence, performing all the duties of his service, not as those who have men only to look upon and censure us, who alone behold the outward actions, but as in the sight of God, who searcheth and trieth the very secrets of the heart and reins, and knoweth whether our hearts be upright, and our actions performed in sincerity and truth, or deceitful and done in hypocrisy, not aiming at his glory in obeying his Commandment, but at by-respects and worldly ends: Herein following the example of David, who desiring to walk in the way of God's Commandments with an upright heart, used to set God always before his eyes. For carrying ourselves in all our conversation as in God's presence, is the means to make us upright in all our ways, whereof it is that this phrase of walking with God, is used, to signify the integrity of God's servants in all their conversation; and God himself persuading Abraham to uprightness, exhorteth him to walk before him, as a means thereof; Walk before me (saith he) and be upright. So David useth it as an argument to persuade Solomon to serve the Lord with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, because the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. And Paul in his preaching shunneth all deceit in handling God's Word, and useth all sincerity, because he spake as in God's sight and presence.

Sect. 2 - The second means is to meditate on the excellency, profit, and necessity of integrity and sincerity.

The second means is, to meditate on the excellency, profit, and necessity of this sincerity and uprightness of heart. The excellency herein appeareth, in that the Lord so highly esteemeth it, that he approveth them as perfect, who serve him with this integrity, though they be never so full of wants and weaknesses, and neglecteth, yea severely punisheth the most glorious works of Hypocrites which are done without it. It is most profitable, seeing God withholdeth

nothing from them that walk uprightly; for he is unto them a Sun and a Shield; a Sun for consolation, a Shield for protection; a Sun to give them life, a Shield to defend life given; a Sun to make them fruitful in all good, and a Shield to preserve them from all evil; and he will give unto them grace in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come. Finally, the necessity of this integrity and sincerity hereby is manifest, seeing the best graces which are without it, are false and counterfeit, our wisdom devilish, our faith dead, our repentance feigned, our love worldly and carnal, our zeal dissembled, our Religion hypocrisy, and all the seeming good duties which we perform, of no esteem in God's sight. For if sincerity be wanting, our prayers are but lip-labor, our preaching a kind of merchandizing for the hire of worldly gain, as the Apostle implieth; our receiving the Sacraments no more accepted in us, then in Judas, and Simon Magus; our giving of alms, not being done with upright hearts to please God, but to be praised of men, shall have the hypocrites reward; that is, glory before men, and eternal shame before God, his Saints and holy Angels.

Sect. 3 - The third means of integrity and sincerity.

The third means is, to consider that nothing shall be wanting unto us, for protection from dangers, or supply of necessaries, if we will serve God in sincerity. For he is all-sufficient without the help of inferior means, and a most powerful and bountiful Master, who is both able and willing to reward and protect all such as do him faithful service; so as there is no cause why we should halt between him and the world, or give any place to dissimulation and hypocrisy, for fear or favor, as though we could no otherwise escape danger, or obtain things necessary for the supplying of our wants, unless we be more careful to please men then God; seeing he is all-sufficient in himself to protect and provide for us, and hath both the hands and hearts of all men at his disposing, so as they can neither help nor hurt us, but so far forth as he is pleased to use them as instruments to serve his providence. And this argument the Lord useth to persuade Abraham unto this sincerity; I am God all-sufficient; walk

before me and be upright. As though he should say, Though thy idolatrous friends forsake thee, and thy heathenish enemies oppose thee, because thou hast renounced their Idols, and wholly devoted thyself to worship me in truth; yet let not this discourage thee in thy sincerity, seeing I am all-sufficient to reward and defend thee. So the Prophet telleth Asa, that there was no cause why he had relied upon the King of Syria, and not upon the Lord his God, seeing he is mighty and all-sufficient to preserve all those whose heart is perfect towards him.

Sect. 4 - The fourth means is, to watch over our hearts.

The fourth means is, that we keep a narrow watch over our hearts, laboring daily to approve their sincerity unto God. For naturally they are deceitful, and much hypocrisy and dissimulation lieth lurking in them. In which respect it is necessary, that we often examine them, with what purpose we perform good actions, what causes move us, and at what ends we aim. And if we find them worldly and carnal, let us labor to purge them from these corruptions, according to that of the Apostle James; Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. And when we find them ready to halt between God and the world, either for fear, or for the getting of some earthly benefit, and to start aside from their sincerity, we are to call them back, and finding other bonds too weak to bind these fugitives unto sincerity in God's service, we are to tie them hereunto by solemn covenant, according to the example of Asa and Josiah, who thus bound themselves and their subjects, that with all their hearts and souls they would seek and serve the Lord.

Sect. 5 - The fifth means, to meditate on the Day of Judgment.

Finally, let us often meditate on the Day of Judgment, when as the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and all hidden things brought to light, and laid open to the view of men and Angels; according to that of Ecclesiastes; God will bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. And of

the Apostle Paul: We must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And then naked sincerity will shine most gloriously, when the gilded veil of hypocrisy being pulled off, the filthy corruption which was hid under it, will appear ugly and abominable in the sight of the holy Saints and blessed Angels. Then shall the upright in heart hold up their heads in the confidence of a good conscience, when the hypocrites and dissemblers shall be confounded with shame, their deceit and secret wickedness being discovered in the sight of all men. Then shall they who have served God in sincerity and truth, receive their heavenly Inheritance with triumphant joy, when guileful and double-hearted men shall be banished out of God's presence, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER III.

That we must join with inward integrity, the service of the body and the outward man.

Sect. 1 - That God requireth outward service to be joined with the inward.

But howsoever the Lord doth chiefly require and delight in the inward service of the soul, and the integrity and sincerity of the heart; yet doth he not rest in it alone, but requireth also the service of the body and outward man, and that we should at all times, and upon all occasions, express and approve our inward piety in our external practice, and the uprightness of our hearts, which is only known to him, by our holiness and righteousness shining in the whole course of our lives and conversation, which is subject to man's view, that thereby we may be justified, that is, declared righteous before them, as by the other we are known unto ourselves to be justified by faith before God, of which, that inward holiness and obedience is a principal fruit. And because everyone would be ready

to boast of the sincerity of the heart which cannot be discerned, God would have us to approve and make it known, by bringing forth the fruits of it in our outward and bodily service. So the Apostle exhorteth us, not to let sin reign in our bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. And as we have yielded our members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, so we should now yield our members servants to righteousness unto holiness. That we should present, not only our souls, but our bodies likewise, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service, that we should possess our vessels in purity and honor, and preserve our bodies from all defilement, as it becometh the Temples of the holy Ghost. For God, who hath created, redeemed, and doth continually preserve both soul and body, will be served and glorified by them both, and as he is in these respects, Lord and owner of the whole man; so he will have the whole to serve him, according to that of the Apostle: Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirits which are God's. The inward service of the heart therefore is not sufficient, unless it be expressed in the outward service of the body, but we must be sanctified throughout, and our whole Spirit, and soul and body, must be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, as well of the flesh as of the Spirit, and perfect our holiness in the fear of God. We must with the Apostle, exercise ourselves to have our consciences void of offense, both towards God and towards men; and labor not only to have in all things a good conscience before him, but also to live honestly in the view of the world; and provide things honest in the sight of all men, as well as those which are holy and religious in the sight of God. For as one saith, Not only faith ought to distinguish between a Christian and an heathen, but the life also; and our diverse religions ought to be demonstrated and showed by our diverse works. Yea in truth, these will always necessarily and inseparably go together; neither is it possibly for a man to have a sincere and upright heart, but it will

show itself in the outward conversation, words, and actions, seeing it is the fountain and root from which they flow and spring; and such as it is, either good or evil, clean or polluted, such will they be also. For if the heart be the Inditer of a good matter, the tongue will be the pen of a ready Writer; If the heart be prepared, so will the tongue also, and both joining together, will sing and give praise; whereof it is that the Apostle James concludeth, that if any man seem religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain. And also, that pure Religion and undefiled before God, will show itself in the works of mercy and Christian charity before men: for as in the bodily, so in the spiritual estate, the health and welfare of the heart is best discerned by the pulse in the hand, neither can there be an upright heart, where the actions are unjust. And therefore the Psalmist describing a true Citizen of Heaven, doth join heart, hand, and tongue all together; He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, speaketh the truth from it, and hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Sect. 2 - Reasons moving us to perform outward service.

Now the reasons which may move us to join outward practice with inward integrity, respect God, our neighbors, or ourselves. In respect of God, first, because he commandeth that we have not only in ourselves the oil of Grace, but that we also cause the light of it to shine outwardly before men. He would have us inwardly to repent with unfeigned contrition in our hearts, but withal, that we bring forth fruits meet for repentance in our lives. He desireth above all that we should love him with all our hearts and souls, but he would have us also to approve the sincerity of our affection, by keeping his Commandments; especially, by loving one another as Christ hath loved us. Secondly, we must bring forth the fruits of our inward sincerity in our outward practice, that men seeing the light of our godly lives, may take occasion thereby to glorify our heavenly Father, for herein he is glorified, if we bring forth much fruit; the which, being the main and supreme end of all things, we are, in whatsoever we do, chiefly to aim at it, as the Apostle exhorteth. Thirdly, we must

join outward conformity unto our inward sincerity, to testify our thankfulness unto God for his innumerable benefits both spiritual and corporal, without which we shall fall into the vice of ingratitude, which is so odious both to God and men. In respect of our neighbors also, we must approve our inward piety by our outward practice, that we may edify them by our good example; for if our lights shine before them, they will glorify our Father which is in heaven; if we have our conversation honest among unbelievers, they will give glory to God in the day of their visitation. Secondly, to avoid offense which they are ready to take, when they see our conversation contrary to our profession. Now we must give no offense in anything, because there is a fearful woe denounced against those by whom offenses come, and that justly, because, as much as in them lieth, they destroy those for whom Christ hath died. Thirdly, that we may hereby gain them to Christ, when they see our holy conversation coupled with fear. Wherein we are to follow the Apostles example, who pleased all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but of many that they might be saved. In respect of ourselves, we are to approve our sincerity by our outward practice in a holy conversation, that hereby we may be assured that our hearts are upright before God, seeing the goodness of the tree can no otherwise be known, then by the good fruits which it beareth, nor the life of Grace discerned, but by the breath of holy and righteous words and actions. Secondly, because we can no otherwise have the peace of a good conscience, in the assurance of our election and salvation, unless we bring forth in our lives the fruits of sanctification. Thirdly, because by our outward obedience our inward graces are exercised, and by exercise increased, which otherwise will faint and languish. Neither will God give us the Talents of his graces, unless we will put them out to use, that he may be glorified, and our brethren advantaged by their increase. Whereas if like good Vines we be fruitful in the duties of piety and righteousness, he will purge and prune us, that we may bring forth more fruit. Fourthly, that we may adorn our profession, when as we walk worthy that high calling whereunto we are called, and approve ourselves to be the children of God, and heirs of heaven, by resembling our heavenly Father in holiness and righteousness;

according to that of the Apostle; As he that hath called you, is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call him Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

Sect. 3 - That Christian apology and outward profession of the Truth is required.

Now as we are to exercise the wholly body in the outward practice of obedience, and the duties of a godly life, as our eyes in seeing, our ears in hearing, &c. so especially must we approve our practice of piety, both by our words and works. By our words, both by Christian profession and holy communication. For if our hearts be upright before God, and serve him in sincerity and truth, then will we make an outward profession of what we inwardly believe, namely, that God is our God, and we his Children and servants, and that we embrace his truth of Religion, and will in all things conform ourselves unto his revealed will So the Apostle saith, that, as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth he confesseth to salvation. And the Psalmist; I believed, and therefore I spake; the which, as it was his own practice, as appeareth in those words, I will declare thy Name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee: so in the next words he telleth us, that it is generally the practice of all that fear God; Ye that fear the Lord, praise him, all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him. The which profession of our faith ought not to be forced and constrained, but free and liberal, as oft as we have any hope thereby to glorify God, or edify those that hear us; according to that of the Apostle Peter; Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. For otherwise, if our profession is likely to tend to God's dishonor, by exposing his Truth to scorn and blasphemy, and our persons to the rage and violence of profane miscreants, our Saviors rule must take place, Cast not that which is holy unto Dogs, nor pearls before Swine, &c. And as we are to be free

and cheerful in our profession; so also to be bold and courageous, not fearing the face of man, nor denying or suppressing the truth, for fear or favor, either to please men, or to avoid our own trouble, according to the example of David; who professeth that he would speak of God's Testimonies before Kings, and would not be ashamed; and the Apostle Paul, who professed before the Governor, that after that way which was called heresy, by the enemies of God's Truth, he worshipped the God of his Fathers, believing all that was written in the Law and the Prophets. To which purpose, we are always to remember that saying of our Savior Christ; Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Secondly, we must testify our integrity of heart by our holy communication, the principal scope whereof must be, the glory of God, according to the example of David, who professeth that he had not hid God's righteousness within his heart, but had declared his faithfulness and salvation, and had not concealed his loving kindness from the great Congregation. And next unto it, our speech must tend to the furthering of our own salvation, and edification of our brethren. For if our hearts be sincere and holy, such also will our conferences be, as before we have showed more at large.

Sect. 4 - That we must practice what we know, in our works and actions.

Secondly, with our words and outward profession, we must join also our works and actions, in doing service unto God, without which we cannot approve our hearts to be upright before him. Neither is it sufficient to make us accepted of God, that we speak religiously, and make a glorious profession of the Truth, unless our practice be suitable in the works of holiness and righteousness. It is not enough (as our Savior hath taught us) to cry, Lord, Lord, for entering into God's Kingdom, unless we do the will of his Father which is in heaven; no nor yet that we have prophesied and preached in his Name; seeing we shall be excluded and depart from him, if we be

workers of iniquity. For not the hearers and talkers of the Law, but the doers thereof shall be justified. Neither will God render unto us according to our outward profession, but according to our deeds, and we shall receive at Christ's appearing to Judgment, not according to our words and shows, but according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad. Yea in truth, bare profession without practice, doth make us the more odious in God's sight. And if we deny God in our works, whom we profess to know with our words, we become abominable hypocrites, who dishonor him more by their sins than any other. In which regard, the Lord would have none to make profession of Religion, who do not endeavor to practice what they know in their lives. What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant into thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee? And such our Savior reproveth; Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Before therefore we compass God's Altar, to offer unto him with our tongues the sacrifice of praise, we must first with David, wash our hands in innocence. If we would approve the sincerity of our faith, and outward confession of the Truth, we must with those believers in the Acts of the Apostles, show it by our deeds. If we would make it manifest that our hearts are inwardly inflamed with the love of God, we must show it by our actions rather than by our words; according to that of our Savior; If ye love me, keep my Commandments: And again, He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, is he that loveth me. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Sect. 5 - Divers reasons persuading us to good works.

By all which it appeareth, that unto the duties of a godly life, there is required real practice in our works, as well as verbal profession with our mouths, neither doth an holy profession alone make any man holy, but only bindeth him to the duties of holiness. The which, though it be acknowledged of all men, yet because it fareth with the most, as with men grievously sick, who having lost their appetite, approve good meat in their judgment and discourse, but when they

are moved to eat of it, put it by, because it is loathsome to their corrupted stomachs; therefore it will not be amiss that we enforce this point a little further, that I may set an edge on their appetite, and as the Apostle requireth, may provoke them unto love and good works. First therefore let us consider, that as the Lord requireth an upright heart and holy profession, so also the fruits of them both in good works. For he would have us, not only hearers of his Word, but also doers of it; and chargeth us to do good unto all, to be rich in good works, and never weary of well-doing. Secondly, that he hath created us unto good works, that we should walk in them, and redeemed us, that we should not only do good works, but also be zealous in doing of them. Thirdly, that they are the chief ornaments of Christians, which much more deck and beautify them in the sight of God and all good men, then all Jewels, gold, and gorgeous apparel. Fourthly, let us consider the exceeding profit of them, seeing God doth richly reward them, both in this life and the life to come. Fifthly, that they are notable and singular means to assure us of all God's graces in this life, and eternal happiness in the life to come; whereby we attain unto spiritual comfort, peace of conscience, and joy in the holy Ghost. For they are the assured signs of our election and effectual calling, seeing if we do these things, we shall never fall. They are the fruits of our regeneration and new birth, whereby we are assured of our spiritual life, even as the natural life is known by action and motion; and that we are trees of righteousness, which God's own hand hath planted; for the tree is known by the fruits, seeing a good tree cannot bring forth those which are evil; nor an evil tree those which are good. They assure us of our justification: for he that doth righteousness, is righteous, as the Apostle John telleth us. They are signs of our adoption and spiritual kindred with Christ: for they that hear the Word and do it, are his brethren and sisters. By them we may be assured that our wisdom is spiritual and heavenly; according to that of the Apostle James; Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. That our faith also is lively and justifying. For they, and they only do truly believe in God, who are careful to maintain good works; seeing as it inwardly

purifieth the heart, so also it worketh outwardly by love. And therefore the Apostle James concludeth, that such a faith as bringeth not forth these fruits, doth nothing profit us for our justification and salvation; because it is dead, and not a living body, but a dead carcass which breatheth not. So that though works do not justify us, but faith only (for we are first made righteous, before we can bring forth the fruits of righteousness) yet that faith which is alone, doth not justify us, because it is a dead faith, and therefore cannot apply unto us Christ our Righteousness. Though they do not justify us before God, yet they justify us before men, that is, declare that we are justified. Though they be not causes, yet they are necessary and inseparable effects of our justification. Though they are not required unto the act of justification, but faith only uniting us unto Christ our Righteousness, yet unto the party justified: for as he that doth righteousness, is righteous, so he that is righteous, doth righteousness, the cause and effect always concurring and going together. Finally, though they be not meritorious causes of salvation, which is God's free gift; an inheritance, and not a purchase made by ourselves, yet they are the means which assure us of it; and though they be not the cause of our reigning, yet they are the way to the Kingdom. Finally, they are the undoubted signs, and (as the Apostle calleth them) the proof of our love, whereby we may try whether it be unfeigned or hypocritical; for if we love God, we will keep his Commandments: and also of the truth and sincerity of our Religion, which is not so well known from that which is false by an outward profession, as by the holy practice of it in the works of piety, justice, mercy and Christian charity.

Sect. 6 - Of the rewards of good works.

Lastly, let us consider, that the Lord will richly of his free grace reward these works with glory and happiness in his Kingdom. For though the strength of our title stand upon God's free gift, yet we are entered into the possession of it by the works of mercy, as being infallible signs that we are the true and lawful heirs unto whom this heavenly patrimony doth belong, by right of Covenant: according to

that of our Savior, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, &c. So the Apostle saith, that at the day of Judgment, Christ will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory honor, and immortality, eternal life, but to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, &c. Whereby it appeareth, that if ever we mean to attain unto everlasting happiness, we must not content ourselves with an opinion of our inward piety and sincerity, nor with an outward profession of Religion, but we must bring forth the fruits of them, both in the works of holiness and righteousness; For not everyone that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into God's Kingdom, but they that do his will. And they only are pronounced happy, who hear the Word of God and keep it. As for those who please themselves with the profession of piety, and neglect the practice in the fruits of obedience, and duties of a godly life, they are presently in danger to be cut off like hypocrites and dead branches with God's judgments, according to that of John the Baptist; Now is the axe laid to the root of the trees; Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire: And in the World to come shall be excluded from God's presence, and have their portion in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, not only as workers of iniquity, but also as neglecters of the works of mercy and Christian charity, to the poor members of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

That we must perform universal obedience to the whole will of God.

Sect. 1 - That only universal obedience to God's will and Word is accepted of him.

And thus have we showed, that our obedience ought to be universal, in respect of the subject or the person that performeth it. In the next place we are to show, that there is also a universality required in respect of the object, whereby we understand the whole will of God revealed in the Scriptures. Neither is it sufficient that we perform some, or many duties, and neglect the rest; but we must in all things be conformable to all God's Commandments: which is not so to be understood, as though we could actually do all that God requireth, for in many things we sin all, but of an habitual obedience and disposition of our hearts, whereby we desire, resolve, and endeavor in all things to do God's will, in as great perfection as we can, bewailing our wants and imperfections, when we fail and come short of our desires. Of which we have an example in David, who had respect unto all God's Commandments, and in the remnant of the Captivity, who bound themselves by covenant and oath to walk in God's Law, and to observe and do all the Commandments of the Lord their God: and in Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless. The contrary whereof we see in the example of Jehu, who obeyed God in destroying the house of Ahab, and Baal with his Priests, for the establishing of his own Kingdom, but not in taking away the golden Calves. In Herod, who heard John the Baptist willingly, and obeyed his doctrine in many things, but would not leave his Incest. In Judas, and Demas, who performed many good duties, but would not forsake their covetousness and love of the world. And finally, in Ananias and Sapphira, who were content to share with God, but kept part of the possession which they had wholly consecrated unto him, for their own use. But our obedience must be universal, keeping no sin as sweet under our tongue; but we must in the disposition, desire and purpose of our hearts, renounce all sins whatsoever without exception, be they never so pleasing or profitable; yea, we must with greatest hatred pursue those, unto which our corrupt natures are most inclined, making war, as against all these wicked enemies of God, so most earnestly against this Canaanitish brood which dwell in our Land. And contrariwise, we must love and embrace all virtues, and practice all Christian duties

which God hath commanded, though they be never so hard and difficult to our corrupt disposition; yea the more averse our sinful natures are unto them, so much the more earnestly we must labor to embrace and practice them. For if we make any composition with Satan and our own flesh, to give willing entertainment unto any sin, or to neglect any virtue or Christian duty, our obedience is but hypocritical and feigned; and the sin reserved, like a little leaven, will sour the whole lump, or a little Coloquintida, will embitter and poison all our seeming virtues and obedience. They will on all occasions open the door of our hearts, and let in all manner of wickedness, as pledges and hostages given to Satan, to warrant his re-entry when he pleaseth.

Sect. 2 - That we must perform obedience to both Tables jointly, and to the Gospel, as well as the Law.

Which dangers if we would avoid, we must resolve to yield obedience to all and every part of God's will revealed, either in the Law, or the Gospel. In respect of the Law, we must observe both Tables, and perform all duties of piety, righteousness and sobriety which God hath commanded in them. And if we would approve ourselves to be in the number of those who are the Lord's redeemed, we must resolve to worship him both in holiness and righteousness. If we would be reckoned among those good scholars unto whom the grace of God hath appeared, that bringeth salvation, we must approve ourselves to be so, by learning that whole lesson which he teacheth, which is, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: And if we would be accepted of God, we must not only religiously fear him, but also work righteousness, as the Apostle Peter speaketh. For if we seem to make conscience of the first Table, and neglect the second, our obedience will make us no better than glorious Hypocrites: or if we will observe the duties of the second, and not regard the first, we shall be no better than civil worldlings, and honest Infidels. Again, we must observe this universal obedience, as in respect of the parts of the Law, and duties of both Tables, so also of the degrees, desiring to

keep, with all care and good conscience, the small Commandments as well as the greater, not thinking any duty so small, that we may wittingly and willingly neglect it, nor any sin so slight and venial, that we may commit it. For small neglects will make way for greater; and lesser sins being willfully entertained, will open the door of our hearts to let in greater. It is true that there ought to be a proportion observed, and as duties are of greatest excellency and necessity, so they must have priority and precedency; and as sins are more heinous and grievous, so they must be resisted and forsaken with greatest zeal and endeavor. But yet true and sincere obedience dispenseth with no degree of sin, or the neglect of the least duties in their due place and time: and though it respecteth chiefly the weighty things of the Law, yet it doth not voluntarily omit the least duties. Though it chiefly abhorreth whoredom, sacrilege and perjury, yet it yieldeth not to wanton dalliance, petty thefts, and idle oaths. And thus also if our obedience be sound and sincere, then have we also respect to the Commandments of the Gospel, as well as the Law; and in them make like conscience of the one, as well as of the other; desiring and endeavoring with no less care to repent unfeignedly of our sins, then to believe in Christ, and apply the promises of grace and salvation; and no less striving to be freed from sin in respect of the corruption, by virtue of Christ's death, and to rise again unto newness of life, by the power of his Resurrection, then to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of it, and to rise at the latter Day unto glory and happiness. For if we divide these, we shall do neither aright. If we believe only, and do not repent, we are but carnal Gospellers, and presumptuous worldlings: and if our sorrow for sin be never so great, yet if we have not faith in Christ, this grief is to be grieved for, seeing it is the fore-runner of despair, and a worldly sorrow which bringeth death. So that though we should bewail our sins never so much, and even melt, and be wholly resolved into tears, yet should we perish in our infidelity; seeing it is not our tears, but the precious blood of Christ applied by faith, which purgeth and purifieth our souls and bodies from the guilt and punishment of our sins.

Sect. 3 - Reasons persuading to universal obedience. 1. Because God requireth it.

The reasons which may move us to yield this universal obedience to the whole revealed will of God, are diverse; first, because God commandeth it. Neither doth he require that we should keep his Law in some things, and break it in others, or in most things, and neglect it in some few, seeing no Prince will accept from his subject such obedience; but all and every of his Commandments without exception. He bindeth us strictly to observe all his Statutes and Judgments which he setteth before us; that whatsoever he commandeth us, we observe to do it; neither adding thereto, nor diminishing from it; that we set our hearts to obey all the Words of his Law, turning not therefrom to the right hand, nor to the left. So our Savior Christ enjoineth his Disciples to preach unto all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded. The which the Apostle observed in his own practice; keeping in all things a good conscience before God, and living honestly before men. And unto this total obedience to all God's Law, doth he restrain all his promises; If (saith he) thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his Commandments; then I will advance thee, and all my blessings shall come upon thee, &c. Whereas that which is but in part, can expect no reward, but rather deserved punishment. For as it is in this case between the Prince and his subject, so also between God and us. Though a man observe the whole Law of his Sovereign, and committeth only one heinous and capital crime, his obedience is not rewarded, seeing therein he doth but his duty, but for his offense he is justly punished.

Sect. 4 - That our obedience cannot be sincere, unless it be universal.

Secondly, if our obedience be not universal to the whole will of God, it cannot be sincere and upright; for if in the integrity of our hearts we yielded obedience to any of God's Commandments, out of our love towards him, and because he requireth our obedience unto them, then would we upon the same ground and reason obey all the

rest, seeing he is the Author of all alike, and by the same divine authority bindeth us to one as well as to another. And upon this reason the Apostle James doubteth not to affirm, that he who breaketh any one Commandment, is guilty of all, though he keepeth all the rest; for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law. For there is a chain of virtues and vices, whereby they are so fast and inseparably linked together, that he who embraceth and practiseth any one virtue and Christian duty out of his love and obedience to God, embraceth and performeth all the rest; he that willingly liveth in the neglect of any one duty, or maketh no conscience of committing any known sin, neglecteth all, and is prepared to commit any wickedness. In which regard it may truly be said, that the unregenerate man breaketh all God's Commandments, even those which he seemeth to keep, and that the sound Christian observeth all, even those which he seemeth to break. For howsoever the one doth not actually transgress every Commandment, yet there is in him a habit of sin, and a natural disposition and readiness to break all when opportunity serveth, and when he is tempted thereunto with the alluring baits of worldly vanities. And though the other do not actually keep the whole Law, but faileth in many particulars, yet there is in him a habit of holiness and righteousness, and a disposition and desire, resolution and endeavor to observe all; for with the Apostle they consent unto the whole Law, that it is holy and good, and being in their hearts delighted in it; they strive to keep one Commandment as well as another, and when they fail of their purpose, do heartily bewail their imperfections. It is true, that a wicked man may not only forsake many sins, but may also in some sort loath and detest them; but this is not out of his love towards God, or because he hateth or forbiddeth them, but caused by some common restraining grace, or done out of some corrupt passion and disposition, not because he hateth sin, but because some contrary vice being predominant in him, doth draw him unto another extreme. And thus the covetous man hateth prodigality, and the prodigal, covetousness: the presumptuous man melancholic despair, and the despairing sinner, bold presumption;

the coward, bloody quarrel, and the desperate backster, cowardice. Yea, thus may a man outwardly shun all sins which make him liable to legal penalties out of self-love, that he may gain rewards, or escape punishments; not out of love to virtue and innocence, but fear of running into danger.

Sect. 5 - That without total obedience we cannot attain to heavenly happiness.

Finally, unless we perform total obedience in the desire, purpose and endeavor of our heart unto the whole Law of God, we can neither attain unto heavenly happiness, nor escape hellish death and condemnation, though we embrace and practice many virtues and duties, and flee from many vices and sins. For as a Mill-stone will keep us from mounting aloft, as well as a Mountain, and the one as well as the other would cause us to sink into the bottom of the Sea, if it were fastened unto us; so if any one sin have taken such fast hold of our hearts, that we will by no means be moved to leave it, the weight thereof will be sufficient to keep us from ascending unto heavenly happiness, and to drench and drown us in the sea of perdition. So the Apostle saith, that he that liveth (not in all or many sins, but) in any one, shall never enter into the Kingdom of heaven; Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And the Apostle John saith, that every sort of sinners, as sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and liars, shall be excluded from this place of blessedness. So that as for the loss of corporal life, it is not necessary that the body should be wounded in every place, but a mortal wound in any of the vital parts, is sufficient to let in death, and give it seizure of the whole man: so is it in this case. And as particular sins deprive us of happiness, so they plunge us into death and destruction, as appeareth by that distinct enumeration which the Prophet maketh of particulars; If (saith he) he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and doth the like to any of these things, and that neglecteth any of the duties there mentioned, he shall not live, but surely die. And the Apostle John saith, that sinners of every

kind, shall have their portion in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Now if any will say, that if for any one duty willfully neglected, or sin committed, they shall lose the joys of heaven, and be cast into hell torments, then it were as good to be outrageously wicked, and to live in all manner of sin; let one of the Ancients make answer to such an objection. This (saith he) is the speech of an ungrateful and reprobate servant: yet let not such an one let the reins loose to all impiety for his own profit. For though all impenitent sinners are excluded out of heaven, and thrown into hell, yet all in hell do not suffer equal torments, but some greater, and some less, according to the quality and number of their sins.

CHAPTER V.

Of the properties of Christian and holy duties, which respect their causes efficient and final.

Sect. 1 - That all duties should spring from the love of God.

And these are the properties which respect the duties themselves. The properties which concern the manner of doing them, are diverse, and respect either the causes that move us to perform them, or our disposition in doing them. The causes are either efficient, or final. The efficient cause moving us to perform all the duties of a godly life, ought to be the love of God, which is the fountain of true obedience, and should be so powerful in us, that we should thereby be moved to serve, like children, our heavenly Father, though there were no reward promised to our service, which is the motive that induceth mercenaries and servants, rather than children, to do their duty. For howsoever we may in our obedience have an eye with Moses, to the recompense of reward; yet the chief argument that prevaileth with us, ought to be, not the love of ourselves, and out of it, the desire of our own salvation; but the love of God, who is the chief Goodness, whose glory is much to be preferred before our own good. Neither is it enough that the love of God accompany our actions, and that they

be done in and with it, as running together (as it were) in the same stream, but also that it be the fountain from which all our obedience doth spring and flow. Consider we therefore when we undertake the performance of any Christian duty, what is the cause that moveth us unto it; and if we find, that it is love of the world, or love of ourselves, either to obtain a reward, or to avoid punishment, temporal or eternal, let us put it back as coming out of due place, and labor that the love of God, which is much more worthy, may have the precedency, as the first and chief motive that persuadeth us to well-doing.

Sect. 2 - That we must propound God's will, and our obedience thereunto in all duties.

Secondly, we must propound unto ourselves, in all the duties of a godly life, the will of God, and his glory, in yielding obedience unto it, as the main scope and end of all our actions; desiring chiefly and in the first place (as our Savior hath taught us to pray) that we may hallow and glorify God's Name, by doing his will. And if we will perform unto God acceptable service, we must therein deny ourselves and our own wills, and yield ourselves in absolute obedience to the will of God; praying, because he will have us pray, hearing and reading his Word, because it is his will that we should do so, giving alms, and doing works of mercy, that we may please him by doing his will; yea seeking the salvation of our own souls, not chiefly because we desire it for our own good; but because his will is to glorify himself in our salvation and happiness. For God's will is the cause of causes; and as all things came from it, so must all things tend unto it as their main scope and end. It is that which gave first being to our wills, and preserveth them in it; and therefore they must not be absolute in themselves, but in all things yield to the will of their Creator, willing whatsoever they will, because God first willeth it. It is the rule of righteousness and all perfection, and all things are just and unjust, perfect or imperfect, straight or crooked, as they agree or differ from it; and therefore there is no goodness in our wills, no not in the choosing and embracing of the best actions and

duties that can be named, but only so far forth as we conform them to the will of God, and do all we do in obedience unto it. And if first and chiefly we perform unto God any service, because our will and desire leadeth us unto it, and not principally in this respect, because God willeth it, and would have us also to will and do it, it doth hereby lose all grace and beauty, and so also all reward at God's hand, seeing we serve not him, but ourselves, when we aim not chiefly at the doing of his will, that we may please and glorify him, but of our own. Neither are our actions chiefly to be esteemed good or evil according to the matter, but according to the main scope and end of them which giveth them their denomination; nor is any act, seem it never so glorious, to be esteemed God's service, which is not done in obedience unto him, nor any obedience which hath not conformity with his will. In which regard it may be truly said, that the basest works of the most servile calling, done by a faithful Christian, in simple obedience to the will of God to glorify him, are more pleasing unto him, and esteemed for better service then the prayer and fasting, hearing the Word, and giving alms of Pharisaical hypocrites, which are done either for the praise of men, or as works satisfactory to God's justice, and to merit by them their own salvation. Finally, if we perform all good duties not as our own will, but as the will of God, and labor in all things that his will may chiefly sway and rule in ours, we shall hereby add much excellency unto all our good actions. For seeing the action receiveth worth and dignity from the agent, in which regard the same thing done by a mighty Prince, is esteemed highly, which in an ordinary and mean person is little regarded; therefore must needs all good duties be much more excellent, when the will of God is the chief motive that setteth us on work, and not our own will, seeing they proceed from a much more excellent cause.

Sect. 3 - That all true service is done in obedience to God's will.

We must therefore, in all Christian duties, propound this unto ourselves, as our principal and main scope, that the will of God, and not our own, may be done in them; according to the example of our Savior Christ, who did not his own will, but the will of him that sent

him. We must labor after Regeneration, not as the act of our own will, but of God's. For we are born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. We must labor to be sanctified, because this is the will of God, even our sanctification; that we may live no longer the rest of our time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. We must pray, and in all things give thanks, because this is the will of God in Jesus Christ. Yea, whatsoever we do, we must do it, not as our own will, but as the will of God. The which is not only to be observed in the high and excellent duties of God's immediate service, but even in the basest and most servile actions, even in the duties of the poorest and meanest servants, who must, in performing service to their Masters, propound unto themselves as their main scope, not their own profit, nor the doing of their own or their Masters will, but the will of God which requireth it at their hands. For so the Apostle exhorteth servants to be obedient unto their Masters, and to serve them with fear and singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. And as in our doings, so likewise in our sufferings, we must with the Apostle, and our Savior Christ himself, chiefly aim at this, that the will of the Lord may be done in them. For those only that suffer according to God's will, receive the promise; and such alone can with confidence commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, as the Apostle Peter speaketh. Now that we may be moved thus to seek, that God's will may be done in all our actions, let us consider, that there is no true obedience which hath not this as the main scope of it; that if we thus do, we shall be accepted of God, and with David be approved, as men according to God's own heart. That we shall hereby be advanced to great honor, and be made of God's own Privy Council, by the illumination of his Spirit; yea, next a kin to our Savior Christ. That God will hear all our prayers; for the blind man could see this, that if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. And if in our Petitions we desire that God's will may be done in ours, we are sure to have them granted, as the Apostle John telleth us. Finally, that those only shall attain unto everlasting life, who

endeavor in all things to do God's will, for he that doth the will of God, abideth forever, as the Apostle speaketh; and not he that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of our Father which is in heaven, as our Savior teacheth us.

CHAPTER VI.

Of those properties which respect our hearts and affections.

Sect. 1 - That we must perform all duties of a godly life with cheerfulness.

And these are the properties which respect the causes of all Christian duties. Those which concern our disposition in doing them, do either more principally respect the heart and affection, or the carriage generally of the whole man. In respect of the heart, this is the property of all the duties of a godly life, that they be done heartily; according to that of the Apostle, Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. But of this in the general I have before spoken; and therefore will here insist upon two special branches of it; the first is alacrity and cheerfulness, the second is fervent zeal in all good duties. Concerning the former, we ought to perform all the duties of a godly life with alacrity and cheerfulness, as being an inseparable property of them, if they be sincere and upright. And this the Lord requireth generally in all Christian duties, that we be ready unto every good work; and more specially in the duties of his service and all the parts thereof. For we must not only seek and serve the Lord, but also make him our chief delight. We must serve the Lord with gladness, and come before him with thanksgiving. We must come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms, as the Psalmist exhorteth. And we must serve God with a perfect and a willing mind, as he persuadeth Solomon his son. Neither must we go to the place of God's service lumpishly and heavily, but be glad and rejoice, when we mutually exhort one another to go up to the House of the Lord. For as in the

time of the Law, God could not endure a dead oblation, but would have a living sacrifice, or the life of it, and especially the inwards and heart offered unto him; so can he not abide, that we should tender unto him a dull, dead, and heartless service, without any spirit, life, and cheerfulness, which is no more pleasing then a dead carrion in his sight. More especially, we must not only serve God on his Sabbaths, but we must account them our delight. In our prayers, we must with the Apostle make our requests with joy. We must in our thanksgiving rejoice before God, according to that of the Psalmist; O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. And again; Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, praise him with harp, &c. Our preaching must be, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Our oblations towards the building of the Tabernacle, and furthering the means of God's service, must, like the Israelites, be offered with a willing heart. And this alacrity and cheerfulness must be used in all other Christian duties, if we would have them acceptable unto God. Our Alms must be given with cheerfulness, and not as wrested from us by importunity, because the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Our benefits must be bestowed not grudgingly and slowly, but readily and with alacrity; for it is a double benefit when the heart goeth with the gift; and (as the Heathen man said) He giveth twice, that giveth speedily and readily. Finally, seeing, if we be servants, and do our duty aright, we serve God and do his will, therefore also we must do it cheerfully and from our hearts.

Sect. 2 - Reasons which may move us to this cheerfulness.

Now that we may thus serve God with alacrity and cheerfulness, let these reasons persuade us. First, because it is most acceptable unto God, and in much more high price with him, then the work and duty itself, be it never so excellent in outward appearance. For if even mortal men, who need the duties and service of others, are much more delighted with the kindness and love of the giver, then with the gift itself: And if Parents and Masters are better pleased with the willing cheerfulness of their children and servants, then with their

duties which they perform, being done with grudging and repining: then much more is the Lord delighted with our alacrity and readiness in the duties of his service, rather than with the outward works and actions, seeing we can in nothing be profitable unto him; yea, as we have showed before, he esteemeth no bodily service which is not enlived with this soul of cheerfulness; whereas contrariwise though our duties of his service be full of manifold imperfections and corruptions, yet if they be performed with ready and cheerful hearts, he doth accept of them for perfect obedience. For he accepteth in the service of his children the will for the deed, and if there be a willing mind, a man is accepted, according to that he hath, and that power of performance which God hath given, and not according to that he hath not, as the Apostle speaketh. Secondly, this cheerfulness and alacrity maketh our otherwise imperfect service, like unto that which is performed by the blessed Angels, who are always ready, as soon as they hear God's voice, to do his pleasure, as the Psalmist speaketh; they stand about his Throne continually, and no sooner receive his Commandments, but hasten to execute them with winged speed. Thirdly, because cheerfulness and delight in God's service, as it is most highly esteemed, so is it above all other most richly rewarded, for if we delight in the Lord, he will give us the desires of our hearts; if we delight in him, and call his Sabbaths, which are consecrated unto his service, our delight also, he will greatly honor and advance us, and enrich us greatly with all his blessings, as he hath promised. So the Apostle saith, that in respect of the bare act of his preaching the Gospel, he had nothing to glory of, because a necessity of performing this duty was laid upon him, and a woe denounced if he performed it not; but if he did not by constraint, but willingly; then he should have at God's hands a reward. Finally, let us serve God with this cheerfulness, because thereby we shall get unto ourselves an infallible mark and sign that we are in the estate of blessedness. For the Psalmist describing a blessed man, bringeth in this as one of his special properties, that his delight is in the Law of the Lord; so that he meditateth in it day and night. And therefore let us not content ourselves with cold, careless, and formal service, but perform it unto God with cheerfulness and delight, without which, it is

neither pleasing unto him, nor profitable unto us And seeing this is not a flower which groweth in natures soil, but a gift of God, who worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure; whereof it is that David acknowledgeth the free-will offerings of himself and his people, towards the building of the Temple, to have wholly proceeded from God, who had given them both these gifts, and also willing hearts to return them; therefore let us beg it daily at God's hands, that taking away our dullness and drowsiness, our averseness and backwardness unto holy duties, he will give us grace to serve him in all things with alacrity and cheerfulness, joy and delight.

Sect. 3 - That we must serve God in all holy duties zealously and devoutly.

The second property respecting the heart, is true zeal, which as we here consider it, is a devout consecrating of ourselves wholly both in soul and body to the service of God, and an ardent desire, study, and endeavor to glorify him, by walking before him in the duties of a godly life. So that it is nothing but the intension of our love and cheerfulness unto these holy exercise, and of our anger, and dislike against all the impediments whereby we are opposed and hindered in them. And this is commended unto us in the Scriptures as an excellent grace, the beauty and brightness whereof, nowhere shineth more clearly, then in this subject. For if it be good (as the Apostle saith) to be zealous in a good matter, where can this zeal more exceed in goodness, then when it is employed and spent in the duties of God's service and of a Christian life, then the which, nothing can be better? It is the vital heat, and, as it were, the very spirits, which intendeth all other graces, and with the warmth of it, increaseth their virtue and vigor, giving unto them motion, and making them active and operative in their several functions. And it is given us of God, as a singular Antidote against that cold and killing poison of carnal formality, and that stupid blockishness, and senseless dullness and deadness, which naturally hath overspread all the powers of our body and mind in performing the duties of God's service. And if it be wanting, we will soon grow cold and careless, either neglecting them

altogether, or performing them with a luke-warm indifference for form and fashion sake, not greatly regarding whether we do or leave them undone; which will make them loathsome in God's sight. But if our hearts be inflamed with this zeal, then will we fervently affect all holy duties of God's service, as being notable means of advancing his glory; and not suffer ourselves to be withdrawn from them by worldly vanities, which we neglect and contemn, in comparison of the other. And then will we also with a holy anger oppose and overcome all impediments and hindrances which stop us in our Christian course, and especially make war against our own corruptions, which dull our devotion, and make us slack and backward to holy duties; which that we may do, let us consider that this zeal is the end of our Redemption, and an undoubted sign, that Christ hath purchased us unto himself with the price of his own blood. For therefore gave he himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. So that if we do not show our zeal in all virtuous actions and Christian duties, we do not attain to this end, and consequently, plainly declare that we are not redeemed by Christ, who being God equal with his Father, and infinite in wisdom and power, cannot fail of those ends which he propoundeth unto himself. Let us consider also, that this zeal is an inseparable fruit of true repentance, as the Apostle plainly showeth. Whereof it is that Christ in his Epistle to the luke-warm Laodiceans joineth them together, Be zealous and repent, because they could no otherwise approve themselves true converts, till leaving that state of tepidity and luke-warmness, they were inflamed with fervent zeal of God's glory. For when we soundly and seriously repent us of our sins, and especially our sloth and sluggishness, coldness and carelessness in holy duties, then bewailing and hating our former courses, we set ourselves with all earnestness to reform these corruptions, and become zealously devout in all holy duties, that we may redeem our former lost time, which we have fruitlessly misspent in their neglect; whereby it appeareth that our repentance cannot be unfeigned, unless this zeal be joined with it, nor any duty of a godly life sincere, which is not approved by this property.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the properties which respect the whole man: And first, diligence
in all duties of God's service.

Sect. 1 - That this diligence must be used in all good duties, and
about the means of them.

The properties which respect the whole man, are two; diligence and constancy. By diligence, I understand that sedulity and assiduity, industry and labor, which we are content to use and take for the compassing and obtaining, effecting and achieving of those things whereupon we have set our hearts and affections. The which property doth always accompany the duties of a godly life, if we rightly perform them as God requireth of us; and is an inseparable fruit of those which went before. For when we perform them with alacrity and cheerfulness, and do esteem them our chief delight, then are we not only in our hearts zealously affected towards them, but so industrious and diligent in pursuing of them, that we think no pains or labor too much, that we may bring them to good effect. And then shaking off all natural sloth and sluggishness, all idleness and unprofitableness, we will set ourselves close to our Christian task, and perform those religious duties, and that holy and spiritual service which our heavenly Lord and Master requireth of us. The which diligence we will show, not in doing some or many duties, neglecting the rest, using our industry and labor about one, as a veil to cover our sloth in omitting another, but in the general performance of all and every of those Christian duties which God in his Word imposeth upon us; and like the good Widow described by the Apostle, we will diligently follow every good work; yea, we must approve our diligence, not only in performing those good duties which offer themselves unto us, but in seeking all good occasions and opportunities of this Christian employment, that we may not stand idle, and be unprofitable for want of work, which indeed is never wanting, if we want not eyes to see it, and hearts to undertake it in

due time. Neither must our diligence and laborious endeavors be only spent in the duties themselves, but also about the means whereby we may be enabled to perform them. For in vain he pretendeth diligence in attaining to the end, who neglecteth the means which conduce unto it, seeing the means and end do inseparably go together. And therefore as no man can be truly said to be diligent in his journey to a City, who goeth not in the way that leadeth unto it, or in attaining to riches, who neglecteth the means whereby they are gotten, or in preserving of his life, who doeth not use the helps of Physic or diet, whereby it may be preserved: so neither can any be diligent in the main duties of a godly life, who showeth not the like industry and labor in the use of all good helps and means, which by God's Ordinance and appointment enable us unto them. Neither must we content ourselves with the use of some means, and neglect others, but we must show and approve our diligence, in using of all good helps, which God hath given us, to further us in our Christian course. And as for the preserving of our natural life and strength, we do not eat alone, or sleep alone, or only keep ourselves warm, or use good exercise, and take profitable Physic, but use all these means jointly in their fit season; so seeing the Lord hath appointed unto us variety of good means, for the preserving of our spiritual life and growth in grace, as praying, hearing, receiving the Sacrament, reading, conferring; we must not think it enough, to pray, or hear, or read, or to single out unto ourselves any other means unto which we have best appetite, but we must approve our diligence in the joint using of them all in their due time. For as in nature God hath not ordained one thing as sufficient for all purposes, but meat to feed us, and not to keep us warm; clothes to cover us and hide our nakedness, and not to nourish us; sleep and exercise to refresh us, and the like: so also for the preserving of our spiritual life, it is not enough, that we use one of those means whereof God hath given us great variety, seeing he hath not made any one of them sufficient for all uses, but will have them severally used for their several ends, and all jointly together, that we may be made perfect to every good work. Yea, this diligence must show itself, not only in the use of all the best and chief means, but

also in wise observing of all circumstances, as time, place, person, and such like, which may further us in the well performing all Christian duties. Neither must we employ our diligence and labor in such means as are of our own choosing, and best fit our appetite, but in those which God hath appointed and sanctified for the better enabling us unto his service. For as it is not enough to be painful in traveling, unless we choose the right way which will bring us to our journeys end, nor for the nourishing of our bodies, and preserving of our natural strength, that we may be fit for all civil employments, to eat anything that cometh to hand, but only such meats as God hath created for this use, and hath made them effectual unto it, by his holy Ordinance and blessing upon it: so we must not choose ways of our own, if we will travel to our heavenly home, but the right and straight way, which God in his Word hath prescribed unto us; we must not, for the nourishment of our souls, that they may be vigorous and strong unto the duties of a godly life, choose food that fitteth our carnal appetite, as Images, Crucifixes, Pilgrimages, superstitious Penance, which torment the body, but do not at all humble the proud flesh: for these being not ordained of God, nor sanctified to this use, but invented and appointed by the skill and will of man, have no more power or virtue to nourish the soul, or to strengthen it to virtuous actions, then earth or chips have to nourish the body. Neither must we spend our diligence in good means unseasonably, out of their due time and place, as those which are inferior and less powerful, when we may employ ourselves in those which are superior, and through God's Ordinance more effectual. As in private exercises at home, when we should join with the Congregation in God's public service; reading a Sermon in our own houses, when we should hear the Word preached in the House of God; for though it be a good exercise at another time, and though the Sermon which we read, may be as good or better than that which we should hear, yet cannot it be so effectual unto us, for the begetting and increasing of our faith, and other saving graces (no more than Abana and Pharpar for the cleansing of Naaman's Leprosy, though as good waters as Jordan) because God hath not ordained and sanctified reading to be so ordinary and effectual a means for the begetting of his graces in

us, as the Word preached, and the means themselves have no other virtue and vigor in them, but as they are his ordinances which are made effectual by his blessing. Finally, as we must use all diligence in all good means which may strengthen us to God's service, so also in shunning or removing all lets and impediments, whereby we may be hindered in holy duties, and the means become ineffectual or less powerful to those good ends for which we use them. For as he who would be rich, is not only diligent in all good means which may improve his state, but also in shunning the contrary; as prodigality, excess in diet and apparel, and the company of wasteful and riotous persons; and as he who desireth to preserve his health, is not careful alone to eat wholesome meat, but shunneth also the means with like care, which would hinder good concoction: so must we take the like course, if we would thrive in our spiritual estate, and have our souls healthy and strong in saving grace, that they may be fit and able for the well performance of all Christian duties.

Sect. 2 - Divers reasons which may move us to diligence. First, because God requireth it.

And thus we see what diligence and labor we are to use in leading a godly life. Let us now consider of the reasons and motives which may persuade us hereunto. And first, this diligence must be used in the duties of God's service, because God requireth it at our hands. You shall diligently keep the Commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and Statutes which he hath commanded thee. Of which Commandment David taketh notice; Thou hast (saith he) commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. And Ezra, like a good Governor, backeth it with all his authority: Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done, &c. Unto this diligence the Apostle exhorteth, in whatsoever office or duty we undertake, and contrariwise dissuadeth from being slothful in any business, especially in the service of God, unto which he requireth fervency of spirit. More especially, this diligence is required in all good means, whereby we may be enriched with all virtue and saving grace. So the Apostle Peter; Giving all diligence, add to your faith,

virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, &c. and in getting thereby assurance of our salvation: Give diligence to make your calling and Election sure. And above all, in the religious duties of God's service, according to that of our Savior; Take you heed, watch and pray. And of his holy Apostle: Pray continually; in everything give thanks: and again, Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Of which laborious diligence and unwearied industry, we have them for examples of their own precepts: For not only in the painful labors of his Apostolic ministry, this holy Apostle exceeded all the rest, but also in attaining unto spiritual graces, and in the exercise of a godly life: For forgetting those which were behind, he reached forth unto those things which were before, and pressed towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. But above all examples of this diligence is that of our Savior Christ, whose time was wholly employed in the duties of God's service, spending the day in preaching and working miracles, and the night in praying: yea with such unwearied diligence he performed these functions of his office, that the weariness of his travel could make him weary of these works. Yea, he preferred the doing of these duties before the satisfying of his hunger, and esteemed it as his meat and drink, to do the works of him that sent him. Now as God requireth this diligence and pains in all duties of his service, so doth he much approve it wheresoever he finds it. As in the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience: And in the servant who had well employed his Masters Talents; Well done, good and faithful servant, &c. So doth he much abhor sloth and negligence in his service, as appeareth in his sharp reproof of the unprofitable servant, who had hid his Lord's Talent in a napkin; Thou wicked and slothful servant, &c. branding him with the name of wickedness, because of his slothfulness, and not because he had riotously misspent his Talent, or spoiled his fellows of those Talents which were committed unto them, but because through his idleness and negligence he had been unprofitable to his Master.

Sect. 3 - Of the rewards promised to the diligent.

Secondly, the manifold and great benefits, wherewith the Lord, rich in mercy towards all who diligently serve him, will liberally reward their labors, may serve as an effectual reason to incite us to this duty. For we cannot serve a more bountiful Master, nor employ our labors to better advantage, then in performing unto him our duty with all diligence, seeing he will suffer none of our pains to be spent in vain, but will proportion our wages according to the greatness of our work. In this life he bestoweth upon those who are diligent in the duties of his service, not only a large measure of his temporal benefits, and his blessing upon them, whereby they become truly profitable for their use, according to those many and gracious promises which in his Law he hath made unto them, but also enricheth their souls with the treasures of his spiritual graces. For we can be no more ready to use the means, then the Lord is to give his blessing upon them, whereby they become effectual unto those ends for which we use them. Neither is he ever in this kind wanting to any, who are not through their negligence wanting unto themselves. In which regard that may be truly said of our spiritual estate, which is spoken of our temporal: He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Hereby also we attain unto the assurance of our Election and effectual calling, which is no otherwise to be had, then by this diligence in laboring after it, as the Apostle implieth in those words; Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; and that we shall persevere in the state of grace unto salvation; for if we give all diligence in adding one grace and virtue unto another, the same Apostle assureth us, that we shall never fall. And the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, remembering the works of piety and mercy which had been performed by some of the faithful, desireth others to show the same diligence, to their full assurance of hope unto the end, and that they would not be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherited the promises.

Sect. 4 - That this diligence in all Christian duties is in many respects most necessary.

Thirdly, the necessity of this diligence in holy duties may move us to embrace and use it. For if in civil and worldly things no great matter is achieved without pains and diligence, how much less in spiritual and heavenly, which are so high above our reach, so excellent above all other things, and so contrary to our corrupt nature and disposition. And if no man can reasonably hope to attain unto riches of his own purchase, who gathereth with one hand, and scattereth with the other, or playeth the good husband at sometimes, and at another neglecteth his business, and wastefully mispendeth his time and substance; nor unto any great learning, if he be slothful and negligent in his studies; or to get the glory of famous victories and glorious triumphs, if he lie idly in the Garrison, and never exercise himself in feats of arms, nor make any attempt against his enemies; but all these things must be purchased and achieved by labor and diligence: then how shall we think ever to enrich our souls with the invaluable treasures of God's graces, to attain unto that high and supernatural learning, which teacheth unto us the knowledge of God, and of ourselves, our Savior Christ and his will and truth, or to get the victory over the spiritual enemies of our salvation, which shall be rewarded with a Crown of glory and triumph, seeing they are so many, mighty, and malicious; if we do not shake off all sloth, and with all study and diligence use all good means whereby we may overcome all difficulties, and compass these things so much to be desired, and so hardly obtained? Neither must we think it an easy matter to serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life, and so slight it over as requiring no pains; seeing they are things of such high excellency, that they are far above our natural reach; and seeing also we cannot proceed in them, but against the violent streams of mighty opposition. For the spiritual enemies of our salvation are always ready to stop and hinder us in our course of Christianity, and we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness's in high places; who using all diligence to work our destruction, by spoiling us of all God's graces, and hindering us from doing any Christian duty, it behooveth us with no less diligence to prevent their malice. Our arch-enemy, Satan, never resteth, but like a roaring Lion, rangeth still about, seeking to

devour us: and how then doth it beseem us to stand continually upon our guard, and as the Apostle Peter exhorteth us, to watch, and to be sober? The world is ever forward to allure us unto wickedness, by evil persuasions, and bad examples, or to thrust us into it by threats and violent courses; and what diligence then becometh us to use in escaping these snares, and preserving ourselves from falling in these temptations? But especially ourselves are greatest and most dangerous enemies unto ourselves, nourishing in our own bosom such natural corruption, as maketh us most averse unto all good duties, and headlongly prone unto all sins; what diligence therefore should we use in subduing the strength, and defeating the wiles of this secret traitor, that lieth still lurking in us, seeking all advantages to hinder us in all Christian exercises, and to betray our souls as captives unto Satan, by drawing them into sin? Through this corruption of nature we are backward unto all good duties, and in our course of Christianity, do (as it were) row against the stream. No longer can we go forward, then we ply the oar with all diligence and endeavor, and no sooner give ourselves to ease, and remit our labor, but we are carried back again with the wind and tide of our carnal corruptions. We wrestle with a cruel monster, our own sinful flesh, against which we prevail no longer then we squeeze and crush it with our spiritual gripes; for no sooner do we surcease this holy violence against this corruption of our nature, but it recovereth (as it were) a new life, and with increased strength, again setteth upon us, putting us to a second labor and danger for the obtaining of the victory; as we see in the example of David, who even after that he had well profited in the practice of mortification, and gotten the victory over his sinful corruptions, by his earnest endeavors in this spiritual exercise; intermitting for a while his wonted diligence, and giving himself to sloth and ease, was shamefully foiled by his traitorous flesh, and lamentably plunged into diverse fearful sins. Finally, by reason of our fall, that heavy curse which was denounced against the earth, seizeth also upon our souls, which are barren in bearing any good fruits of holiness and righteousness, and naturally bring forth nothing but the thorns and thistles of sin and wickedness, unless we spiritually manure them with all painful diligence, and make them

more fertile and fruitful with the sweat of our labors. Neither can we expect any harvest of holy duties to spring out of such barren soils, unless we do well husband them, and use all diligence in tilling and breaking up these fallow grounds, in sowing them with the good seed of heavenly doctrine, and in weeding out of them daily some vices and corruptions. Again, this diligence is necessary; for as if it be remitted, the strength of sin continually increaseth; so the graces of God's Spirit, in respect of the vigor of their operations, do daily decrease and languish in us. For as to the welfare of our bodies it is necessarily required, that they be nourished and sustained by the same elements whereof they were first composed, which being but a while neglected, the spirits languish, the strength is abated, and the whole body is enfeebled and fainteth; so also is it no less necessary that we use all diligence in nourishing God's spiritual graces in us by the same means, whereby they were begun in us; as the Word, Sacraments, Prayer, and the rest; for if we do not give them continually this spiritual refection and refreshing, they will soon abate of their strength, wax faint and languish. Neither are these graces connatural with us, or like plants thriving and well-liking (even when they are neglected) in their own soil, but like trees transplanted out of hot countries into ours, (as suppose the Orange, Lemon tree, or such like) which need much tending; watering in the Summer, covering, and keeping warm in the Winter, that what is wanting in nature, may be supplied with art and diligence. They are like fire burning, not in its own element, or in combustible matter, where it needs not labor to continue it; but in green wood, which is ready every hand-while to go out till it be thoroughly kindled, unless we diligently blow it, and take great pains to make it burn. Whereof it is, that the Apostle using this metaphor, exhorteth Timothy, to stir up and relieve God's gifts and graces in him, (as it were) by blowing the fire, which otherwise would decay and languish in him. Finally, the necessity of this diligence hereby appeareth, in that without it we can neither escape God's curse, nor attain unto blessedness. For he is accursed of God, not only who is diligent in the service of the devil, but also who is negligent in the duties of his service, seeming like Meroz, in a cold neutrality, to take neither part; and not he alone

who contemneth or omitteth the works of God, but he also who doth them negligently. In which number are our civil worldlings, who contenting themselves with their moral honesty, just dealing and keeping their word, do either wholly neglect the religious duties of God's service, further then the Law compelleth them, or else perform them after a formal, cold, and careless manner: nor can we, without this earnest endeavor and studious diligence, attain unto eternal and heavenly blessedness. For this rich reward is not given to idle loiterers, but to painful laborers in God's Vineyard, nor to those slothful servants who hide their Masters Talent in a napkin, doing with it neither good nor evil; but unto those who by their spiritual trading have increased it to his advantage. The Kingdom of God falleth not (as it were) by lot to the lazy, but suffereth violence, and is taken by a holy force: and so strait is the gate that leadeth into it, and the way so narrow, afflicted and troublesome, that we cannot possess it by sitting at our ease, but must strive to enter with all diligence and endeavor, as our Savior exhorteth.

Sect. 5 - The last reason taken from the unwearied diligence of worldlings, in pursuing of earthly things.

Lastly, the unwearied diligence of carnal worldlings, in serving of the world and their own lusts, for the contemptible hire of earthly vanities, may effectually move us to use the like, or greater, in the service of our Master. For howsoever they, after their work is done, are not sure of their wages, or though it be put into their hands, are not sure to hold it; or though they do, find it vain and of no worth, always unprofitable, and oftentimes hurtful and pernicious; yet with what diligence do they yield their service? With what affection do they dote on this golden strumpet? And with what zeal and devotion do they commit idolatry with this painted Idol? For they are content to rise early, and go late to bed, to consume their spirits with carking care, and their bodies with restless labors, both by land and sea, to spend their strength, and to hazard unto innumerable dangers their health and life, yea the everlasting salvation of their souls, that they may obtain riches, pleasures and preferments, and fill their hearts

with these windy vanities, which may puff them up, but never satisfy them: and therefore how much more doth this diligence become us in the service of God, by performing unto him all Christian duties, seeing our wages as much exceedeth theirs, as heaven earth, everlasting excellencies, momentary vanities; the which also are certain both in payment and possession? So also the double diligence of Idolaters in serving their Idols, and the care and cost which is spent in their service, may make us ashamed to be less industrious and painful in the service of the true God. For they are ready to break their sleep, and rise early, with the Israelites, to do them service, and to offer their oblations; to part with their chiefest ornaments, as their jewels and earrings, their silver and their gold, for the making and decking of their Images; to launce and cut themselves, with Baals priests before their Idols; to do voluntary penance, and to go on pilgrimage to stocks and stones; to consume their strength with watching, that they may perform their superstitious orisons, and to torment and whip their bodies before their Cross and Crucifix, to strip themselves of all their means, to vow voluntary poverty, and with Jezebel, to spare for no cost in maintaining their idolatrous priests, who draw them on, and help them forward in their idolatry: And shall we be less diligent in the service of our good God, from whose blessing and free gift we have all things which we presently enjoy, or yet do hope for in the life to come? Or shall we think any pains, or care, or cost too great, in performing those duties which assure us of salvation, when as they think nothing too much which they do, or can do, to nourish their doubtful and wavering, their false and deceiving hopes of their future happiness? Yea, the diligence of desperate sinners in the service of the devil, by committing of all manner of wickedness, may make us blush for shame, to neglect God's service in the duties of holiness: For they break their brains in plotting of mischiefs, and spend their strength, and hazard their health and life in effecting them. For (as the Wise man speaketh) They sleep not except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall; and wickedness and violence more cheereth their hearts, then their bread and wine. They serve the devil oftentimes for nothing, and not seldom, even to

worldly loss, wasting their strength in wanton pleasures, impairing their health with costly gluttony, and loathed carouses, only in a bravery, and hazarding their life by needless quarrels, and bloody murders; besides, the inward torments of mind, heart and conscience, which their unruly passions, vain hopes, and false fears, frivolous anger, and lustful love, fretting envy, and revengeful malice do bring upon them. By all which courses, though they have no wages for their work; yet (as the Prophet speaketh) they are willing even to weary themselves to commit iniquity. And shall they be thus diligent in serving the devil that mortally hateth them, and shall we be negligent in God's service, who hath so dearly loved us? Shall they think the greatest pains too little in taking these wicked courses, which do but seal up unto them their certain destruction; and shall we think any pains too great in performing such holy duties as will assure us of eternal salvation? Finally, let the devils diligence in dishonoring God, and seeking to deprive us of grace and glory, that he may plunge us into everlasting perdition, make us studious and industrious in seeking to glorify God in our salvation. For as himself witnesseth, He compasseth the earth continually to and fro, to spy out all advantages against us, first, drawing us to sin, and then accusing us for it: and as the Apostle Peter testifieth, He walketh about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour. And shall not we use like, or greater diligence in preserving ourselves out of his danger; in keeping our souls and bodies holy and undefiled, that being unblameable, they may not be damnified by his accusations; and in employing our time in such holy and Christian duties, as will enrich our hearts with all saving graces, strengthen us to withstand all Satan's temptations, confirm our assurance, and further us in the fruition of heavenly happiness?

CHAPTER VIII.

Of constancy in the duties of godliness, without remission or intermission.

Sect. 1 - That all those which are sincere, are also constant in the duties of a godly life.

The last property of those Christian duties which appertain to a godly life, is constancy in performing them, of which there are two branches, continuance without remission or intermission, and perseverance without Apostasy or defection; both which David conjoineth in his practice of obedience; I have (saith he) inclined mine heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the end. Concerning the former, it is not sufficient to entitle us unto true godliness, that we be religious by fits, having our good and bad days, or that we spend some time in religious exercises, and then think that we are set at liberty to live as we list, and to follow the lusts of our own flesh; that we sometime perform Christian duties, when our worldly profits or pleasures will give us any leisure, and neglect, or slightly perform them when we have other employments; or (as it were) in some religious humor, and pang of devotion, caused by fear of some approaching judgment, or by smart of some present affliction. For inconstancy, which is a fruit of folly, will not stand with true godliness, which is the head and prime part of spiritual wisdom, the which, as it enableth us to choose that which is best, so also to be constant in our choice: Whereas folly and impiety are full of vanity and lightness; causing men, according to that sway which they bear in them, to be unsettled and inconstant in all their ways (if at least, they have any inclination unto religious duties, and be not wholly settled upon their dregs) and like Meteors hanging in the air, sometimes moving towards heaven, and soon after falling back again towards the earth. But no further progress hath any made in piety, then he hath profited in the constant practice of religious duties; and they who are sometimes hot, and sometimes cold, and sometimes between both, luke-warm; who one while perform service unto God, and another while neglect it, now devout and seemingly zealous in good things, and soon after cold and negligent, carnal and profane, have just cause to suspect themselves, that as yet they have made no sound entrance into the practice of godliness.

Sect. 2 - The former point illustrated by some comparisons.

For the course of Christianity in the Scriptures, is compared to the Kings high-way, and they who go on in it, to travelers going on in their journey towards their own Country; and therefore to be sometime seen in this way, is no sign that in good earnest we travel in it, if we sometimes go forward, and sometime backward, but rather that we are walking for recreation, and will give over when we feel any weariness. Even thieves and robbers do sometimes cross the high-way, though their ordinary haunt be in the woods and mountains, yea will travel in it for a while, that they may be thought true men, and so get the better advantage, by being unsuspected of executing their designs; but it is only the honest traveler that goeth constantly in his journey, and travaileth in it from morning to night. It is compared likewise to the running of a Race, wherein none get the Garland, but they who run as they ought, and as runners do not sometime run, and sometimes stand still, one while hold the right course, and another while leaving it, spend their time and travel in by-ways, or in going by fits forward and backward, for so they should be Non-proficiency, ridding no ground, and after much labor lost, be as far from the Goal and Garland, as they were at the beginning, when they first set forth: so none get the Garland of glory, who do not run constantly in the Race of godliness; and they who run by fits and starts, sometimes going forward, and sometime standing still, or going backward, or out of the way, become hereby Non-proficiency in Christianity, and after that by much unsettled rambling up and down, they have tired themselves in this course, they are (like the blind Horse in the Mill) in the same place and case they were in the beginning; no more mortified to sin, nor richer in saving graces, no more expert and active in Christian duties, no nearer the Goal, nor surer of the Garland at the end of their lives, then when they first entered into the profession of Religion. Yea oftentimes having wearied themselves in this fruitless labor, and seeing the small benefit that they have reaped of it, for want of hope, and assurance of ever getting either the Garland of grace or the Crown of glory, they quite give out, and ceasing any longer to run in the Christian Race,

do return back again (like the Dog to his vomit) and run as fast as ever they did in their old wicked courses, that so they may not lose all, but may gain, at least, the prizes of worldly vanities, which Satan offereth unto those who run swiftest in the ways of wickedness. Finally, the Christian life is our spiritual Husbandry, in which, there cannot be, without loss, any intermission of our labor, but one business being finished, another presently is to be undertaken. After breaking up of our fallow grounds, and plowing, there must be sowing, and harrowing, after seed time weeding, and then reaping and carrying into the barn. Neither must the spare time between these main employments, be spent in idleness, but in tending of our cattle, which are the helps of husbandry, in making and mending of our fences, in lopping and topping, plashing and pruning, threshing out of the Corn, that it may be fit for our own use, or carried out to the Market, with many other employments of like nature: So is there no intermission of our pains in the spiritual Husbandry, but after one duty performed, we must set ourselves about another, and spend our whole time either in preparing our hearts that they may be fit grounds to receive the seed of God's Word, or about the art of sowing, or covering the seed, that it may not be stolen away, or in weeding it from vices and corruptions, when it beginneth to grow; or in preserving and strengthening all the good helps and means, which will enable and further us in all our Christian labors; or in making or repairing our spiritual fences, which may keep out the beasts of the field, and enemies of our Christian thrift; or in reaping the present crop of God's saving graces, which will comfortably sustain us in the full assurance and expectation of the everlasting Harvest of heavenly happiness.

Sect. 3 - A complaint of men's unconstancy in performing the duties of a godly life.

And yet alas how many of us, who seem most forward in the profession of Christianity, that have not in the greatest part of their life, come to any settled constancy in performing the duties of godliness? How many profess themselves travelers towards our

heavenly Country, and yet are unconstant in all their ways, and unsettled in all their courses, sometime performing the duties of a godly life, and sometime neglecting them altogether; serving God one day, or in some small part of it, and spending the rest of their time in serving Satan, the world, and their own lusts? How many that make a fair show, as though they would run the Christian Race, who one while go forward, and another while, as out of breath, and weary of holy exercises, do stand still, or turn back again into their old sinful courses, and instead of seeking the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, do spend the chief of their strength in pursuing of worldly vanities? How many of those who would be thought good husbands for their souls, that are wholly negligent in the spiritual husbandry, every hand while intermitting their pains and diligence, sometimes using the means of growing and thriving in grace, and sometimes neglecting them, praying only when they are pinched with afflictions, hearing the Word at their best leisure and most ease; in the Country, when the weather is warm and the ways fair; in the City, when they cannot walk abroad about their pleasures or profits, as in time of winter, when the foulness of the way, and weather and darkness of the night leaveth unto them no other employment; and at no time taking any care after the seed is sown, to cover it in their hearts by Meditation or conference, that it may not be stolen away, but take root, and bring forth fruit in due season? So also receiving the Sacrament only at Easter, or some of the chief festivals, and neglecting to come to the Lord's Table, though often invited all the rest of the year besides; and finally, reading the holy Scriptures, and other profitable writings unconstantly, and by uncertain fits, when they have nothing else to do, or cannot well tell how to put away otherwise the tediousness of idleness. Through which inconstancy, after long using the means, they little profit by them, but like those of whom the Apostle speaks, they are ever learning, and never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth; they are old truants, and though in profession ancient, yet children in growth. They are like those of whom Seneca speaketh, who are always but beginners even to their ending, and but about to settle themselves in the course of a godly life, when death approaching will force them to finish it.

Finally, they either like Non-proficiency stand at a stay, without any increasing in knowledge, faith, and other saving graces; or the fruits of them in a godly life; or else deficient, falling back from their profession, and betaking themselves to the service of Satan, the world, and their own sinful lusts. Now what do all these but spend their precious time and unsettled endeavors not only in vain, but even oftentimes unto loss? What do they but make the practice of their Religion a Penelopes web, one day undoing that which they have done in another? Or like unto Sisyphus his feigned labor, rolling up the stone till it be almost at the hill top, and then suffer it to tumble back again, and so give them occasion to renew their labor? All which inconstancy, and evil fruits which spring from it, do proceed from the corruption of our natures, and the imperfection of our sanctification, the relics of sin still remaining in us; which make us apt and prone to return to our old courses, like a Horse to his trot, that is not thoroughly paced, or a Hawk to turn Haggard that is not well manned.

Sect. 4 - That constancy in all Christian duties is strictly required in God's Word.

But let us not please ourselves with this state of imperfection, but labor and strive daily after more perfection; and seeing how unsettled we are even in the state of regeneration, in all Christian courses, let us, bewailing our unstaidness, endeavor to attain unto more constancy in the embracing and practicing of all good duties. For God requireth at our hands, that we should serve him, not by fits and flashes, but constantly in all our courses, and not only that we do well, but that we continue in well-doing. Thus Samuel chargeth the people, that they should take heed (not of forsaking the Lord, and renouncing his service, but) that they should not turn aside after vain things which would not profit, nor deliver them from danger. So the Wiseman requireth, that we should continue in the fear of the Lord all the day long; and the Apostle, that we should never be weary of well doing; seeing in due season we shall reap, if we faint not: and exhorteth us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, because we are sure that we shall not labor in vain. And this constancy we must show both in choosing and holding us to the right way, and also in walking in it; In professing constantly the truth of Religion, and living accordingly in our holy practice. For the first, we must be constant in embracing and professing of God's Truth, and not by fits only, when it will best stand with our worldly advantage. So the Apostle exhorteth; Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. And again, Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our Epistle. Unto which constancy in the truth, he limiteth and appropriateth the benefit of our Redemption by Christ. For he saith, that we are reconciled by his sufferings, if we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved awry from the hope of the Gospel. So elsewhere he chargeth us, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. The which he condemneth in the Galatians as extreme folly: And rejoiceth in the contrary constancy of the Colossians; joying and beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. And the like constancy we must also show in the practice of all Christian and religious duties, according to our profession, for as we must not be weary of bearing upon us the livery of our Christian profession, and be ready to cast it off when the sun of persecution shineth, so neither in doing the duties of our Lord and Masters service, but we must labor to be stablished in every good word and work, as the Apostle prayeth for the Thessalonians: And desire with David, to keep the Law of God continually forever and ever. Our practice of godliness, must not with Ephraim's goodness be like a morning cloud which vanisheth ere noon, nor like the dew, which falleth over-night, and goeth away the next morning. But neglecting all things in comparison of this one thing necessary, we must make them give place to the constant performance of religious duties, when as they cannot stand together, whereof we have an example in Daniel, who setting all things apart, would not neglect his constant course of calling upon God three times a day, though thereby he hazarded the favor of the King, yea even his own life. Whose example if we would imitate, we must carefully avoid two vices, as notable

hindrances of this constancy; the first is careless sloth in spiritual duties, arising from our over-much minding and affecting of worldly things, which maketh us either to neglect them altogether, or to perform them unconstantly, and only by fits, which kind of intermission is a temporary defection, and if it be not reformed, will bring us at last to a full and final neglect of them. The other is fickle inconstancy in our courses, proceeding from carnal loathing of spiritual exercises; which causeth us to be soon weary of performing any good duty, and therefore to shift and change (as the sick man turneth from one side to another) unto a new exercise, before we have finished that in hand, and brought it to any good effect; like the unruly Patient, who hindereth the cure by often changing of medicines, before any of them have had time to work; or the foolish Gardener, who every hand while transplanteth his trees from one soil to another, and letteth them not have any convenient time to be settled and rooted.

CHAPTER IX.

Reasons which may move us to be constant in all Christian duties of a godly life, and the means of it.

Sect. 1 - That constancy is an inseparable companion of integrity.

And thus we see what that constancy which is required in the duties of a godly life, and the vices which we are to shun as opposite unto it. The arguments which may move us to this constancy, are many, some whereof I will briefly touch. The first reason is, because it is an inseparable companion of integrity and uprightness of heart; For if in sincerity and truth we perform service unto God, out of our love and obedience to his will, then these motives always remaining, will make us constant in doing of it. Whereas if in hypocrisy we formally perform any duties, being moved thereunto by worldly respects, then doth our obedience last no longer than they last, and as they are variable and subject to many changes, so shall we likewise change with them; according to that of the Apostle James; A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Secondly, if we be not constant in the duties of a godly life, all the pains which we take by fits will be spent in vain; seeing we shall undo that one day which we did the day before, and like foolish builders, one while setting up, and another while pulling down, we shall not be edified in our faith and sanctification, and after much time spent, be never the nearer the finishing of our work. For though at sometimes we row never so strongly against the tide and stream of our corruption, yet when we intermit our labor, and give ourselves to sloth and negligence, they will carry us down again as far from the Haven of our hopes, as we were at the beginning. Of which, we have lamentable experience in many ancient professors, who through this inconstancy in religious duties, stand at a stay (like dwarfs, whose age brings no growth) neither increasing in knowledge, faith, and other saving graces, nor in bringing forth of the fruits of them in their lives and conversation.

If therefore we would spend our pains to any purpose, let us not only begin well, but continue the work of our sanctification, till we have perfected our holiness in the fear of God, as the Apostle exhorteth. If we would be true Nazarites consecrated to God's service, we must not be holy by fits, but fulfill the days of our sanctification, and separating ourselves from all sinful pollution, we must be holy to the Lord. For as in legal purifications, though a man observed never so strictly some days allotted to his cleansing, yet if he failed in any one, though it were the very last, and defiled himself with any legal pollution, all his former labor was spent in vain, and the work was new to begin again: so is it also in our spiritual purifying, and in our sanctifying and consecrating ourselves to God's worship and service. Thirdly, the benefits which arise from this constancy, may persuade us to embrace it; for by continuance in the Word of Christ, we approve ourselves to be his Disciples indeed. We shall with much ease perform all Christian duties, when by our constancy we have brought ourselves to a habit. And as all things which are put into a state of motion, do continue moving with great facility and little help; and if it be intermitted, requireth much more strength and pains to begin it again, then it would have required to have continued it in that state; so if we be continually inured to the duties of a godly life, they will be easy and familiar unto us whilst this spiritual motion continueth, but if it be broken off and intermitted, it is a new work to begin again, and will not be renewed to the former state, without much endeavor and great difficulty. It is easy to keep that armor bright which is daily used, but use it only by some fits, and hang it by the walls till it be rusty, and it cannot, without much labor in scouring it, be restored again to its former brightness. If the Instrument be daily played upon, it is easily kept in tune by the skillful Musician, but let it but a while be neglected and cast in a corner, the strings and frets break, and the bridge flieth off, and no small labor is required to bring it into order. And thus also it is in spiritual things, which are kept in an easy and orderly course, with one half of the pains, if we continue them with a settled constancy. Finally, this constancy in holy duties giveth us assurance of all God's promises, according to that of the Apostle; We are made partakers of

Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; and that covenant made with David in the behalf of his son Solomon: I will establish his Kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my Commandments and my judgments as at this day: and by God's gracious and free promise giveth us just title to spiritual and heavenly rewards: For he will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality; eternal life, as the Apostle speaketh.

Sect. 2 - The manifold evils which accompany inconstancy in good duties.

Lastly, the manifold evils which are caused by inconstancy, may effectually move us to be constant in all good duties. For this various and often changing of our spiritual estate upon every slight occasion, maketh our service odious unto God, and all our actions unclean in his sight. The which is implied in the ceremonial Law, wherein the Chameleon was forbidden, among the beasts which were unclean, whose property is to hold constantly no color, but changeth as the things are changed which lie next unto it. Secondly, it hindereth our growth in grace, and maketh all the good means which we use to this purpose, unprofitable unto us. It disableth us in our spiritual race, from coming to the goal, and getting the garland, and causeth us to be prevented with their speed, who set out long after us. It maketh us unfit for all good duties, and not only more backward unto them by our intermission, but also more unable to perform when we do undertake them. For when we have for a time neglected prayer, meditation, hearing the Word, and such like spiritual exercises; our deceitful hearts, after they are broken loose out of the bonds of God's fear, and have tasted the carnal sweetness of this slothful liberty, are hardly recalled and recovered; and not without much pains reduced into order, nor well settled and composed to religious duties. It hindereth us in our spiritual journey towards our heavenly home; and whereas those who are constant in their travel, and rid continually some part of the way, come seasonably and surely to

their journeys end, though they seem to go a slow pace; these who go on by fits and spurts, tire themselves in the mid-way, and though sometimes they seem to go a gallop, yet their many intermissions, and often stays make them to be benighted, and to give over their travel before they come to their journeys end. Finally, it greatly endangereth us unto final apostasy, for leaving those good duties undone, which our consciences approving, call upon us to perform, and by this negligence running into temptation, it is just with God to leave us in it, and to withdraw his grace, which only giveth unto us both will and ability for the well performing of any good duty. Whereof it cometh to pass, that many who intend at the first but to play the truants, and to intermit their studies for a time, that they may take their liberty and pleasure, and then to come unto Christ's school again, are afterward partly so possessed with fear and shame of their Masters presence, and partly so bewitched with their carnal delights, that they run quite away, and never return. And when they have thus far given place to the devils temptations, and the sluggish sloth of their sinful flesh, that they intermit all spiritual exercises, as prayer, hearing the Word, reading, meditation, that they may the more thoroughly intend their worldly profits or delights, yet with a purpose to return unto them again when these things are dispatched; they are more and more ensnared in Satan's nets of perdition, into which they have cast themselves, and the longer they forbear, the less appetite they have to religious duties. Lastly, this inconstancy maketh us far worse in the service of God, then the sons of Belial are in the service of the devil, and of the world. For they, for the uncertain and base wages of earthly trifles, are constant in those works of darkness wherein they employ them, toiling themselves, and spending their strength in their servile drudgery night and day, though it be to the everlasting damnation both of their bodies and souls: whereas these who profess themselves the servants of God, serve him negligently by fits and starts, one while taking a little pains in spiritual exercises, and another while intermitting their labors, and spending their time in sloth and idleness, although he encourageth them to do him faithful and constant service, with the

present pay of all temporal blessings, and with the assured hope of future happiness.

Sect. 3 - Of the means whereby we may be enabled to serve God constantly in the duties of a godly life.

And these are the reasons which may move us to constancy in the duties of God's service. In the next place let us consider of some means which may enable us unto it. The first means is, often and seriously to consider of God's manifold mercies and rich rewards, both in this life and the life to come, which he hath faithfully promised unto all those who do him diligent and constant service. For in this world nothing shall be wanting to those that serve and fear him; for if he provideth so liberally even for strangers and enemies; then will he much more for those of his own family, and not suffer them to want anything which is good. He will shine upon them with the bright beams of his face and favor, and glad their hearts with the joy of his countenance. He will preserve them from all dangers, and mightily defend them from the malice and power of all their enemies. He will watch over them with his providence to do them good, and will have them always at his finding, who hath all things in heaven and earth to bestow upon them. He will enrich them with the chief treasures of his spiritual graces; and hereafter give them the possession and fruition of heavenly happiness. So that though we should not intermit our pains in the duties of his service for the space of an hour in the whole course of our lives; yet may we say of our doings, as the Apostle of our sufferings, The service of this present life is not worthy the glory which shall be revealed; for that is short and momentary, weak and imperfect, but shall be rewarded with a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory. The second means of constancy is, to take notice, and to have a true sense of our frailty and infirmity, our natural mutability and inconstancy, our dullness and weariness in all good duties, that so we may keep a narrow watch over ourselves, and not give way to our spiritual sloth when it creepeth upon us, and moveth us to intermit the duties of a godly life. We must not be proud and presumptuous of our strength,

as though it were in our power to leave and resume our work when we please; but be humbled in the sight and sense of our backwardness and weariness in holy duties; and as the Apostle exhorteth, we must not be high minded, but fear: whilst we seem to stand, we must take heed of falling, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. For, blessed is he which thus feareth always; seeing it will make him careful to keep his spiritual watch, that he do not neglect or intermit any good duty which may strengthen his faith in the assurance of his salvation. The third means is, that we endeavor to work our hearts to the love, not only of God, which will make all our labors light which we take in serving him whom our souls love, but also of the spiritual duties themselves, by meditating often upon their excellency, profit and necessity above all worldly employments. For what the soul loveth, in that it resteth with unwearied delight, and so pleaseth itself in the fruition of it, that it admitteth no thought of change. The fourth means is, to keep ourselves in acquaintance with all good duties, that they grow not strange unto us, and that we give no place to sloth, but keep ourselves in continual exercise, which will enable us to hold out with constancy. For the more we do them, the more easy shall we find them, and ourselves more strong and able to continue in them. And as runners in a race do daily use exercise to keep themselves in breath, and that they may be more able and active to perform it, and hold out when they run for the Garland: whereas if they should intermit their diligence, and give themselves to ease and sloth, it would make them short-winded, and unable to continue when they strive for the mastery: so in this spiritual race, the more we exercise ourselves in Christian duties, the better able we are to continue in them without fainting or weariness; and the less pains we take, the sooner we are out of breath, and less able to continue in our course. The fifth means is, that seeing we are naturally glutted with satiety in the continual use of the same thing, and delighted with some variety and change, we do not wholly tire ourselves in any one good exercise; but seeing God hath given unto us variety and choice of many Christian and religious duties, and will not be served by one of them alone, but hath allotted unto every one of them their due time and

season: Therefore avoiding that unconstant levity before spoken of, shifting and changing, before we have brought the duty in hand to some good effect, that we may receive some fruit and benefit by it, it is profitable for the enabling us to this constancy in God's service, when we feel ourselves weary of one good duty, to betake ourselves to another; as from praying, to reading; from hearing, to meditating or conferring; from religious exercises, to the civil duties of our callings; and when we feel our spirits spent, our minds dulled, and bodies wearied with them both, or either of them, to refresh ourselves with honest and moderate recreations: whereby we shall not only preserve our strength, that after one duty done, we may be more fit to perform another, but also return unto the same duty again in seasonable time with a better stomach, when as we left it with some appetite, and were not glutted with any loathing satiety. The last means of constancy is, that we do all good duties in due time and order: For these are inseparable companions, and mutual helps one to another: so the Apostle saith, that he rejoiced in the Colossians, beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith; and exhorteth the Corinthians to the same practice, that all things should be done decently and in order in the service of God, because he was not a God of confusion, but of order and peace. And this will much further us in constancy, seeing those things continue longest, which have an orderly proceeding: as we see in the celestial bodies, which as they much excel all earthly things in their admirable order, so also in the constancy of their motion. That therefore we may be alike constant in all our courses of Christianity, let us be like them also in their orderly proceeding, and beginning the day with spiritual exercises, as before hath been showed, and so proceeding to civil duties, let us hold on in the same tenor, neither confusedly intermixing them one with another, nor upon every slight occasion changing our course. And if we constantly observe this order, this order will be a notable means to preserve our constancy.

CHAPTER X.

Of our perseverance in all Christian duties of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That we must persevere both in profession and practice of godliness.

But as we must be every day constant in the duties of a godly life without intermission, so must we persevere in them unto the end without apostasy or defection. For as it is the property of a faithful and blessed man to bring forth his fruit in due time and season, so also not to fade or wither, but to flourish always like the Palme tree, and to bring forth most fruit in old age. His righteousness endureth forever, and his ways are like a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. An example whereof we have in the Church of Thyatira, whose last works were more than their first. Now this perseverance must be showed both in embracing and professing the truth of Christian doctrine, and also in practicing the holy duties which it teacheth in the whole course of our lives and conversations. Unto the former the Apostle exhorteth, Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. The Apostle John likewise: Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. And our Savior Christ in his Epistle to the Churches: That which you have already, hold fast till I come. The other, the Lord himself commandeth: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge and his Statutes, and his Judgments, and his Commandments always: or as he expoundeth it in another place; In all the days that thou livest upon the earth, or for evermore. And contrariwise apostasy and defection is forbidden; Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Sect. 2 - Of the means of perseverance. The first and second Means.

Now the means whereby we may attain unto this perseverance in the duties of a godly life, are diverse. The first is, to consider often with ourselves, that all God's gracious promises are limited and restrained unto those (not that begin well, or hold out to the mid-way, but) who

persevere unto the end. So our Savior Christ, He that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a Crown of life. And not he that fighteth, but in fighting overcometh, hath the promises of freedom from all misery, and fruition of heavenly happiness made unto him. And elsewhere he indefinitely promiseth, that if we abide in him, and let his Word abide in us, then ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. To the same purpose the Apostle James telleth us, that who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, that man shall be blessed in his deed. And the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, that we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold out the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. And therefore if we mean to have any part in God's promises, we must constantly persevere in the profession and practice of true godliness, and the Christian duties of an holy life. The second means of perseverance, is carefully to avoid the causes and means of apostasy and defection. And these are diverse: first, voluntary living in any known sin, which will harden the heart, and dead the conscience, and so make way for many others, till we be wholly carried away from God in a stream of wickedness. Secondly, we must carefully take heed of the least declinations in Christian graces and holy duties; for if we be once going down the hill, we shall hardly keep ourselves from running headlong to the bottom, unless we stop speedily in the very beginning. And as for the preserving of our bodies in a sound estate, we labor with seasonable physic to prevent diseases, and when we find our health to decline a little, do use all good means at the first, because if the sickness seize thoroughly upon the vital parts, it will hardly be removed, and endanger our lives: so must we take the same course for the good of our souls, carefully observing the first declinations of our spiritual health, that we may stop them at the beginning, before they break out into any extremities. And considering that those diseases both of body and soul, are most dangerous and desperate (not which come suddenly with some sensible violence, but) which steal upon us by degrees upon no apparent causes, and impair the health by little and little, because they are hardly discerned, and when they are known, not

easily cured, as in the outward man, the consumption, hectic fever, and the like; and in the inward and spiritual part, carnal security, hardness of heart, and others of like nature; let us not therefore neglect the least declinations in saving grace, and holy duties, but keep a careful watch over ourselves, that none of these diseases of our souls steal upon us, and become desperate before we discern them. Let us be as good husbands for our souls, as we are for our clothes, houses and grounds, mending little holes, before they tear out into great rents, repairing the first decays, ere they become rotten and ruinous, and making up the breach as soon as we discern it, before it come to an inundation, and carry us away in a flood of wickedness. And this counsel the Apostle giveth us. Lift up (saith he) the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths to your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed, &c. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. A third cause of apostasy, is a great opinion of our own strength, which causeth God to leave us that we may see our weakness, as we see in the fearful defection of the Apostle Peter: And also a fond conceit that we are so rich in grace, that we may spend upon the stock, and labor for no more; and that we have already so well profited in religious duties, that we need not take any care or pains to make any further progress: For there is no standing still in the ways of Christianity; but when we cease to go forward, we begin to go backward; when in our own opinion we are at the full, we will begin to wane and decline towards a change; and when our godliness is come to a standing water, it presently declineth and never ceaseth, until it be come to a low ebb. For the preventing whereof, let us not measure our virtues and good proceedings by the false mete-yard of pride and self-love, which will make us overween our own gifts and good parts; nor compare ourselves with ourselves, or others that come behind us, and have not attained unto our measure, but with the perfect Law of God, which like a looking-glass will discover our blemishes and imperfections, and with our Savior Christ, the perfect pattern of holiness and righteousness, according to whose Image we ought to

be conformed. A fourth cause of defection from God and godliness which we must shun, is the immoderate love of the world and worldly vanities, which cooleth and quencheth in us the love of God, and of spiritual and heavenly things; and so choketh in us all good desires and endeavors of seeking after them that we may obtain them. For as our Savior telleth us, we cannot serve God, and Mammon: And the Apostle saith, that the amity of the world is enmity with God; and therefore whosoever will be a friend of the world, he is God's enemy. Which argument the Apostle John useth to dissuade us from this carnal love: Love not the world (saith he) nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. A fifth cause, is slackness and negligence in the use of those means which both beget and begin God's graces in us, and also nourish and preserve them when they are begun; as the hearing of the Word, reading, prayer, meditation, the Sacraments, and such like. For as the strength of the body languisheth and consumeth, if we refuse our bodily food, whereby it is preserved, so must also our souls needs fall into a consumption of all grace and goodness, if we neglect that spiritual nourishment by which only they are sustained in us. A sixth cause is, the grieving of God's Spirit dwelling in us, by quenching the good motions of it, and defiling our souls with sins that waste the conscience, being committed willfully against the knowledge; which loathsome filthiness polluteth our souls and bodies, and maketh this holy Ghost weary of his lodging, and going away, to withdraw also with him his gifts and graces, by which alone we are enabled unto all good duties. And therefore if we would not fall away from all grace and goodness, let us lovingly entertain the Author of them, and not grieve God's holy Spirit, by resisting those good motions which he putteth into us, and by making our hearts and bodies, which should be his holy temples and place of residence, a loathsome sty of sinful uncleanness. A last cause of apostasy, is near and inward familiarity with profane and wicked persons, who will corrupt us with their evil examples, and poison us with the contagion of their sins, alluring and drawing us by degrees to accompany them in their evil courses, until at last we run on with

them into the same excess of outrageous wickedness, and so give a final farewell to all grace and goodness.

Sect. 3 - The third means is to consider that we can no otherwise be accepted and approved of God.

The third means of perseverance is to consider, that there is no other way to be approved of God, either in our persons or actions. For though our works make never so glorious a show in the sight of men, and our first beginnings and proceedings seem most excellent, and give great contentment both unto ourselves and all others, yet if we continue not unto the end, the Lord will take no delight either in us or them; according to that of the Apostle: If any man draw back, my soul shall take no pleasure in him. Fourthly, let us remember, that our begun and continued righteousness will not at all profit us, if we desist in our course, and return again to our former wicked ways. For so the Lord hath plainly said, That the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression, and for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby, in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness, in the day that he sinneth, &c. And therefore as the sinner hath no cause to go on in his sin, despairing of pardon, so the righteous hath no reason to desist in his righteousness, presuming of reward, for that which he hath done already. The fifth means is, to consider, that if we persevere not in the profession and practice of true godliness, all our former labor will not only be spent in vain, but also to our great loss, seeing we shall be in far worse case after our apostasy, then we were before we made any profession of Religion. For Satan having been once beaten out of possession, upon his return taketh surer hold; and as our Savior speaks, One evil spirit taketh with him seven other worse than himself, and reenter and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So the Apostle Peter telleth us, that it had been better for apostates not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from it, like the Dog to his vomit, and the Sow being washed, to her wallowing in the mire. The sixth

means is, to have always in our remembrance the fearful punishments which are inflicted upon Apostates, both in this life and the life to come. For the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man, who persevereth in his integrity, shall be satisfied from himself. More especially, he that forsaketh God and the ways of his Commandments, the Lord will forsake him, and give him over unto himself, to go on in his own sinful courses to his everlasting perdition and destruction, according to that of David to his son Solomon; If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. And that of Azariah to Asa; The Lord is with you, while you be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. So the Lord threateneth to stretch out his hand, and to cut off them that were turned back from him, and those who had not sought him, nor inquired after him. In the life to come Apostates shall be deprived of heavenly happiness, for he only that endureth to the end, shall be saved. And he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, shall not be thought fit for the Kingdom of God. Yea, they shall not only lose these heavenly joys, but also have their portion in hellish torments; For they that sin willingly, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, and persevere in their sins without repentance, there remaineth unto them no more sacrifice for sins; but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries, as the Apostle speaketh.

Sect. 4 - The last means of perseverance, is Prayer.

Lastly, if we would persevere in the duties of a godly life unto salvation, we must remember, that it is not a thing in our own power, but the free gift of God, and therefore if we would have it, we must continually beg it at his hands by fervent and effectual prayer. For as it is he alone that giveth unto us the spiritual life of Grace, who were naturally dead in trespasses and sins; so it is he only that can preserve us in it. And if he openeth his gracious hand, we shall be nourished and filled with all good; but if he hideth his face from us, we shall presently be troubled, and perish in our former state of sin

and infidelity. It is he that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure; and we who are able to do nothing of ourselves, are enabled to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. It is he that beginneth the good work of grace in us, and he only can perform and finish it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is he alone, that is able to keep us from falling, as the Apostle Jude speaketh, and to preserve us faultless, before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. We can no more walk in our own strength in the ways of godliness, then Peter could upon the waters: but it is the power of Christ's Word, that supporteth us, and keepeth us from sinking, and his gracious promises of his help and assistance, by which we are stayed. It is not our apprehending him, but his apprehending us and holding us in his hand that preserveth us from falling; for our weak and childish hold would soon fail, though we cling unto him by a lively faith, if he took not surer hold of us, and (as it were) carried us like a loving Father in the arms of his providence. Neither do we chiefly persevere, because we are faithful unto God, but because he is faithful unto us, and will stablish and keep us from all evil. Our own strength would not stay us from being forcibly carried away with the violent temptations of our spiritual enemies; but it is our Savior Christ that keepeth us, who having received from his Father all power in heaven and earth, is stronger than all, and none shall be able to pluck us out of his and his Fathers hands. It is he that confirmeth us unto the end, that we may be blameless unto the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The promises of God which in Christ are yea and Amen, unto the glory of God by us, are they which stablish us in him; and it is he that hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. And therefore if we would persevere in grace and in the ways of godliness, we must beg it at God's hands, and pray for ourselves, as the Apostle for the Colossians, that he will replenish us with knowledge of his will in all wisdom, that we may walk worthy the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. And as he prayeth for the Thessalonians; that the Lord will make us to increase and abound in love, to the end that he

may stablish our hearts unblameable in holiness before God, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

Containing in it the helps and means which enable us unto it.

CHAPTER I.

Of the rules of a godly life, whereby we may be directed in the right performing of all Christian duties. And first, of such rules as respect the causes of it, both principal and subordinate.

Sect. 1 - Of the helps enabling us to lead a godly life.

Having showed what the godly life is, and the duties wherein it consisteth, with the properties belonging to them, which serve as way-marks and signs, whereby we may know that we are in a right course; it now remaineth, that we entreat both of the helps whereby we may be furthered in the ways of godliness, and also of the impediments, which hindering us in our Christian course, are to be carefully removed out of the way, if we would travel in it with any ease and comfort, and come happily to the end of our journeys. For as they who are to run a race for a corruptible crown, think it not sufficient to know perfectly the way, with the nature and properties of it, as whether it be long or short; up, or down the hill; rough or plain: but also carefully use all helps which may further them in the race, and remove all impediments which may hinder their speed, and frustrate their hopes of coming seasonably to the goal, and winning the Garland: so must we all take the same course in running of the spiritual Race of a godly life, that we may obtain that Crown which is heavenly and immortal. The helps whereby we may be furthered and enabled to lead a godly life, are either the means which tend to the advancing of it; or the arguments and reasons which may induce and

persuade us to use them, and to practice all Christian and holy duties in the whole course of our lives and conversation. The means respect either direction or practice: The former consisting in certain rules which are to be observed, that we may profitably proceed in the ways of godliness: The other in well using of certain special means which God hath ordained and sanctified to this end, that they may enrich us with his spiritual and saving graces, and strengthen us to the performing of those Christian duties which belong to a godly life. The rules to be observed, have either reference to such things as belong to all Christian duties, or to the duties themselves.

Sect. 2 - The first rule is, that we make God the supreme end of all Christian duties, and wholly deny ourselves in them.

Of the former sort, are such as concern either their causes or their circumstances. The causes are chief and principal, or else subordinate and instrumental. The chief and principal cause of working all holy duties, in, and by us, is God himself, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit. Concerning whom, this first rule is to be observed, that seeing God is the chief Author of all good duties which can be performed by us, that therefore we also make him the supreme end of them, propounding unto ourselves his glory in the undertaking of any action, as the main motive that induceth us unto it. And seeing he is first and last in all holy duties which are performed of us, and both beginneth, continueth, and finisheth his works of grace in and by us; yea, seeing we ourselves are wholly his, both by right of creation, preservation, and redemption; therefore being his and not our own, we must devote and consecrate ourselves wholly, and all our actions and intentions to his service, performing all Christian duties, not as acts of our own wills, to please or profit ourselves, but as works which he willeth and commandeth, and are therefore pleasing and acceptable in sight. So that this must be our first step and entrance to the Christian duties of a godly life, utterly to deny ourselves and our own wills, and acknowledging God to be all in all,

we are to resign both our persons and actions to be directed and guided as he pleaseth, and to make his will in all things the rule of ours; not performing the duties of a godly life, because they are pleasing unto us, or plausible unto others, but because God requireth them, and it is his will, that being sanctified, we should glorify him, in bringing forth much fruit. We must, if we will be Christ's Disciples, in the very first place deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him. We must not, like untamed Heifers, run and range which way we list, but we must take upon us his easy yoke and light burden, and casting off our pride and self-will, we must learn of him to be humble and meek in spirit. We must be content to be, not what we would, but what God will have us, both doing and suffering whatsoever he commandeth or imposeth. We must go the way that nature shunneth, if God choose it for us; and walk with Peter, not whither we would, but whither we would not. An example of which obedience we have in the Saints of Macedonia, who resigned themselves unto the Lord in doing his will, and in him to the direction of his holy Apostle. And in Paul also, who before his conversion applied himself to do his own will, and to please the chief Priests, but no sooner was he cast down and humbled, but presently he offereth himself to God's service, and desireth to be guided by the will of Christ. Yea our Savior himself, who is the most perfect pattern for our imitation, though his human will were most just and holy, yet professeth that he sought not his own will, but the will of his Father who sent him. Neither must we only deny our own wills in all our doings, that we may submit them unto God's, but also in our sufferings, that so we may say with David; Here am I, let him do to me, as seemeth good unto him; and with our Savior Christ himself; If this Cup may not pass by me, not my will, but thine be done. The fruits and benefits of which resigning up ourselves wholly to the direction and disposing of God's will, are great and manifold. For thus all our actions must needs be pleasing unto God, seeing they are conformable to his own will. We shall live the life of Christ, when being wholly moved and ruled by his Spirit, we shall do, not our own wills, but his, and the will of his and our heavenly Father. We shall be partakers of the divine nature, as the Apostle Peter speaketh, when

as keeping his residence in us by his Spirit, his holy will doth reign and rule in us. We shall greatly profit in humility, which is that Christian ornament that chiefly maketh us glorious in the sight of God. We shall be contented in all estates, and rejoice even in tribulation and affliction, because the will of God is fulfilled in us, upon which our will dependeth. Finally, the will of God shall be unto us as a most skillful and faithful Pilot, which standing at the stern, will direct us in all our courses, in this our dangerous passage thorough the sea of this world, and preserve us safe in all tempestuous troubles, from falling upon the rocks and shelf's, upon which we would often run and make shipwreck of our souls, if we followed not this guide, but were led by the direction of our own corrupt and unskillful wills, or by the traditions of others who are as ignorant as ourselves.

Sect. 3 - The second rule respecting our Savior Christ; namely, that we aim at him as the main scope of all our actions.

The second rule of direction for the leading of a godly life, respecteth our Savior Christ, namely, that we propound him as the main scope and mark at which we aim in all our actions, not resting in the best duties which we perform, as having in them any sufficiency to make us happy and blessed, but using them as helps to gain Christ, and to confirm and assure our union and communion with him, by whom alone we attain unto happiness. The end of our legal knowledge, is not chiefly that we may obey it, and so live in our own righteousness, but to discover our misery both in respect of sin and punishment, that thereby we may be driven out of ourselves unto Christ, and seek in him righteousness and salvation. The end of the knowledge of the Gospel and of all other knowledge, learning and wisdom, is to bring us to the knowledge of Christ and him crucified; for the saving knowledge of this only, would make us happy, though we were mere Idiots in all other things; whereas if we had all other knowledge of the secrets of nature, the profundity of all Arts and sciences, yea even

of the highest and darkest mysteries of Religion, yet wanting this alone, we should be miserable. And therefore the Apostle neglecting the excellency of all other wisdom, determined not to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. In respect of this, he esteemed all other gain but loss and dung, and propounded this unto himself, as his chief mark unto which he pressed with all his power, that he might know Christ, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. In which, when he had attained unto it in some measure, he chiefly gloried. The end of our faith must not be to rest in it, as an infused grace, for which in its own virtue we are accepted, but that it may serve as an instrument to apply and appropriate unto us Christ and his righteousness, in and by whom alone we are justified in the sight of God. The end of our hearing and reading the Word, is not chiefly to commend us unto God by the performance of a religious act of his service, but that we may thereby come to the knowledge of Christ, and apply him unto us by a lively faith. The end of our receiving the Sacraments, is to confirm and assure our union and communion with Christ. The end of our prayers, is not that for themselves and their own fervency and holiness, they should be heard and granted of God, but only in the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ. Finally, the end of all the duties of a godly life and fruits of new obedience, is not to satisfy God's Justice and merit heaven, but to assure us that we are engrafted as lively branches in the true Vine Jesus Christ, and that we have from him this sap of grace which maketh us fruitful, seeing without him we could do nothing; and that we are partakers of the virtue and power of his death and Resurrection unto Justification, and the remission of the guilt and punishment of all our sins, seeing we feel them powerful in us for our sanctification, and for the abating of the corruption, and subduing in us the power of sin, so that it no longer reigneth in our mortal bodies. Now the reason why we must not rest in our Christian graces and holy duties themselves, but only use them to another end, propounding unto them as their main scope the gaining of Christ, and that we may hereby be more nearly and firmly united unto him, is, because nothing in us, nor anything done by us is pleasing unto

God in it own worth and excellency, but only as it is accepted in Christ the Son of his love, in whom only he is well pleased; for even our prayers themselves are but a loathsome sacrifice, unless our high Priest taking them at our hands, do put them into his golden Censor, and sweeten them with the odoriferous Incense, and fragrant breath of his mediation and intercession. Our best righteousness, being imperfect and stained with our corruptions like a polluted cloth, will not endure the pure and parching eye of God's strict Justice; unless our imperfections be covered with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the pollution washed away in his most precious blood. And therefore let not this be the end of all our Christian duties in a godly life, that they may bring us directly unto God, in their own credit, or procure his favor in their own worth and excellency, for then he will justly reject both us and them; but let us propound the getting of Christ as the main scope of them all, that so being united unto him, we and our duties may in him be accepted before God, and receive a rich reward by virtue of his merits and perfect obedience.

Sect. 4 - The third rule, respecting the Spirit of God dwelling in us.

The third rule respecteth the holy Spirit of God dwelling in us, namely, that seeing we cannot of ourselves pray, or hear, or read, or meditate, or else perform any other Christian and holy duties, but as this Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and giveth us power to bring them to some good effect; therefore stopping our ears to carnal disputes, and shaking off the yoke of natural and corrupted reason, we must, in the performing of all the duties of a godly life, give ourselves over to be governed and guided by it, both in respect of the matter, manner, and time of doing them. And when we hear the voice of the Spirit secretly whispering in our hearts (like the voice of one standing behind us) saying, This is the way, walk thou in it, when thou turnest to the right hand or to the left, we are to be directed by it. And when it putteth into our minds any good motions, or inciteth us unto any holy duties, as praying, hearing, reading, meditating,

renewing of our repentance, or doing the works of mercy, and such like, we must not quench the Spirit, by checking these motions, nor by delaying and putting them off to another time, but undertake them presently, and labor to bring them to good effect, whilst it offereth unto us its help and assistance, without which, of ourselves we are able to do nothing that is good. Let us not grieve the good Spirit of God dwelling in us, whereby we are sealed to salvation, by refusing his government, (as the Israelites dealt with Samuel) notwithstanding it is so profitable unto us, pulling (as it were) his Scepter out of his hand, and saying unto him, as those Rebels to Christ, This man shall not reign over us: but like obedient subjects, let us submit ourselves in all things to be ruled by it; and when we discern that the motions which are put into our minds, are his, (as we may easily know them from all others, both by their holiness resembling their Author, and their agreement with the voice of the Spirit in the holy Scriptures) let us not only yield unto them, but also give them the best entertainment; nourishing and cherishing them when they seem weak, and inciting and re-enlivening them when as they begin to languish and die in us, by meditation, prayer, reading, and other such like religious exercises. Let us open the door of our hearts when he knocketh, and give kind entertainment to this holy Ghost, who bringeth his cheer with him, and will feast us with a delicate banquet of spiritual graces. But especially when he visiteth us after an especial and extraordinary manner, and giveth more evident signs of his presence than at other times, by working more powerfully good motions in us, kindling our zeal, and enlarging our hearts with the love of God, and the duties of his service, then are we not by sloth to let slip so good an opportunity of enriching our souls with saving graces, but we must (as we use to say) strike whilst the iron is hot, and reap our harvest, whilst this Sun-shine continueth: we must set up all our sails, whilst this fair gale of wind lasteth; and so we shall in a shorter time make a far greater progress in our course of godliness, than in many months, when being left by the Spirit, in respect of this extraordinary efficacy and operation, we shall be becalmed, and have neither will nor power to go forward. When he offereth himself in an unusual manner unto us, in our

traveling of the spiritual journey, (as the Angel to Jacob) we must take fast hold of him, not suffering him to depart, before he hath given us an extraordinary blessing. And when he moveth our hearts, as the Angel the Poole of Bethesda, and by his special presence infuseth into them more then wonted virtue; let us not suffer so good an opportunity to pass, without making of it some spiritual advantage, for the curing of our sores and sicknesses of sins, and the confirming and increasing of our health and strength in our inner man.

Sect. 5 - That we often renew the Covenant of grace between God and us.

The rules which respect the subordinate causes and helps, whereby we are enabled to perform the duties of a godly life, are diverse. The first, that we often renew the covenant of grace between God and us, by renewing the condition of it on our part, faith and repentance. In which exercise, as we are to renew our sorrow for all our sins, and those above the rest, which we have most often committed, and thereby most offended and dishonored God; so especially for those sins and corruptions which have most disabled us unto the duties of a godly life, and have plunged us into the contrary wickedness, whereby we have served sin and Satan. As our negligence and want of zeal, and holy care to glorify God by the light of our Christian conversation, and bringing forth the fruits of new obedience, and adorning our profession by our holy conversation, whereby contrariwise we have caused God's holy Name to be blasphemed, and our Christian profession to be slandered and evil spoken of, as though it were the cause of all our enormities. Our security and hardness of heart, whereby we have made no good use either of God's Word or works, his mercies or judgments, to be drawn by them to repentance, and made more diligent in the duties of his service; but putting the evil day far from us, have taken occasion thereby, with the evil servant, to be slothful and negligent in all good duties,

and to take liberty in running licentious courses, loathing the means whereby we should have been wakened and roused up out of this spiritual lethargy. Our cowardice and slothfulness in making war against our flesh and fleshly lusts, whereby they have often gotten to such a head, strength, and height of rebellion, that they have prevailed, and have shamefully foiled the spiritual part, and led us captive unto sin. Our negligence in preventing the occasions, and withstanding the first motions and beginnings of sin, and our want of care, in banishing out of our minds and hearts the desires and concupiscence of the flesh, when they were first suggested unto us; whereof it hath come to pass, that suffering them to rest in us, we have been allured and tick led with carnal delight in thinking of them, which hath drawn us from our former sincerity, and moved us to like and approve them, to consent unto, and produce them into act, when we have had fit occasion. Our worldliness and earthly mindedness, which have made us, by affecting transitory trifles, to neglect spiritual and heavenly excellencies, and neglecting God's service, to serve Satan, in hope of receiving this base wages and rewards of iniquity. Our little profiting by the long enjoining and using of the light of the Gospel, and plentiful means of our salvation, for the enriching of ourselves with God's spiritual and saving graces, knowledge, faith, affiance, love, zeal, patience, or the fruitful exercising of them in the duties of a godly life: which hath come to pass by our irreverent, slothful and sluggish using of the means, nor bringing unto them any faith, zeal, fervency of spirit, or a good conscience. Our want of Christian valor and resolution in the Christian warfare, and our often yielding unto the temptations of Satan, the world, and our own flesh. Finally, our abuse of prosperity and temporary blessings, which being given us of God as present wages in our hands, to make us more cheerful in his service, we have abused as means and occasions to make us more sinful, more forgetful of God, and negligent and cold in his service: more proud, worldly, and unconscionable in all our courses. And when we have called to our remembrance these, and such other sins, whereby we have been hindered in the ways of godliness, and have unfeignedly lamented and bewailed them with bitter grief, and resolved

amendment for the time to come; then are we also to renew and strengthen our faith, by applying afresh unto us the gracious promises of the Gospel which are made in Christ unto all repentant sinners. The which often renewing of our covenant with God, will be a notable means of strengthening us unto all the duties of a godly life; seeing this covenant of grace is the ground and foundation of them, God having promised therein, that he will take away from us our stony hearts, and give us hearts of flesh; and that he will put a new spirit within us, that we may walk in his statutes, and keep his ordinances and do them. That he will give us one heart, and one way, that we may fear him forever; and put his Law in our inward parts, and write it in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him. And as thus on God's part we are strengthened unto all good duties by his Spirit, which he promiseth and giveth unto us; so also on our part, this renewing of our faith enabling us hereunto; for the more we are assured of the remission of our sins, and of all God's benefits, both spiritual in this life, and heavenly in the life to come, the more we love him who hath so loved us, and of his infinite bounty hath multiplied upon us such inestimable blessings; and the more we love him, the more loath we are to do anything which may displease him, and the more forward and willing to glorify him, and to perform all good duties acceptable in his sight.

Sect. 6 - That we must take more care to approve our ways to God and our own consciences, then unto men.

The second rule is, that we chiefly labor to approve all our works and ways to God and our own consciences, rather than unto men, the testimony whereof is much more to be esteemed then public fame, and human censures. For fame being but a breath of the often deceived multitude, may also deceive us, by giving a false testimony, either on the worser or better part; but our consciences, which are privy even to our secret actions, and inward intentions in doing them, will not easily be corrupted to give in false evidence, especially

in those who are sanctified and regenerate. Human and vulgar censures are often false and frivolous, ridiculous and impious, applauding that which God condemneth, and condemning that which he commendeth; and commonly that best pleaseth the multitude, which displeaseth him. They call him honorable, not who honoreth God, and is honored of him, who is a son of God, brother of Christ, and heir of heaven; but who is ennobled by the virtues of his parents, or who hath bought glorious titles (as it were a slave in the market, or as the Centurion his freedom) with a great sum. They call him rich and happy, who is poor, beggarly, naked, and utterly destitute of the riches of God's graces, because he hath some worldly pelf, which every day may be taken from him, or he from it. And he of the world is esteemed valorous and magnanimous, who is so impotent in ruling his passions, that he cannot bear the least injury without taking revenge; and contrariwise he base and cowardly, who dissembleth wrongs, and according to Christ's Commandment doth readily forgive them, leaving vengeance to God, unto whom alone it belongeth: Though nothing is more contrary to true fortitude, or the magnanimous constancy of a sound and well-settled mind, then with every wind of words to be moved out of a right state; and with other men's folly to become furious and frantic. But a good conscience giveth in true evidence, as witnessing with God, or that which he witnesseth, not out of a blind opinion misled by passion, but according to the book of holy Scriptures, with which this book of conscience commonly agreeth. And therefore if we would lead a godly life, and constantly perform those Christian duties which are pleasing unto God, let us lightly regard the censure of the multitude, who ordinarily outface and discountenance virtue and piety, and commend and magnify vice and wickedness, justify those whom God condemneth, and condemn those that he justifieth; accounting their false praises a great dishonor, and their scorns and disgraces for innocence and piety, our praise and glory, seeing he cannot be but honorable whom God honoreth, nor want glory, whom Christ, his Saints and holy Angels approve and applaud. And contrariwise, let us highly esteem, in all our actions, the testimony of our own conscience, which will restrain us from secret sins, as well as from

open and notorious, and move and incite us to all Christian duties, even in our secret closets, when there is none by to censure our actions. And as no wise man in running of a race is much moved with the speeches of the standers by, which he assuredly knoweth to be false and frivolous, thinking ever the better of himself when he is cast behind all the rest of the company, because they commend his speed, or the worse when he hath outstripped them and is near the goal, because they discommend him for his slowness: so neither must we be lifted up with a good conceit of ourselves, when others commend us for our swiftness in the spiritual race, if our own consciences tell us, that we are slow and behind all the rest with whom we contend for the Garland; nor yet dejected and discouraged when they dispraise us: if we are privy unto ourselves, that with all our endeavor we strive to make our best speed.

Sect. 7 - That we must perform all good duties with a quiet and peaceable mind.

The third rule is, that we labor to perform all the duties of a godly life with a peaceable and quiet mind, which is not disturbed with disheartening fears, or tumultuous passions. The which calm quietness ariseth from two causes. The chief and principal is our peace with God, and peace of conscience, which are effects and fruits of our justification by faith. The which assuring us of the remission of our sins, our reconciliation with God, victory over all the enemies of our salvation, and that the Lord so watcheth over us with his providence, and ruleth us in all our ways with his Wisdom and Power, that we shall never fall from him, and so overruleth all things which oppose us, that nothing shall be able to hurt or hinder us, and all things shall turn to our good, and further our salvation; we are made hereby constant, cheerful and courageous in all Christian duties, serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness, without fear, all the days of our lives. For then our sins, and the judgments of God due unto them will not terrify us, the malicious assaults and

temptations of our spiritual enemies will not affright and discourage us, afflictions and persecutions for righteousness sake, and for the profession and practice of God's true Religion, will not daunt and dismay us, but we will, in despite of all these oppositions, hold on our way, and finish our course with joy. Whereas if we want this inward peace and tranquility, our sins will press us down as an heavy burden, and hinder our proceeding in the ways of godliness, our consciences will accuse and terrify us; Satan with his temptations will affright and beat us down, and outward troubles, joined with those inward discouragements which we find in ourselves, will so vex and disquiet us, that either we shall desist in the ways of godliness, as despairing to overcome all these difficulties, or else proceed slowly, and unsettledly with much inconstancy and discomfort. The second cause of this inward peace and tranquility of mind, is the subduing and mortifying of our carnal lusts and tumultuous passions, as worldly love, fleshly fear, rash anger, and the rest; and the right ordering of all our affections when they are sanctified. For where those unruly passions do still live and bear sway, they blind the mind, that it cannot discern the right way; corrupt and over-rule the will, that it cannot choose, even that which the judgment approveth, and so unsettle us in all good courses, that we can keep no constant tenor in them, but upon every slight occasion, all our good resolutions are overthrown, and we quite turned out of the right way. Whereas if these be subdued and kept (as it were) under hatches, the mind being quiet, is able to judge uprightly, and the will to embrace that which holy reason commendeth to its choice, and the work of piety prospereth and proceedeth without any disturbance. And as we are thus to mortify our carnal lusts; so we must rightly order our affections and passions, even after they are sanctified; that they may perform their duties in due time and place, and like servants, attend upon holy reason, that they may assist it, and not as commanders and chief agents, go before it. For as when a right and due order is observed in the performing Christian duties, reason being enlightened by God's Word and Spirit first approving them, the will, upon the commendation of reason choosing them, and the affections and passions subjecting themselves to the service of them

both, affect and desire them, and oppose, with all their strength, all impediments which hinder their producing into act; out of this orderly proceeding (as in a well governed state) we become constant in all good courses: contrariwise, when affections bear chiefest sway, and are the first movers unto Christian duties, reason being thrust from his throne, and will from the council table, though we may by fits and flashes perform them, yet doing them in a disorderly manner, not out of sound judgment rightly informed, but out of sudden and ungrounded passions, we can never be constant in any good course, but hot and zealous whilst the heat of passion lasteth, remiss and indifferent when this fervor abateth, and stone-cold when it ceaseth. And this is the true cause why so many, who have been zealous professors in their youth, become luke-warm when they come to riper years, and wholly cold and negligent, worldly and profane in their old age; because their Religion and devotion was but a flash of youthful passion, and not well-grounded upon sanctified reason, and a sound and settled judgment, convinced by the evidence of truth, and rightly informed by the Word of God. And therefore seeing the first beginnings were disorderly and confused, it is no marvel if the proceedings be unsettled and unconstant; and having laid so unstable and unsure a foundation, it is no great wonder, if the whole building, in short time, become ruinous.

Sect. 8 - That all our duties must arise from the fundamental graces of a godly life.

The fourth rule is, that all the duties of a godly life, do not only arise and spring from those inward and fundamental graces, saving knowledge, a lively faith, purity of heart, a good conscience, and fervent love, as I have already showed at large in the beginning of this Treatise, but also that they be joined and accompanied with other Christian and internal virtues, and principally Christian prudence, zeal and humility, without which they cannot be acceptable unto God. Christian prudence is most necessary to the

well performing of all good duties, because it guideth and directeth us in all particular actions, that they may be done aright, both in respect of the matter, and the manner, the substance and circumstances, of which if we fail, or of any one of them, our works, otherwise commendable, do lose all their grace and excellency. For though they be never so good in the matter, yet if they be done in an ill manner, and though for their substance they seem never so glorious, yet if we fail in the circumstances, not observing due time, place, or persons, that which is generally good in the Thesi and Theory, ceaseth to be so in the Hypothesi, and in respect of the particular act, as it is done by us; neither can we safely pass thorough all these narrow straits and difficult passages, unless Christian prudence sit at the Helme, and direct us in all our courses. Besides, this prudence is necessary for the guiding and tempering of our zeal, which is a good Soldier in the Christian warfare, but an ill Commander, as being fit for execution, but not to give directions; and if it be not under the conduct of prudence, it becometh blind and preposterous, rash and willful, like a headstrong horse, full of courage, which being well backed, may do good service, but if he be ill managed, carrieth his rider into headlong danger. But zeal, joined with prudence, is most necessary for our well proceeding in all virtuous actions, seeing (like the spirits in the body) it giveth to our souls lively heat, whereby they are moved in the course of godliness, and are made active in all Christian duties, laboriously using all good means whereby they may be furthered, and courageously opposing and removing all lets and impediments which cross us in our way. And therefore if we would deserve the name of true Christians, we must take heed that we incline not to that damnable error of carnal worldlings, who make zeal and prudence flat opposites, thinking those that are most fervent, most foolish, and with Jehu his companions, censuring them as mad fellows, that with any zeal perform their duty; seeing holy David, who in wisdom exceeded his teachers and ancients, was so zealous in God's service, that scoffing Michal condemned him of folly: yea, our Savior Christ himself, who is the Wisdom of his Father, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom are hid, as the Apostle speaketh, as he excelled all men in prudence,

so also in holy zeal, seeing he was not only thoroughly heated, but even consumed in this divine flame, as he professeth. Neither can true prudence be more severed from holy zeal, then zeal from prudence, being herein like the natural heat and radical moisture of the body, which preserve mutually one another, and both faint and fail, when either languisheth and decayeth. For prudence without the warmth of zeal (like frozen waters) loseth its motion in Christian duties, and (like the parts of the body, from which the animal spirits are stopped) becometh senseless and benumbed, falling (as it were) into a dead Palsy. Yea, if zeal do not put into it Christian courage, it groweth so wary and full of caution, that it attempteth nothing, because in all things it foreseeth danger; and so at last degenerateth into worldly wiliness, and irreligious policy. Finally, we must deck ourselves, and all Christian duties, with true humility, ascribing all the glory of them unto God alone, from whom only we had power and will to do them, and reserving nothing unto ourselves but the shame of their imperfections and corruptions, let us acknowledge that we are sufficiently rewarded, if our frailties and infirmities be graciously pardoned. But of this also I have spoken in the beginning of this Treatise.

Sect. 9 - That we must chiefly esteem, choose, and affect the duties of godliness, according to their worth and excellency.

The fifth rule is, that in our judgments we esteem, in our wills choose, with our affections desire and embrace, and in our actions practice and exercise Christian virtues and duties, according to their worth and excellency, profit and necessity; keeping (as much as in us lieth) a due proportion between them, in our judgments esteeming and preferring, in our wills choosing, in our affections loving and desiring, and in our actions seeking after, and practicing every good grace and duty in their due time and place, preferring in our estimate, choice, desires and practice, the chief and principal virtues and duties, before the mean, and the mean before others that are

inferior unto them. Not that we may neglect the least grace of God or Christian duty, or so regard the greatest and most excellent, as that we dis-esteem the least and meanest; for as our Savior saith, Whosoever breaketh one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least (that is, none at all) in the Kingdom of heaven; but that we must, when they may all stand together, give the priority and precedency, in judgment, desire, and practice to the chiefest, both in time and earnestness of endeavor, spending our first and best time, the fervor of our zeal, and chief vigor and strength both of body and mind about them; or if we are brought into such straits of necessity, that all cannot be done, but some must necessarily be omitted, that then the lesser give place to the greater, till we can get fit opportunity of performing both. Thus we must prefer Theological virtues, as faith, affiance, hope, charity, humility, and the fear of God before those which are human and civilly Moral, as temperance, chastity, civil justice, alms-deeds, and such like; and generally our duties towards God, before our duties towards our neighbors and ourselves, the Commandments of the first Table, before those of the second, a due proportion being observed, Moral duties being compared with Moral, degree with degree, as the greatest with the greatest, middle with middle, and least with least; more desiring, and zealously endeavoring to get the chief graces, and perform the religious duties of God's service, then those which merely concern ourselves or our neighbors. Thus we are more fervently to effect, and diligently to practice Moral and substantial duties, then those which are ceremonial and circumstantial; yea, to reject these latter, when both will not stand together, according to that; I will mercy and not sacrifice; and the practice of our Savior, who neglected the outward rest of the Sabbath, that he might do the works of the Sabbath, in curing and healing the lame and diseased. The contrary whereof, God condemneth in the Jews, and rejecteth their ceremonial service, as odious and abominable, because they took occasion thereby to neglect the Moral. And thus they offend, who spend their chief zeal about ceremonies and circumstances of God's service, and employ their best strength and endeavor, either in defending or opposing

them; being in the meantime more cold and slack in the main parts of God's service, and the principal duties of a godly life. Thus we must prefer the service of God itself before the means of it, and the duties of piety and charity, before the helps which further us in them; as the doing of the Word, before hearing, the practice of godliness, before the teaching or learning of it, when both cannot well stand together; prayer, and the works of piety and righteousness, before fasting and outward abstinence. In which regard, the Lord rejecteth the fasts of the Jews, because they preferred them before the works of Justice and charity, neglecting these, under color of doing the other. And thus likewise they fail, who place their Religion chiefly in hearing the Word, in the meantime neglecting the practice of what they hear and learn, in the duties of their callings, and in the works of Justice and mercy towards their neighbors; herein like unto rich misers, which spend all their time and strength in gathering riches, and when they have got them into their possession, never care to make further use of them. But we are to know that the end is to be preferred as more excellent, before the means that conduce unto it. As the life is better than food and raiment; health, than the medicine; treasure, than the pains that getteth it, or the chest, lock and key that keepeth and preserveth it. In which respect, the practice of religious duties in our lives and conversations, which is the end of our teaching and learning, is to be preferred before either of them, and accordingly, our chief zeal and most earnest endeavor is to be employed and spent in doing the Word, rather than in hearing of it; though both are most necessary in their due time and place, to all that intend to lead a Christian life. Finally, we must prefer both in our choice and practice, internal duties of the mind and heart, before the external and bodily service, for that is the life and soul of Religion, this the body, and without the other but a dead carcass, which God accepteth not, nor will bring unto us any profit, as the Apostle teacheth us. And lastly, the great and weighty matters of the Law, as judgment, mercy, and faith, before those of small importance, as tithing Mint, Anise, and Cumin; seeing our righteousness shall be Pharisaical and Hypocriticall, if we spend our chief zeal and strength about trifles and things of small importance,

and be in the meantime cold and slack in the main parts of God's service.

Sect. 10 - That we must use all helps and means which may enable us unto godliness.

The sixth rule is, that as we desire spiritual graces, and to express them outwardly in the duties of a godly life, so also that we use all good means and helps whereby we may obtain the one, and practice the other. For the means and the end do inseparably go together in all ordinary courses of proceeding, and they who neglect the one, in vain profess either their love and desire, or their hope, that by their idle wishes the other may be obtained. Neither is it more possible, that we should obtain any saving graces, or perform the duties of a godly life, if we neglect the means which enable us unto them; then it is for a man to live without meat and drink, or come to his journeys end, and never travel in the way that leadeth unto it. Contrariwise, with no less care and diligence we are to avoid or overcome all lets and impediments, which stop and hinder us in our Christian course, of which, I shall have occasion to speak at large in the following discourse. Here let it suffice to name one or two, as examples of all the rest. First, evil company, which will taint and infect us with the poison of their breath, and by their evil examples and corrupt communication, will first bring us to a neglecting, and then to a loathing and utter forsaking of all virtue and Christian duties. Among these, we must shun with greatest care those dangerous tame beasts, clawing flatterers, which are (as one calleth them) the pestilence of the soul, and the poisoners of good men's minds and manners. For so powerful are their cunning insinuations, being assisted with our pride and self-love, that we are ready to give more credit to their false praises, then to the impartial testimony of our own consciences, and to think ourselves (because they say so) such proficience in all virtue and godliness, that we need not further to use any means whereby we might be bettered and improved in our spiritual state;

when as we are so far from the mark of perfection, that we have scarcely as yet aimed at it. But above all other impediments, let us carefully shun the immoderate love of the world and earthly things, which will so wholly take us up, that we shall have neither leisure, power nor will to think on spiritual and heavenly things, or to spend any time in the duties of a godly life, or using any good means to further our assurance of heavenly happiness. And therefore we are not to set our hearts upon them, but to use them only as comforts of our pilgrimage; and as steps to lift us up in divine contemplation, and to inflame our hearts with greater love of heavenly excellencies; concluding with ourselves, that if the Lord in greatest plenty imparteth the best things the world can boast of to his enemies; then how unspeakable are the riches, pleasures, and glory of his own Kingdom, which he hath reserved as his peculiar blessings for his own children and faithful servants?

CHAPTER II.

Of the rules of a godly life, which respect the circumstances of it.

Sect. 1 - That we must make precious account of our time which God hath allotted us for his service.

And these are the rules which concern the causes both principal and fundamental of a godly life, and those also which are inferior and subordinate. Those which respect the circumstances of it, are these; First, that we make precious account of our time which God hath allotted unto us for his service, suffering (as much as in us lieth) no part thereof to be spent vainly and unfruitfully, about those things which profit not, either for the enriching of our souls with spiritual grace, or the furthering and assuring of our salvation. But either we

must continually be taken up with spiritual exercises, as Prayer, Meditation, hearing the Word, Reading, holy conferences, and such like; or in the works of our honest callings, and of justice and mercy for the good of our brethren, or in honest and moderate recreations, that we may be refreshed, and better enabled to perform these duties with more fruit. To which purpose, let us often consider, that these are the main ends for which we came into the world, and are suffered by God to live and continue in it, and therefore that time which is not employed to advance these ends, is spent in vain. That time is the most precious Jewel in the world, which cannot be bought at any price, nor the least minute of it redeemed when once it is past, with the treasures of the richest Monarchy. That we have only assurance of the time present for our use, and cannot promise unto ourselves one month or moment of that which is to come. That our whole time were far too little, though it were all spent in the duties of God's service, from whom we have received so great and manifold blessings, as pledges and pawns of far greater, which we assuredly expect in the life to come. That our employments in our course of Christianity are so many and important, so full of difficulties, and yet so necessary, as attaining to the knowledge of God and his will, and the practice of that we know, the furnishing of our souls with sanctifying and saving graces, and bringing forth the fruits of them in the whole course of our lives, the making of our calling and election sure, and getting into our own custody the assured evidences of our salvation, that if we be wise, we will think all too little for these uses, and find none to spare for idle and vain exercises. Let us consider, that the time which is spent in the pleasures of sin, and pursuing of worldly vanities, brings for the present no true profit, or sound and solid comfort, and ending at the best in late repentance, leaveth nothing behind it but grief and vexation of spirit. That now is the acceptable time and day of salvation, which we were best presently to take hold of, if we love our own souls, because we know not how soon it will be past, and withal that when it is gone, it can by no possible means be recovered. That our momentary and uncertain time being well spent, shall be rewarded with infinite and eternal happiness; but being idly and unprofitably wasted, shall bring upon us everlasting

woe and misery. Finally, that in this short time, heavenly happiness is either won or lost, which shall continue beyond all times, and that damnation and hellish torments most intolerable, and endless, are either escaped, or else procured and sealed up unto us.

Sect. 2 - That we must not stay for occasions of Christian duties, but seek for them before they offer themselves.

The second rule is, that we do not stay for occasions and opportunities of performing the Christian duties of a godly life, but that we seek for them earnestly before they offer themselves, and carefully take hold of them when we have found them. Concerning the former, we are with our longing desires, to prevent the occasions of well-doing before they are offered, and use all our best endeavors to find them out when they seem to lie hid, and to pursue them with all our speed, when they seem to flee from us. Herein imitate we the practice of worldlings, who having set their hearts upon earthly things, do not sluggishly stand still till they be put into their mouths, but with all vigilancy and diligence spy out all opportunities, whereby they may achieve their ends, and become rich and honorable in the world. And seeing spiritual and heavenly wisdom, which chiefly consisteth in true godliness, is much better then riches and worldly honors, according to that of the Wiseman; How much better is it to get wisdom then gold? And of greater price, and more to be desired then precious stones, or any worldly thing besides; therefore we must seek it as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures; and being (as he teacheth us) the principal thing and chief end of all, we must labor to get it with all our gettings; that is, make it our chief business to attain unto it; according to the example of the wise Merchant, who having by diligent search found the hid treasure, never resteth till he hath made himself owner of it, and gotten it sure in his own possession. Neither is it sufficient with all diligence to seek for all opportunities of godliness, but when we have found them, we must with all speed lay hold of them, and not suffer them to slip from us

through our careless delays. And first, when God offereth unto us opportunity and means of serving him in the duties of a godly life, calling and exhorting us unto them in the Ministry of his Word, and encouraging to embrace them, by offering unto us the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, we must in this very day hearken unto his voice, and not harden our hearts; when he inviteth us to his Supper, we must not pretend excuses, and put him off with delays, and whilst he knocketh at the door of our hearts, by the sound of his Word and finger of his Spirit, we must open unto him, that he may come in and feast us with a banquet of his spiritual graces. Whilst he calleth us to repentance, and offereth unto us the means which formerly have been denied, let us hearken and turn unto him, whilst the acceptable time and day of salvation lasteth. For it is but a day, and nor an age, and when the Sunshine of the Gospel setteth, and the night of ignorance and superstition cometh, there will be no time of working. Now our Bridegroom calleth and knocketh, and if we open unto him, we shall solace ourselves in our sweet communion with him, and the fruition of his love. But if with the sluggish Spouse we pretend excuses, and will not let him in, he will withdraw himself, and then we may long seek him, before we shall find him. Now wisdom crieth out unto us in our streets, and happy are we if we hearken to her voice; for if we now stop our ears to her call, we shall in the day of our affliction, cry and call, and not be heard, as the Lord threateneth.

Sect. 3 - That we must set ourselves most seriously about Christian duties, when we find ourselves best prepared and fitted for them.

Secondly, when we find ourselves best fitted and prepared for the performing of holy and religious duties, the Spirit of God disposing us unto them, by enlarging our hearts, and inflaming us with the love of spiritual exercises, by the sweet taste and comfortable feelings which we find in them, we are not to let slip this opportunity, but entertaining these good motions, and nourishing in us these spiritual

inclinations, we must set ourselves seriously about them. As when the Lord calleth us in the Ministry of the Word, and thereby awakeneth us out of the sleep of sin, we must be ready to say with Samuel, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. When the Lord boreth the ear and openeth our hearts, we must with Lydia, attend unto the things that are spoken, embrace them by faith, and bring forth the fruits of it in the works of love. When he poureth upon us the spirit of grace and supplication, we must retire ourselves a-part into our Closets, and pour forth our souls and suites before him by fervent prayer. When our hearts (like David's) are with meditating upon God's manifold mercies, and the sweet taste of his inestimable benefits duly prepared, we must not lose this opportunity by delays, but presently with him sing and give praise. When God hath given unto us ability to perform spiritual duties, whereby we may mutually further the salvation of one another, and put also some zeal into our hearts, whereby we are disposed unto them, let us make no delays, but exhort one another daily, whilst it is called today, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Finally, if God hath put power into our hands, and some pity and charity into our hearts, whereby we are enabled and moved to do the works of mercy, we are to lay hold upon these opportunities, and not hazard the losing of them by our slothful delays; according to the counsel of wise Solomon; Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it; Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee. For if we neglect our opportunity when God offereth it, he may justly deny it us when we would have it; or if it still continue, he may withdraw his grace more and more, which we have neglectfully abused, and so give us up to our own hardness of heart, to go forward and increase in our former neglect. Finally, seeing our hearts are deceitful, fickle, and flitting, and we have them not so at command that we can keep them close unto good duties, or preserve in them at our pleasure the fire of devotion, it would be our wisdom to take them in their good mood, and to lay hold of the opportunity, for the performing of holy duties, as Prayer, Meditation, renewing of our Repentance, and such like, when we find and feel them best affected

towards them; and when we discern that they are well warmed with the fire of God's Spirit, we are to stir it up, and (as it were) to blow it more and more, giving unto it vent in our holy actions, that it may not be choked and smothered. For if we do not take them at this advantage, they will slip away, and the heat of our zeal and devotion growing cool in us, we shall become unfit for any religious duties, and as unable to work our hearts to any frame of godliness, as to fashion the iron to a new figure and form, when the fire is extinguished, and the heat gone out of it.

Sect. 4 - That we must observe an order in doing these duties, and avoid confusion.

The last rule, respecting the circumstances of a godly life, is, (which I have already in part touched) that for the avoiding of confusion and unsettledness in our course of Christianity, we do not confound and intermingle duties one with another, but that we, upon good advice and mature deliberation, propound unto ourselves some good order in the doing of them, allotting unto every hour and part of the day, some special duties to be ordinarily performed in them: As such, and so much time for Prayer, Meditation, Reading, and other religious exercises; such, and so much for the duties of our callings, recreations, and civil employments; for sleeping, waking, rising, going to bed, eating and drinking, conferring, and the like. The which, howsoever we may not superstitiously tie ourselves unto for conscience sake, because God hath left the fitting of all times and occasions to our Christian liberty and to spiritual wisdom, as shall be most agreeable and profitable for us in our several places and callings; yet for order sake, and to avoid confusion, inconstancy and utter neglect of good duties; after that upon sound advice we have set down a good order and method for our proceeding in Christian duties, and what time is ordinarily to be spent in them, we are not easily and upon every slight cause to alter our course, but to keep ourselves, as near as we can, unto it, unless either necessity, charity,

or some unlooked for opportunity of better and more profitable employment, offering itself unto us, do move us in Christian wisdom and discretion, at sometimes to vary from our common course of proceeding. And this we shall find profitable, not only to avoid disorder and confusion, but also to settle our hearts in a constant practice of all good duties, which otherwise naturally affecting variety, novelties, and often changes in religious exercises, by reason of that satiety and carnal loathing which they bring to our corrupt nature, would every hand while be flitting and starting, sometimes performing them in a confused manner, and sometimes neglecting them altogether.

CHAPTER III.

Of the rules of a godly life, respecting the matter, form and substance of it.

Sect. 1 - That we can no otherwise aspire to perfection in Christian duties, then by proceeding by degrees.

The rules of a godly life which respect the matter, form and substance of it, come now to be entreated of. The first whereof is this, that we aspire unto perfection by degrees, and not dream or imagine, that we can the first day, and in the beginning of our conversion attain unto it. For howsoever the Lord is not tied to times and means, but can as soon, and as well perfect the work of our Regeneration, as he did the work of our Creation, wherein he did but say the word, and it was done; and howsoever sometimes, to show the absoluteness and greatness of his wisdom, power and goodness, he maketh quick dispatch of his great work of grace, and causeth some to attain unto a great measure of perfection, by the extraordinary

assistance of his holy Spirit, especially such as are converted in their latter times, and having long loitered, are cast behind hand, and have much way to travel, and work to finish, in the very evening of their lives; and some others also whom he sanctifieth from their birth and tender youth, to be his greatest lights shining in his Church: yet this is not usual in God's ordinary course of proceeding, nor much more to be expected of us, then that we should have the stature and strength of men as soon as we are born, unto which we ordinarily attain by degrees, because we were at once made perfect and complete in the extraordinary work of our Creation. Besides, we have all true saving graces according to the measure and proportion of faith, unto which we cannot at once ordinarily attain in any great perfection, both because itself also must hold some proportion with our knowledge, which is not suddenly attained, as soon as we are converted, unless we had it before; and also because faith (as we have showed) increaseth by degrees, and we cannot attain unto any great measure and fullness of persuasion, but by much exercise in holy duties, and great experience of God's love and goodness towards us. We must not then, in the childhood of our Christianity, think that we can attain unto the perfection of old men in Christ, and so accordingly in our words and profession, after a glorious manner take upon us; but we must be content, with the Apostle, whilst we are children, to do and speak as children, and when we become men, to put away childish things. We must not think, when we are first bound to this spiritual trade, that we can learn and practice it in any perfection the first year; when as seven years are thought little enough for manual trades, which are not so difficult to flesh and blood. No liberal Art is gotten without much pains and study, and many years are required, before we can be any great proficiencie in any of the chief professions, Divinity, Law, or Physic: and shall we think that Christianity, which is the highest and hardest of all, can be attained unto in any perfection, without much study, practice, and experience? It is not possible. Well may we deceive ourselves with shows and shadows, and deceive others with outward flourishes of a glorious profession; but we cannot otherwise attain unto any perfection in substantial practice, but by degrees; and as possible it is

at one leap to mount to the top of a high ladder, which others climb step by step; as to come to the top and perfection of Christianity, unless we proceed from one degree to another. If we would be wise builders, we must not think that we can in the very beginning set up the roof, and adorn the house within, that it may be fit for habitation; but we must finish our work by degrees, and after we have provided store of materials, holy desires and good resolutions, we must spend much time and pains in laying a sound and sure foundation, large and deep, which (being as it were underground) maketh no great show to ourselves or others; even that foundation of which the Apostle speaketh, repentance from dead works, faith towards God, and the knowledge of the principles of Christian Religion.

Sect. 2 - Of the degrees by which we must aspire to perfection.

First, we must see and feel our misery, both in respect of sin and punishment, in the looking glass of the Law, wherewith being thoroughly humbled, and utterly denying ourselves in the work of salvation, we must flee unto Christ, hungering and thirsting after him and his righteousness, and then apply him unto ourselves by a true faith, the which at the first (like the hand of an Infant) is weak in apprehension, but by degrees cometh to more strength. And if we proceed not by these steps, we build upon a false or sandy foundation, and our building in short time, seem it never so stately, will become ruinous; and our faith which at the beginning is in our conceit a full persuasion, will by our fearful relapse, when we come to be tried by the winds and floods of temptation, show that it was, at the best, but carnal presumption. If we would approve ourselves to be good grounds, after we have received the seed of the Word into good and honest hearts, we must keep it, till it have taken fast rooting in us, and bring forth fruit with patience; and not like those that are compared to the stony grounds, who incontinently as soon as the seed is sown, without any prick of conscience, or sound humiliation for sin going before, do receive the Word with joy, and

forthwith bring forth a green blade of a flourishing profession, which for want of root never cometh to bring forth fruit, but withereth as soon as the sun of persecution ariseth. We must not be like meteors, which soon after their first beginnings make the greatest show; nor like a fire of thorns, which as soon as it is kindled, giveth the fairest blaze, and maketh the most noise and crackling; both which decrease by little and little, till they disappear and be wholly extinguished; but like the morning light, which shineth more and more unto perfect day. We must not be like mushrooms, which come to their perfection in one nights growth; but trees of righteousness of God's planting, which are still in growth, and bring forth most fruit in old age. We must not resemble Summer-fruits, which are soon ripe, and soon rotten, and best of taste when they are first gathered; but winter fruits and long lasters, which are a great while in coming to their perfection, and relish best, and give wholesomest nourishment in their latter end. We must be like Infants in the womb, which stay their time and come to their growth by degrees, and not, by making more hast then good speed, prove abortive births; for as in nature there is a growth by degrees, from the least to the greatest perfection, both in respect of the body and mind, from which common course of nature our Savior Christ himself was not exempted, who is said to have increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man: so in our spiritual growth, we cannot attain to the pitch of perfection in our first beginnings, but being then little children and weaklings in grace and goodness, we grow from knowledge to knowledge, from faith to faith, and from one degree of grace to another, unto a perfect man, and unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Whereof it is that one of the Ancients saith; I would not upon the sudden attain to my highest pitch, but grow towards it by little and little. For look how much the rash impudency of sinners displeaseth God, and so much he is pleased with the modesty of the penitent. And therefore let us not nourish in us this fond conceit, that we either have already, or may in our first entrance into the course of Christianity, attain any great perfection, unto which others scarcely aspire, after great pains, and long time spent in spiritual exercises; for this will but puff us up with pride, and make

us ready to despise and censure others which were in Christ long before us, whom we seem to ourselves to have outrun, whereby we shall move the Lord to deny his grace, which being withdrawn, we shall by some fearful fall discover our weakness. It will make us rest in that which we have, as though it were sufficient, and not to labor and strive after more perfection, and so keep us from being something, by pleasing ourselves in our own nothing; seeing all the seeming perfection unto which we have attained, is not grounded upon saving knowledge, a lively faith, and a sound judgment, but a sudden flash of unconstant passion, and hath in it no substance and solidity, but is like an empty bladder, which is suddenly blown up with the wind of pride. Or finally, if we be awakened out of our dream, and upon serious examination find how far short we come of our account, we are ready to sit down discouraged, despairing of coming to any perfection, seeing we have scarce attained to the first degrees of it.

Sect. 3 - That we must fit our burden according to our strength.

The second rule is, in the exercise of Christian duties, that we fit our burden to our strength, so as we may be able to perform them in sincerity and truth, yea with cheerfulness and delight, and not oppress ourselves with an unsupportable weight, by taking upon us more than we are able to bear. In which respect many offend, especially young professors, who being children in Christ, and endued but with a small measure of the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, do seek to match and exceed those who are come to a ripe age, and to a great measure of perfection, in all outward duties of Religion and a godly life. As for example; because these being endued with a great measure of knowledge and grace, besides excellent gifts of nature, and both much helped and perfected with long practice and experience, are able, according to all occasions, to conceive prayers, and to continue in them with perseverance, pouring forth their souls with great freedom and liberty of speech and spirit, words coming at

will, and not being any stop, in inventing of them unto their devotion and fervency of affection, but like streams from the fountain, flow freely and kindly from them: therefore they also, wanting knowledge and the spirit of supplication in any good measure, do notwithstanding tie themselves to the same task, and not only contemning all forms, impose a necessity upon themselves of conceiving all their prayers upon the sudden; but also of continuing and holding out as long a time in this exercise, as those that have been longest practiced in it. Upon which it must necessarily follow, that their devotion and affection must be much cooled and distracted, when as the powers of their soul are taken up wholly with invention of words and matter; and that through ignorance and want of gifts, many things will be impertinent, the same things often repeated, because new matter cometh not to mind, many imperfect, and scarce sensible speeches, without any order or coherence uttered, to make up the breach, where knowledge, invention and memory have failed them. Others seeing some great proficiencie in godliness, and long exercised in mortification, strict in their courses, denying the world with all unlawful pleasures, subduing their flesh with moderate fasting and abstinence, and such like spiritual exercises, they also, though but newly entered into the profession of Religion, will not only labor to imitate, but exceed and go beyond them, though not in inward truth and spiritual duty, yet at least in bodily exercise and outward show. If they abstain from unlawful pleasures, these will restrain themselves of those which are lawful. If they be moderate in their honest recreations, these will not use any at all. If they subdue the flesh with fasting, that they may be more fit for prayer, and other parts of God's service, these will pine their bodies, and so impair their health and strength, that they are made unfit to perform any Christian duties with any cheerfulness. If they avoid immoderate mirth, carnal joy, and scurrilous jests, these will scarce admit a smile, and place much of their Religion in continual mourning, in a sorrowful and dejected countenance, and in an austere carriage of themselves in all companies, not knowing, that as there is a time for mourning, so also for rejoicing; that Christian joy beseemeth none but Christians, seeing they only have interest and

right in the causes of it, and that we may, yea ought to rejoice in the Lord with a double joy. Finally, they content not themselves to match in these outward shows and bodily exercises, those who far excel them in inward graces, nor to overtake those who have set out long before them in the race of Christianity, unless they quite outstrip them, and leave them far behind. The which must needs proceed either from spiritual pride, which maketh them overween their gifts, and to think their strength fit for the hardest task; or from hypocrisy, which maketh them to supply, in outward shows, what is wanting in inward substance, or at best, from blind zeal, which transporteth them beyond themselves and their abilities in a flash of passion. But if we mean to hold on a constant course in Christianity, we must avoid this practice, and being truly humbled in the sight and sense of our own frailty and weakness, let us so begin, as we may continue, and hold out to the end, with daily increase in all grace and goodness. Let us so be careful to tame the flesh with due and seasonable severity, as that we do not impair our health, disable our bodies to the service of God, nor deprive our souls of all comfort, whereby they are made cheerful in all Christian duties. Let our zeal carry us as far and fast as it will, but let it not over-carry us beyond all bounds of spiritual wisdom and discretion. Let us not rashly undertake a task, before we have examined our strength, whether it be sufficient for it; and ere we cast the burden upon our shoulders, let us poise and weigh it, that we may know whether we shall be able to continue under it without fainting, till we come to the end of our journey. Finally, let us so labor to bring our outward man to conformity in bodily exercises and external duties, with those which are greatest proficiencie in Christianity, as that we do not forget to spend our greatest pains and strength in mortifying our sinful lusts; as pride, covetousness, rash anger, malice, envy, uncharitableness, and the rest; and not only to adorn our souls inwardly with all sanctifying graces, love, humility, patience, zeal, and such like, but also to approve the truth and sincerity of them by our works of piety, righteousness and mercy towards the afflicted members of Jesus Christ. For to neglect these, and to be strict in outward shows and bodily exercises, is (as it were) to bestow much cost upon the outside

of the house, and to let the inside lie full of rubbish; to deck the body, and neglect the soul and life of Religion, which consisteth chiefly in inward graces, and the practice of them in the main duties of holiness and righteousness; to esteem the shell more than the kernel, and to make ourselves (as our Savior compareth such) like unto painted sepulchers, which are outwardly trimmed, and gorgeously gilded and painted, but within, full of rottenness and putrefaction. What doth it profit (saith one) that thou afflictest thy body, when as thine heart is never the better? To fast, and watch, and not to mend thy manners, is as if a man should bestow great pains without the Vineyard, in weeding and manuring, but leave the Vineyard itself neglected and unhusbanded, and fit for nothing but to bring forth thorns and thistles.

Sect. 4 - That we must exercise ourselves in the duties of a godly life, according to the measure of grace received.

To which purpose let us consider, that the Scriptures require, that we should exercise ourselves in the duties of a godly life, according to the measure of grace given us, and not in such things as are above our reach and strength. They do not command that we should torture our devotion, by setting it upon the rack, and undertaking things above our ability, but that our service of God should be a free-will offering, and performed with cheerfulness and delight: not that Christians should be all of one size and spiritual growth, and perform their duty in equal perfection; but that we perform that which we are able, in sincerity and truth, according to the measure of the gift of grace received, and that we should grow up by degrees unto a perfect age in Christ. So the Wise man willeth us, not to be righteous and wise overmuch; whereby he meaneth, not only a righteousness and wisdom of our own framing and fancying, which is contrary to the Word of God; for so it is not lawful, not only overmuch, but not at all to be wise and righteous; but that we do not take upon us more outward show and semblance of wisdom and righteousness, then our

inward substance of grace will bear out in sincerity and truth; or such a degree of it as is quite above our reach and strength. To which purpose the Apostle speaketh and exhorteth, that no man should think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. And this is that which our Savior meaneth, (when excusing his Disciples for not fasting like the Pharisees, he saith, that no man putteth a new piece of cloth into an old garment, nor new wine into old bottles:) namely, that there is no wisdom to impose strict and hard exercises upon young beginners and tender weaklings in faith, seeing it is the next way to discourage them quite in their good proceedings, and to bring all to naught. For when the duties which they undertake exceed their strength, and the measure of their faith and inward grace, having no internal virtue to support themselves, they grow presently faint and weary both of their practice and profession. When they have put themselves into an displeasing prison, they are never well till they have broke out, taking their liberty even unto licentiousness. When in the course of Christianity they have over-loaded themselves, they are soon tired, and cast off their burden in the midway. When in running the spiritual race they strive and strain themselves at their first setting out, even above their strength, they are presently out of breath, and giving over the race, leave the goal and garland unto those who wisely fit their pace to their power and activity, so as they may hold out unto the end. In which regard one of the Ancients (otherwise strict enough) professeth, that immoderate fasting's, especially in weaklings, did much displease him, because he had learned by experience, that an Ass wearied in his way, is ready to seek many turnings. And preferreth sparing and sober diet, and a stomach always retaining an appetite, before fasts of three days continuance.

Sect. 5 - That they who undertake matters above their strength, cannot do them in sincerity, but in show only.

Again, for small proficience in Christianity, to tie themselves unto the same exercises, which are performed by those that have attained to greatest perfection, both in respect of matter and manner, measure and degree, what is it, but as if a child should travel in a man's shoes? What is it, but to bring the exercises of Religion unto a fashion, of which, everyone must be, who will be in any esteem? What is it, but to fit all bodies with the same garment, and to make all Christians of one size and stature, leaving no distinction of childhood and riper age? And what do they who thus do, but open a gap to gross hypocrisy, and shut sincerity out of doors? For how can we be sincere, when we have no measure of inward grace in any proportion answerable to the show of our outward duties? Or how can we perform service unto God in them, heartily and cheerfully as he requireth, when as wanting a support of inward gifts, we toil ourselves above our strength? Finally, how can we think that to exercise ourselves in things above our power and reach, is to take upon us Christ's yoke and burden, and not rather such as are of our own making and imposing, seeing he hath taught us, that his yoke is easy, and burden light, bringing quiet rest unto our souls, and not an intolerable weight, which pressing us down and vexing us, maketh our lives unpleasant unto us, and our hearts never at ease until we have again cast them off? Rather let us imitate the example of David, who having a humble conceit of himself and his own gifts, even like a child new weaned, kept himself quietly within his compass, and did not exercise himself in great matters, or in things too high for him. To which purpose, let us observe these two rules; first, that we do not set forth all that we do gloriously to the show, but always so order the matter, that our practice of Christian duties do not come short, but always exceed our outward profession, and that we be more holy and religious in truth, then we desire to be in outward appearance. For nothing maketh men so forward to undertake great matters which are above their strength, as a desire to gain a greater esteem of their inward gifts and outward duties in the sight of men, then they any ways deserve in their true worth. Secondly, in the undertaking of any exercise of godliness, let it be our care, that we have a sufficient measure of inward grace and spiritual strength to support us, that we

may continue constant in it unto the end. For if the fountain be not sufficient to nourish the streams, they will soon grow dry; whereas if it be full, they will plentifully flow of their own accord. If we have not an inward stock of grace to maintain our expenses in outward and bodily exercises, all quickly will be spent and consumed, and we shall become beggars and bankrupts in all grace and goodness. And unto this our Savior adviseth us in the parable of the wise builder, who intending to erect a Tower, sat down first and counted the cost whether he had sufficient to finish it, lest haply after he had laid the foundation, and not being able to finish it, all that beheld it, should begin to mock him, &c.

Sect. 6 - That we must not undertake too many things at once.

The third rule is, that we do not cumber ourselves with too many businesses at once, but that we orderly proceed from one duty to another, not undertaking a new employment, till we have brought that which we had first in hand, to some good effect. For as nature intendeth not many things at once, because being of finite virtue and operation, it cannot compass and achieve them all together, but uniteth all its forces and vigor, that it may perfect that at which it chiefly aimeth: so upon the same reason, grace followeth the same course, and because our understanding is but of small capacity and extent, and cannot without confusion comprehend many things at the same time; and our wills weak and unable to make sound and good choice, when as they are troubled with confused variety of many objects, and the zeal and ardency of our affections much weakened and cooled, when as they are distracted and divided between many things desirable; and finally, the wit dulled, the spirits spent, and the body tired, when as they are exercised about more employments, then by their virtue and vigor they can achieve; therefore it chooseth this as the best course, to do one thing after another, and undertaking the best and most necessary duties in the first place, not to think of or affect another, until that be brought

unto some perfection. For as the fire lying together giveth great heat, but being scattered abroad, soon goeth out; and the River running in the same current, is of such force that nothing can stop it, but being divided into many little streams and rivulets, becometh weak, and of little strength: so, if the fire of our zeal be united about one object or Christian duty, it will be able to achieve it with great fervency, and the stream of our devotion, running wholly in one course and current, will be of such force, that nothing shall be able to divert or hinder it; but let them be scattered and divided about multitudes of employments at the same time, and their heat will be abated, and their strength so weakened, that they will not be able to bring any one good duty to any reasonable perfection.

Sect. 7 - That we must not busy ourselves in other men's matters.

The fourth rule is, that we be not busy and curious in prying into the lives of other men, and spying out their infirmities; nor strict and severe in censuring and condemning their faults and imperfections, when we have taken notice of them. For he that undertaketh much business abroad, must of necessity neglect his own at home; he that is curious in searching and examining other men's manners, will find no time to look into his own. The which we see daily verified by woeful and lamentable experience in many Professors of these times, who spend all their zeal in censuring of others, and in exclaiming against the corruptions of the times, the disorders in the Commonwealth, the faults of Governors Civil and Ecclesiastical, the defects and blemishes of the Church, and in the meantime are cold and negligent in searching out their own sins, in reforming their own manners, and in the duties of sanctification, and of a godly life. The which, is oftentimes done, not so much out of a true mislike and hatred of others vices and corruptions (for then they would make speed to pursue and subdue them with greater detestation in themselves, out of a feeling experience of the manifold evils which they bring upon them) but to magnify their own zeal, which will not

suffer them with any patience to tolerate such faults and corruptions, to disguise and hide their own vices, under this show of misliking others sins, and to commend themselves, and get the name of forward Christians, by dispraising those who come far behind them in outward show. But if we would make any good progress in the ways of godliness, we must be more diligent in reforming our own lives, then in censuring other men's; and in using all good means, which may furnish us with saving graces, and further us in all good duties, then in spying out how far others come short in them, and in censuring them for these defects. For as it is not the way of thriving in our worldly estate, to sit still and exclaim against others ill husbandry, but diligently to follow our own business; so it is no course to grow richer in grace, and in the fruits of godliness, to censure and inveigh against others, as unthriving Christians; but carefully to look unto our own estate, and to use all good means whereby we may better it. Yea in truth, this supercilious pride, in over-weaning our own gifts, and censuring and condemning other men's defects, moveth the Lord oftentimes, to withdraw from us those graces and good parts which we seem to have, whereby we are disabled, either in substance or show to proceed in any Christian course, and oftentimes overtaken with some foul sins, to the end, that being humbled in the sight of our own frailty, we may become the more charitable towards others, and ceasing to pry into their infirmities, we may with all our endeavor, seek to amend our own lives.

Sect. 8 - That we must take heed, lest daily use of Christian duties make us cold and formal in them.

The fifth rule is, that we carefully take heed, that through the daily use of Christian and religious duties, they do not become cold and formal, and performed, rather for custom than conscience sake, doing them still, because we have long done them, rather than out of a lively sense of their profit and necessity; like those who go to feed,

not because they have any appetite to their meat, but because it is dinner time; and betake themselves to rest, not in regard that they find themselves sleepy, but because their ordinary time is come of going to bed. But let the same causes which moved us first to undertake them, move us still to continue in them, namely, the love of God, and obedience to his Commandments; an earnest desire to glorify him, by doing the duties of his service, and so to carry ourselves, as that we may please him in all things, and have both our persons and actions accepted of him, that we may hereby adorn our profession, edify our brethren by our good example, be more and more enriched with all sanctifying and saving graces, strengthened to all good duties, and so more and more assured of our own salvation. For if we be not still moved by these causes and considerations, to perform the duties of God's service; but do them in an ordinary course, and never think why, nor to what end, we shall soon grow cold and formal, serving God after such careless and negligent manner, as that neither we nor our service shall be accepted of him.

The sixth rule is, that with all care and watchfulness, we preserve our zeal and devotion in holy duties in their full strength, and not suffer them to decline in any part of their heat and fervency, seeing as in all things that are good, declinations are dangerous, so most of all in spiritual graces and holy duties, which being no natural habits, but continually opposed by our inbred corruption, and the malicious fury of all our spiritual enemies, declinations in them do speedily bring us to headlong ruin, the least remissions causing intermissions, and these total neglect and utter defection. An example whereof we have in the Church of Ephesus, who falling from her first love, that is, remitting some degrees of the fervor and zeal of her affection, and not repenting of it, when by Christ she was admonished, stayed not in this first degree of declination (for who can stay himself that is going down the hill, who besides his own natural proneness to go on, hath so many malicious enemies at his back to thrust him forward?) but from one degree to another, fell within a while to utter Apostasy. Neither must it in our declinations give us any comfort, that we still retain some parts and remainders of our former goodness; for as no

man can rise to any height of perfection, but by degrees; so neither any that hath had any shows of goodness, though merely civil, can at the very first become extremely evil, but by degrees declineth, till at last he cometh to the height of wickedness. And as a small chink in a ship doth not at first let in water enough to sink it, if it be carefully looked to, and the water pumped out as fast as it cometh in; but if it be neglected, from a little rift, groweth at last to a desperate leak: so our small slips will not sink our souls into the gulf of perdition, if they be quickly espied, and carefully repented of and amended; but if we continue in them with careless neglect, they will enlarge themselves, and increase from one degree to another, till they come to a full height of desperate wickedness. The same care and providence therefore which we take for our bodies, let us also take for our souls, using wholesome spiritual food and diet, to preserve them in their perfect health and strength; or if we so much as fear any declinations, let us withstand the first beginnings with timely Physic, seeing small and scarce sensible remissions, will by degrees bring us into deep consumptions of all grace and goodness. And as we find it necessary for the preserving of water in its full heat, to keep a good fire still under it, because it is not a natural property of it, and therefore if it be not preserved by the same means by which it was first caused, it will within a while grow lukewarm, and soon after stone-cold; and as the fire itself will continue no longer burning then we put fuel unto it, because it is not in its proper element, but will slake and abate by degrees, until at last it vanish into air, and leave nothing behind it but cold ashes: so our zeal and devotion in holy duties, being supernatural gifts and qualities, contrary to corrupted nature, and being spiritual, and of an heavenly nature, when they be in us, who are earthly and sensual (as it were) out of their own proper place and element, they will not continue, if we nourish them not by the same means by which they were bred, adding daily unto them new fuel to preserve their heat, but will soon grow remiss, and quickly after soon cold. And as they, so also their motions in the duties of godliness, not being natural, if they be not followed with a continued strength, by which at first they were made to move, they will, like the unnatural motion, be violent in the beginning, slack and

slow in the middle, and in the latter end faint, and utterly desist. The which we have seen often verified, by the too lamentable experience of many professors in our days, who having been forward and fervent in their youth, by remitting some degrees of their zeal, and through the temptations of the world fawning or frowning upon them, become more slack and slothful in religious duties (resting in a formal fashion, and in the outward act; without any quickening power, or internal life of zeal and devotion) have declined in their riper years to a loathsome lukewarmness, and to dead and desperate coldness, worldliness, and profaneness in their old age.

CHAPTER IV.

That we must not content ourselves with a small measure of grace,
but labor to grow unto perfection.

Sect. 1 - That the Scriptures require this growth in grace, from the least degrees to the greatest.

The last rule of direction for the leading of a godly life is, that we content not ourselves with that small measure of grace which we have received, nor rest in those duties which we have already performed, but that we labor to grow daily, and increase in grace, and in the Christian practice of a godly life. For as in nature, things stand not at a stay, but as weary of the state of imperfection, tend to perfection, growing up therein from one degree to another, till they come to the highest (as the grain of corn taking root in the earth, shooteth up into a blade, and then groweth to have an ear, and so ripening, multiplieth itself in its kind; and the little kernel springeth first into a small shoot, and then groweth by degrees to a flourishing and fruitful tree; and man himself conceived of a little excrementall

matter, groweth first in the womb, by degrees to a perfect shape in all the parts and lineaments of a true human body; and then after the birth, from childhood to youth, and from thence to ripe age and full stature) so the growth of grace proceedeth from imperfection, to one degree of perfection after another, until we come unto a perfect age in Christ. And as sick men newly recovered, cannot rest contented that they live, but long after their wonted strength, desiring first to sit up, and when they can do this, are not satisfied, but desire ability to walk, and to recover their stomach and appetite, and then to go abroad, and not so content, wish to be freed from faintness, to be restored to their former good habitude, plight, and liking, and in a word, are never quiet in their desires, till they have recovered their perfect health: so we, having been sick in sin unto the death, after we are revived and quickened by God's Spirit, do not content ourselves with some first degrees of spiritual life, and beginnings of health and strength, but long and labor by all good means, that we may daily increase in them, until we attain unto them in full perfection. And this growth in grace, and in the practice of all holy duties is commended unto us, both by testimonies and examples. The Apostle would have us to be no more children, but to grow up unto him which is the Head, even Christ. And beseecheth and exhorteth the Thessalonians, not only to continue constant in the ways of holiness, and to please God, but that they would abound more and more. And the Apostle Peter requireth, not only that we should continue steadfast, but that we should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To which purpose, Augustine thus adviseth; Let that which thou art, always displease thee, that so thou mayest come to that which thou art not. For where thou hast pleased thyself, there thou stayest. And if thou once comest to say, I have enough, thou art undone. And another persuadeth us so to live, that always the present days may be better than those which are past, lest beginning to decline by little and little, it be at length said unto us, Ye did run well, who hindered you, that you should not obey the truth? A notable example hereof we have in the Apostle, who when he had long run in the Christian Race, and outrun all others that set out long before him, yet forgot those things which were behind, and reached

forth to those things which were before, and still pressed towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. And in the Church of Thyatira, who hath this commendation, not only that they excelled in good works, charity, service, faith, patience, but also that their last works were more than their first. The contrary whereof, the Apostle reproveth in the Hebrews, namely, that when for the time, they ought to have been teachers, they had need to be taught themselves the first principles of the Oracles of God, and were become such, as had need of milk, and not of strong meat. And our Savior condemneth it in the Church of Ephesus, that she had fallen from her first love. And in the Church of Sardis, of whom he saith, that he had not found her works perfect before God, that is, tending and growing towards perfection. Neither must we be content with some degrees of spiritual growth, but we must propound unto ourselves the mark of perfection, unto which, because we cannot attain in this life, therefore we must put no end here to our labor and endeavor, but strive daily to come nearer and nearer unto it. So the Apostle exhorteth us never to leave, till we have cleansed ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and till we have perfected our holiness in the fear of God; propounding unto us no other mark to aim at, but the mark of perfection. And telleth us that God hath therefore instituted the Ministry of the Word, that he might thereby bring us unto a perfect man, and unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Thus he exhorteth the Hebrews, that leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, they should go on unto perfection. And the Apostle James exhorteth us to aim at such a perfection, as wherein there is no want: Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. And lest we should grow sluggish, because we suppose that we have already matched our patterns in perfection, we have not only examples of God's Saints set before us for our imitation, as Noah, Abraham, Job, David and the rest, but even of God himself, who is infinite in all perfection. Be perfect (saith our Savior) as your heavenly Father is perfect; not in degree, seeing his perfection is above all degrees; but that we should strive to be herein like unto him, seeing we profess that he is our Father, and we his children.

Sect. 2 - Reasons moving us to aspire unto perfection.

Besides which testimonies and examples of holy Scriptures, tending to persuade us unto this continual growth, till we attain unto full perfection, there are also many reasons grounded upon them, which may quicken our endeavor in this kind. As first, because though we have made good beginnings and proceedings, yet if we be not still growing and going forward towards perfection, all we have done already, is not praiseworthy in the sight of God, who being in his own nature most perfect, liketh of nothing which is not like himself, and tendeth not unto perfection. Secondly because we cannot stand at a stay in the course of Christianity, but are still proceeding, or else declining and going back; either we are rowing against the stream, or else are carried downward, though we perceive it not. To which purpose one observeth, that Jacob in his vision saw Angels upon the Ladder, ascending and descending, but none sitting or standing still: because we have not here an abiding City, but we seek for one to come. Either we must be still ascending, or we shall descend: if we will stand still, we shall surely fall; like those who are upon a high and narrow bridge, whose greatest safety in passing over is in their best speed. For howsoever Christians, which have attained unto some good degree of perfection, and to a settled course in godliness, may carry themselves with such uniform constancy in all outward duties, that themselves cannot discern any remarkable difference, yet even in them there is daily some proceeding in respect of their inward graces, hearts and affections, and although their actions and operations may, by reason of temptations and spiritual desertions, decay in their sense and feeling; yet in respect of their habits and disposition, they are still proceeding to more perfection. Thirdly, because we can no otherwise be assured of our spiritual life in grace, of which, motion and proceeding is an inseparable consequence. For it is not with our souls as it is with our bodies, which are of short life, and shorter growth, having their increase, full stature and declination, seeing they, as long as we live, do proceed from one

degree of perfection unto another, till after this life they come to a perfect age in Christ. They are herein like unto the morning light, which still increaseth and shineth more and more unto the perfect day; but herein unlike the Sun, in that there is in this life and light of grace, no time of setting or declination; and therefore the beauty of Christ's Spouse, is compared to the brightness of the morning, which still increaseth, and not to the afternoons light, which abateth more and more. They are trees of righteousness of God's planting, which always flourish; and when they come once to bring forth their fruits, they never grow dry and barren, but are still purged and pruned by him that set them, that they still bring forth fruit in more abundance; herein unlike other trees, and resembling only the Palme and Cedar, in that they continually flourish, and most exceed in fruitfulness in their old age, as the Psalmist noteth. God's children are not like false conceptions and dead moles in the womb, which quickly come to full growth, and then standing at a stay, prove abortive births; but staying their appointed time, are perfected by degrees in their shape, parts, and all their lineaments, and after their birth stand not at a stay, (for there are no dwarfs in God's family) but grow from strength to strength, and from stature to stature, till they come to a perfect age in Jesus Christ.

Sect. 3 - That except we grow in grace, we can have no sound comfort in our estate.

And therefore when there is no growth in grace, nor in the practice of holy duties, we can take little comfort in such a state: but as it is a grief to parents, when as their children grow in age, and not in wisdom; and an ill sign that nature is out of frame, and hindered in her course, when as in their bodies they stand at a stay, and though they eat, and drink, and sleep, yet do not grow at all in their stature: so have we more just cause to grieve, when after many years we remain children in knowledge, and weaklings in all saving grace; and may take it as an ill sign, that there is little grace in us, or some

notable impediment which doth stop and hinder it in its operations, when as having enjoyed for a long time, the spiritual food of the Word and Sacraments, we grow not up thereby, nor any whit increase in our strength and stature. We are pilgrims and travelers (as we profess) towards our heavenly home, who are still going on, and every day dispatch some part of the way; but if we stand at a stay, and after many years spent, are no more forward in our journey, then we were at our first setting forth, it showeth plainly that we are no true travelers, but loiterers, that lazily lie lusing in our Inn, or that we have not gone in the right way that leadeth to our Country. We would be counted soldiers in the Christian warfare, and profess that we fight against the spiritual enemies of our salvation: but if Satan in every temptation prevaileth with us; if the world hath so allured us by her bewitching baits, that we are in league and love with it, if after many years we have got no conquest over our corruptions, pride, covetousness, voluptuousness, malice, envy, and such like; but that they still reign and rule in us as in former times, it is a sign that we either are none of God's Soldiers, seeing we have made a peace with his enemies, or that we are notable cowards, who justly deserve to be cashiered, and that there is little grace or goodness in us, seeing so long time, and large means have so little improved and increased it. Doubtless (saith one) he is not good, who will not be better: and when thou ceasest in thy desires to become better, thou ceasest also to be good. And again, no man hath attained to any perfection, who doth not desire, and labor to be more perfect: and so much the perfecter doth every man approve himself, by how much the more earnestly he striveth after perfection. Moreover, true virtue knoweth no end, nor is circumscribed with time; and the fear of the Lord endureth forever. The just man thinketh with Paul, that he hath never apprehended that which he pursueth; nor ever saith, I have enough, but always hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness; so that if he should live forever, he would also forever desire still to be more just, and would strive with all his strength to proceed from good to better. For he is not a mercenary that hath hired himself to do God service for a year, but a son of the family which continueth forever. Finally, let us labor daily to grow in grace, by exercising it

continually in the duties of godliness, both because otherwise we can have no assurance that it is true and substantial, but hypocritical, and a bare shadow, seeing all true grace is growing grace, like the grain of mustard-seed, small at the first, and great afterwards; and also because if we do not increase our Lord's Talents, he will take them from us, and give them to faithfuller servants; and seeing through our negligence we have deprived ourselves of the substance, he will also take away from us the show and shadow; according to that of our Savior; Unto him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.

Sect. 4 - That if we desire to grow in grace, we must carefully use the means which may further us in it, and what these means are.

Now if we would attain to this Christian growth, we must use all good means which may further us in it: for in vain he professeth his great desire to be rich, who neglecteth all good husbandry and means of thriving; or to grow in strength and stature, who will not use food and clothing, which are the ordinary means to attain unto them. Yea, if we desire spiritual growth in grace and goodness, we must take more than usual pains, seeing as to the augmenting of the body, there is required more meat, and better concoction, then for the preserving of it in that stature and strength unto which it hath already attained; so unto our growth in grace, and increasing of our spiritual stature, it is necessary that we more diligently use the means, and receive the food of our souls in greater quantity, and with better stomachs, then only to hold (as we say) life and soul together, and to preserve our graces in their bare being and present plight. Now the means of increasing in grace, and proceeding in the practice of all Christian duties, are the same by which they had their first beginnings; as the careful and conscionable hearing of the Word preached; for we must, like new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, (which is also the seed of our Regeneration and

newbirth) if ever we mean to grow up thereby. So also the reading of the Word, and use of the Sacraments, meditation, holy conferences, of which we have spoken in part, and shall say more in the following discourse. But above all, invocation and prayer, desiring God, who is the Author of our spiritual birth and being, and also of our preservation and growth in godliness, that he will perfect his good work which he hath begun in us, sanctify us throughout in our souls and bodies, and bring us from one degree to another, till at last we come to a perfect man in Christ; whereof we have the holy Apostles in many places as fit precedents and examples, who by their fervent prayers crave at God's hands this growth in grace for themselves and others. Finally, if we would be good proficiencie in God's service, we must often think of the worthiness and excellency of our heavenly Master, who is the chief Goodness, and infinite in all perfection, and therefore, above all, deserveth our best pains and diligence; of his inestimable love towards us shining in our Creation, Preservation, and that great work of our Redemption, by the death of his dear and only Son; for who would not love him, that hath so loved us, and labor to approve it by striving to serve him daily in more perfection? Of the Passion and sufferings of Christ, which will make us think that we can never do too much for him, who hath done and suffered so much for us. Of the perfection which the Law requireth, under the penalty of a fearful curse, and of the gracious promises, and sweet encouragements of the Gospel, belonging to all those who strive and labor daily to attain unto this perfection. Of the manifold and inestimable blessings, both temporal, spiritual and eternal, which God hath partly put presently into our hands, and partly confirmed unto us by infallible assurances: all which liberal and bountiful wages, if we be not too too ungrateful, will make us daily to double our diligence in doing him service. Finally, we must oftentimes meditate of the brevity of our lives, and uncertainty of this short time, compared with the excellency and eternity of our heavenly happiness, promised to all them who spend this momentary and uncertain time in the duties of God's service; the which, if anything will move us to improve the time present to the best advantage, seeing we are not sure of another day; like wise Merchants who lay

hold of a good penny-worth when it is offered; and the prudent Pilot, who setteth up all his sails whilst the wind and tide favor him, because he is uncertain how long it will last, and his opportunity being once past, cannot be recovered at his own pleasure.

CHAPTER V.

Of the means whereby we may be enabled to lead a godly life: and first, of the ministry of the Word.

Sect. 1 - That if we will lead a godly life, we must use the means enabling us unto it.

Unto the rules of direction, which help and further us in the duties of a godly life, we are to add the consideration of certain special means respecting practice, whereby we may be the better enabled to perform them. For as God in his Decree hath ordained the ends at which we must chiefly aim, that we may attain unto them; so also the means which conduce unto these ends. As for example; he hath propounded his glory as the supreme end of all things; and withal, diverse means whereby it is advanced and magnified, as our faithful service and obedience to his Commandments, faith in Christ, and such like. He hath ordained us to salvation, and that we may attain unto it, he hath linked his Decree to this end by certain subordinate causes and means, as Creation, Redemption, Effectual calling, Justification, Sanctification, and Preservation. He hath decreed that we should live our natural life unto our appointed time, but withal, that we should use the means of food, clothing, sleep, physic, by which it is preserved and maintained. And thus also as he hath ordained that we should live the life of grace, so likewise that we should use the helps and means which he hath appointed for the

beginning, continuing, and finishing of it: which if we neglect, we can have no more hope of attaining unto it, whatsoever fair pretenses we make of our fervent desires to achieve this end, then of coming to happiness, being destitute of holiness, without which, the Apostle telleth us, we shall never see God; or of living to old age, without the use of the means, meat, drink, and apparel; or of living to God's glory, when as we delight in the works of darkness, and shine not in the light of an holy life. The which as it must make us careful to use all good helps appointed by God for the enabling us unto the duties of a godly life; so our second care must be, that we use them as means, and not supreme and principal causes, but relying ourselves chiefly upon God, his wisdom, and goodness, power, and promises, the death and Resurrection of Christ effectually applied unto us by the holy Spirit, let us use these means, as being his ordinances which he hath appointed to serve his providence, yet without putting our trust and confidence in them, as sufficient in themselves to confer grace, or to enable us unto the duties of a godly life; seeing without the chief Worker assisting us in the use of them by his holy Spirit, they are able to do nothing; and contrariwise, if they be wanting, he is all-sufficient without them, to make us live holily in this world, and happily in the life to come. Now these means are either ordinary, and in continual use upon all occasions; or extraordinary, and to be used but at sometimes, when some special causes move us unto them; and both of them either public or private, or else mixed, and to be performed sometimes publicly in the Congregation, and sometimes privately by ourselves, or with others. The public means are the ministry of the Word, the Sacraments and prayer. The which admit of a double consideration in respect of their diverse relations to several ends. For as they are duties performed unto God, that we may glorify him by doing unto him service in them, they are parts and branches of piety and a godly life, in which sense we have already entreated of them; but as they help and further us for the begetting and increasing in us of all spiritual graces, and the enabling of us unto all other Christian duties, they are the means of a godly life, in which sense we are now to speak of them. Wherein they may be resembled unto coin and treasure, the which is not only a part of our

wealth, but also the means of purchasing and procuring house, lands, goods, and all other riches: or unto the hand, which in one relation is a part or member of the body, but in another respect, an instrument and special means for the preserving and nourishing of all our other parts.

Sect. 2 - That the ministry of the Word is a chief means of our spiritual life.

The first means of a godly life, is the ministry of the Word; the which is the ordinary means of begetting us to the life of godliness, and of beginning in us all spiritual and saving graces, by which, as inward causes, we outwardly move in all Christian and holy duties. Of raising us from the death of sin, and cleansing and purging us from the guilt and corruption of it; and also of so quickening and reviving us, that we are enabled to perform the actions of holiness, and to bring forth the fruits of a godly conversation. Thus the Apostle calleth it, God's strong power, whereby he pulleth us out of the state of death, into the state of life and salvation; and the Apostle Peter, The immortal and incorruptible seed, which begetteth us unto God, living and abiding in us forever. And hence it is that the Ministers of the Word are called our spiritual fathers, who beget us unto God, because being dispensers of the Word of grace, they are instruments and means of our Regeneration. Thus our Savior saith, that the hour was coming, yea even then was, that the dead should hear his voice, and live; that is, those which were dead in trespasses and sins, should be quickened, and have their part in the first Resurrection, by virtue of his Word preached; for at this death and Resurrection that whole discourse aimeth. And as we have first our spiritual life from the ministry of the Word, so also our cleansing and sanctification from the corruption and filth of sin, whereby we are wholly disabled unto all holy duties of a godly life. For so our Savior telleth his Disciples, that they were clean, through his Word which he had spoken unto them. By which means he desireth his Father, in his

holy Prayer, to sanctify them more and more. Sanctify them with thy truth; thy Word is truth. So the Apostle saith, that our Savior gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; and implieth elsewhere, that we cannot ordinarily have faith, by which the just man liveth, but by the preaching and hearing of the Word. How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? And after expressly affirmeth; That faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And in another place he intimateth, that we cannot put off the old man, and being renewed in the spirit of our minds, put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, unless we have first heard Christ, and been taught by him, in the ministry of his Word. But here we must take heed, that we do not attribute our new birth and spiritual cleansing unto the Word preached, as having in it any inherent power to give life and grace in its own nature, or as it is by man preached unto us, (for then all that hear it, would be quickened unto holiness and new obedience, whereas common and woeful experience teacheth us, that after the Gospel hath been long preached in diverse places, the greatest number remain unregenerate and dead in their sins,) nor yet as unto a principal and chief cause of reviving us; for this were to make an Idol of it, by attributing unto it God's prerogatives and peculiar actions; who alone is able to regenerate us, as he only could first create us. But we are to attribute this virtue of giving spiritual life to the Word preached, not as coming from man, but as it is the Word of God, and his holy ordinance which he hath instituted and sanctified to this use of giving spiritual life, and the begetting and increasing of his graces in us. By virtue of which ordination, and the blessing of God upon it, the Word receiveth all its power and vigor to quicken and preserve our spiritual life; even as by the ordinance of God, and his blessing, we receive our natural life by generation, and the preservation of it by food and clothing, which in themselves exceed not other creatures in their virtue for these uses, but only so far forth as God by his blessing enableth them unto them. The which if he withdraw, our meat will not nourish us, but rather become our bane and poison;

and the Word preached will be so far from being a Word of life and salvation, that it will become the savor of death unto death, to our deep condemnation. In which regard we must not rest in the preaching and hearing of the Word, as in the deed done, for the begetting of God's graces, and beginning in us the life of godliness: (for thus it is only the Spirit that quickeneth, making the same Word, and at the same time, effectual unto some for these ends, by an inward, secret and powerful operation, which for want hereof is heard of others without any profit) but use it as God's ordinance, unto which his blessing is promised, and doth so ordinarily accompany it, in the hearts of all those that use it in obedience to God, and desire to profit by it for the former ends, that we may as well hope for spiritual life by feeding on this food, as for the preserving of natural life by meat and drink, seeing both alike are God's ordinance, and by his power he is effectual in the one as well as the other. And so contrariwise the neglect of this means, when God giveth it, doth take away all hope of the spiritual life of grace; seeing we tempt the Lord in refusing the means, and despising his ordinance; like those, who pretending that they rest upon God's sole power and promise for the preserving of their lives, should utterly refuse to eat or drink. Again, whereas I say, that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary means of life and grace, when the Lord granteth it unto us, we are to beware that we do not limit God's power unto it, as though he could not any other way quicken, sanctify and save us. For he is able, without all means, to do all these by the sole and secret work of his holy Spirit, being such an All-sufficient workman in himself, that he needeth not the help of any instruments; as we see in his sanctifying and saving of elect Infants, dying whilst they are incapable of outward means; for even in them these two go together, seeing the rule is general, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And he is able to sanctify other means for these uses, (as he ordinarily doth where the public ministry and preaching of the Word is wanting) as the reading of the Word, private catechizing, holy conferences, instruction, exhortation, admonition, good examples, extraordinary blessings strangely conferred, sharp afflictions, and by them great and unusual humiliations, the Lord using his corrections

as a hand to lead us to our sins, which have brought them upon us. And therefore as when we have the Word, we may hear diligently, in hope of God's blessing upon his own ordinance; so when we are deprived of this ordinary means of life and salvation, we are not to despair and cast away all our confidence, seeing the Lord is able, either without means, by the sole operation of his holy Spirit, to work his own work of grace and sanctification in us, or to make other means, more weak in themselves, as powerful and effectual unto us as the other, yea will assuredly do it, rather than he will fail of any part of his promise, which he hath made unto all those who trust and depend upon him for life and salvation.

Sect. 3 - That it is the ordinary means of our new birth, and of working God's graces in us.

Secondly, as the ministry of the Word is the ordinary means of our new birth, and of beginning in us God's spiritual graces, whereby we are enabled to move in the duties of a godly life; so also of our spiritual growth from strength to strength, and of increasing God's graces where they are begun; according to that of the Apostle Peter; As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. Neither are we to think that the Word read, either by ourselves or others, is ordinarily sufficient to work in us grace and godliness; for if faith (as I have showed) cometh by hearing the Word preached, then also the life of faith, and fruits of sanctification which spring from it, all which are nourished and increased by the same means whereby they were first begun in us. Neither are we to dispute of the excellency and power of other means in themselves, or compared with this, seeing neither this, nor any other work by any inherent virtue in themselves, but as they are God's ordinances, which by his blessing attain to their ends, and are made powerful and effectual by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, to work and increase grace and sanctification in us. And therefore seeing the Lord hath ordained in all ages, not only that his Word should be read for

the edification of his people, but also that it should be expounded to their understanding, and applied to their particular use, (as we see in the example of the Priests in the days of Nehemiah, who caused the people to understand the Law, and not only read the Book of God's Law distinctly, but also gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading: And in the practice of our Savior Christ and his Apostles, who when the Law and Prophets were read to the people, contented not themselves therewith, but expounded and applied them to their use, according to the custom of those times) let not us therefore take upon us to be wiser then God, supposing that we can do his work better by tools of our own choosing, then by the means and instruments which he hath ordained and sanctified, seeing nothing can be done in this supernatural work of grace, without God's blessing, which we may expect with most assurance in the use of his own ordinances. So that if either we desire the new birth of grace, or being born, to grow therein from one degree to another, let us conscionably use the ministry of the Word to both these ends. Neither let us think that being once regenerate, we may grow up of ourselves by sole virtue of those principles then infused unto us, and need no further the ministry of the Word to preserve us in that state and being. For as the child new born, cannot long continue in life by virtue of his natural heat and moisture, and much less can grow in strength and stature to a perfect man, unless he receive daily nourishment; so neither can we subsist in our spiritual state and being, and much less grow in grace unto a perfect age in Christ, unless our souls be duly nourished with spiritual food, the Word of God, which is not only the immortal seed of which we are begotten, but our Manna and meat; milk for babes, and strong meat for men grown to riper age. Especially seeing to our natural defects and sinful corruptions, which as inward impediments hinder the growth of grace in us, there are added the outward assaults of our malicious enemies, the world and the devil, who by their temptations will keep us from thriving and increasing, unless what is diminished by their malice, be supplied plentifully by our spiritual nourishment. Neither do I thus magnify the ministry of the Word, to derogate anything from other excellent means, as prayer, Sacraments, the

reading of the Scriptures, and the rest, but am ready to give unto them their deserved praise in their own place. For howsoever, in the first acts of Regeneration, the preaching of the Word is the chief, if not sole means of our new birth; For how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? Yet in our spiritual growth, the other are no less necessary for the increasing of God's graces in us, especially prayer, which is an ordinary and most powerful means to prevail with God, for the obtaining of whatsoever is wanting unto us, although we cannot pray with hope to be heard, unless we pray in faith, as the Apostle James teacheth us, and we cannot ordinarily have faith, till first it be wrought in us by the preaching of the Word. And therefore let us not set these means of grace, to contend together for eminence and excellency, and much less magnify one of them to exclude another, but acknowledging all to be excellent and necessary in their place and time, let us carefully join them all together, that being nourished in our souls with this plenty and variety of food, we may grow up the faster in all grace and godliness.

Sect. 4 - What is required in the Minister, that by his preaching he may further the people in the duties of godliness.

Now that the Ministry of the Word may be an effectual means of grace, and of strengthening us unto all holy duties of a Christian life; there are some things required, both to the right preaching and hearing of it. Unto the former, there are some things necessary in the person of the Preacher, and some things in the act and execution of his Ministry. In the person, there must be skill to divide the Word aright, not only giving a true sense of it to all, but to apply a fit portion unto all sorts of hearers; and a great measure of wisdom and understanding, through the outward helps of study and learning, and the inward illumination of God's Spirit, that he may be able to instruct those which are ignorant; according to that in the Prophet

Malachi; The Priests lips should keep knowledge, (namely, as Joseph's corn in the store-houses for the common use, and not a close Prisoner, with whom none may be admitted to confer, saving his Jailor) and the people should seek the Law at his mouth. Unto which knowledge and skill, there must be added industrious diligence, whereby he is ready to preach the Word in season, and out of season, reprovng and rebuking, with all long suffering and doctrine, although he seeth small fruit of his labors. For though the Minister be never so rich in the spiritual treasures of learning and knowledge, yet if miser-like, he do not communicate them, but locketh them up in his own brain; the poor people are never the better, but may perish in their ignorance, even as he shall do in his sloth and unfaithfulness. Thirdly, he must have his heart affected with sincere love of the people, whereby he is moved in all things to seek their good, and to prefer their salvation before his own private profit. The which love in the teacher, will make way in the hearts of his hearers, not only for his instructions and comforts, but also his admonitions and reproofs, seeing they come not out of any spleen, but out of mere love, and fervent desire of saving their souls. In the act and execution of his Ministerial function, he is to speak nothing but God's Truth, as from him, and as before him, in his pure sight, which discerneth all error, and in his glorious presence, who hateth and abhorreth all vanity and hypocrisy: And that not after his own manner, chiefly aiming to magnify himself in the ostentation of his own learning and gifts, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, above all desiring and endeavoring to glorify God in the salvation of his hearers.

Sect. 5 - That the word must be preached powerfully and plainly.

Whereunto these two things are required; namely, that he preach the Word powerfully and plainly; powerfully to the consciences of all, and plainly to the capacity (as much as in him lieth) of those which are most simple. Of both we have the Apostle Paul for our pattern,

who though he were most learned above all other the Apostles, both in arts and tongues, and all other learning of the Jews, yet came not in excellency of speech, nor the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; desiring to know nothing (that is, to make show of no other knowledge) saving Jesus Christ and him crucified; and preferring five words spoken to the understanding of his hearers, above ten thousand in an unknown tongue. Yea, we have herein our Savior Christ himself, as our Precedent, who preached the Word, not like the Scribes and Pharisees (after a jejune and Scholastical manner) but with all power and authority. And though he were the wisdom of his Father, in whom all treasures of knowledge and learning were hid; and the word of his Father, exceeding in sound eloquence both men and Angels, yet preached the Word in a plain phrase and humble manner of speech, not respecting what he was able to speak, but what his Disciples were able to hear, conceive, and carry away; like a loving and careful nurse, chawing the harder and stronger meat in his mouth, that they might the better receive it, whilst he explained more difficult points, by easy and familiar similitudes. Neither had he only care of more thoroughly informing those who were men grown in knowledge, by teaching them the high and hidden mysteries of his Kingdom, but also of instructing his little children and young novices in the first principles of true Religion, as it was prophesied of him by Esaias, All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace. And like a faithful and careful Shepherd, he did not only apply himself to feed his whole flock, but extended his care and love chiefly to his younglings, gathering his Lambes with his arm, and carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading those which were great with young. The which care and charge, when he was to ascend on high, he deputed to the Apostle Peter, and in him to all the whole Ministry, that they should feed his tender Lambes, as well as his older and stronger Sheep. And therefore though the over-wise Grecians account the simple preaching of Christ crucified, foolishness; and the learned Doctors of the world make themselves sport with this easy plainness: Let all that truly fear God, choose rather to imitate Christ and his Apostles in their course of preaching,

laboring to speak unto the capacity of the meanest and simplest, seeing the charge of their souls is commended unto them by our great Shepherd, as well as theirs who are of greatest understanding, and the souls of all being alike dear unto God, they shall give account of one as well as of another, of the little Lambes, as well as of the Rams of the flock. And seeing we must not only take care for ourselves, that we may go to heaven alone, but are appointed Captains and Leaders of God's Armies, we must not scorn plain ways, wherein all our company may go with us, the weak and sick, as well as the strong and healthy; and mount aloft in learned discourses and Scholastical speculations (as it were upon the Alps) which are no less high above their capacity, then cold and heartless, giving no warmth to their zeal and devotion; or travel in the craggy and rough ways of knotty controversies, needless genealogies, and abstruse difficulties, where we shall leave all our hearers afar off behind us: but choose rather such fairways and beaten paths, as will bring us and our company with us, with most speed and safety to the end of our journey. For though hereby we cannot commend our strength and swiftness, though we outrun others that have set out before us, because they go in mountainous ways, and far about, yet we shall commend our wisdom and prudence, in that we have chosen the fairest and nearest way. And surely if an impartial view were taken of several congregations, and just trial made, whether those have best thriven in the Christian growth, who have been diligently fed with ordinary food and daily bread, or those who are sometimes feasted with a banquet of delicate dishes; I doubt not but it would be found, that as sometime Daniel and his fellows, that fed upon plain pulse, which God had sanctified to their use, were fatter and in better liking then they that did eat the portion of the kings meat: so those people and Parishes would be found more thriving Christians, both in knowledge and practice, who are fed with the pulse of plain Preaching, and with wholesome, though homely food, because they can feed upon it, and better digest it, then others that have a kingly portion of abstruse learning, wit, and eloquence, sometimes (though rarely) allowed unto them, seeing they are meats of too hard digestion for their weak stomachs, causing crudities, humorous and

ill-concocted conceits, and seldom affording any wholesome nourishment.

Sect. 6 - Of the duties of the people, respecting the Ministry of the Word.

The consideration whereof, as it should effectually move God's Ministers to take such a course in their preaching, as is most fit and profitable for their hearers, and denying themselves, and the praise of their great learning and gifts in the work of their Ministry, to become as weak to those that are weak, that they may gain them to Christ; so also should it move the people, who desire to be built up in saving knowledge, and in the practice of all holy duties belonging to a godly life, to affect such teachers, as being learned and sufficient, do conscionably apply themselves to their capacity, for their instruction and edification. To which purpose, they must strive with God in their fervent prayers, that he will send such laborers into his harvest; and in humility and submissive obedience, as their place and calling will permit, labor by earnest suite with superior Magistrates over Church and Common wealth, and especially with Patrons and disposers of Church-preferments, that they will provide and set over them such faithful and painful Pastors, as will feed them with food convenient for the preserving of their souls in spiritual life, and the nourishing and increasing of God's graces in them; not foolishly affecting and admiring (as it is common with those that are most ignorant) such teachers, as desiring the praise of their great learning, more than the salvation of their people's souls, do most exceed the short reach of their shallow capacities; like unto cold stomachs, which have a greedy appetite after meats of hard digestion, but when they have received them, for want of natural heat turn them into wind, which affecteth their brain with noisome vapors, and are not able to convert them into any wholesome nourishment. Secondly, their care must be, as much as in them lieth, and the necessary preservation of their state will suffer them, to place themselves under such a Ministry, as

will help them forward in their spiritual thrift and growth of grace, and counting (according to Mary's choice, and our Saviors approbation) this one thing necessary, let them prefer it before all worldly things; as fertile soils, good air, well-seated houses and shops fit for trading, delightful walks and prospects, and plentiful provision for house-keeping; which without the other, may make full purses and Barns, but hearts empty of all grace and goodness; healthy and well-liking bodies, but hunger-starved, lean and sickly souls. Thirdly, they must join their cost with their care, and like the wise Merchant, esteem this precious pearl and hid treasure, above all other their possessions; they must, if it be in their power, purchase it at any rate, seeing it only can make them truly rich, according to the counsel of the Wiseman; Buy the truth, and sell it not; thinking that part of their wealth well spared, which serveth as a means to bring them unto the right use of all the rest, and to enrich their souls with the incomparable treasures of God's saving graces, whereby they are strengthened to the wise performance of all Christian duties. Fourthly, having Ministers, though not eminent and excellent in their gifts, yet of some good towardliness and willingness to grow unto more perfection, they must give them no discouragements, by their bitter censures, backhanded and froward carriage, backwardness to pay unto them their right, or running from them upon every slight occasion to hear others; but rather they must nourish and cherish the good things which they see in them, that they may increase more and more, by showing all love and kindness, due reverence and respect; especially by regarding them in the work of their Ministry, and hearing them with all diligence, constancy, and attention. For by thus drawing the breasts of their spiritual nurses, they shall bring down their milk, and cause it to increase and abound, at least, to a sufficiency of nourishment, whereas if it be not sucked, it will curdle in the breast, and make them heart-sick to be thus neglected, or else in short time turn back, and quite drying up, leave unto them no nourishment at all. Finally, when God hath provided for them such as are eminent in their gifts, and painful in their Ministry, laboring in word and doctrine, and going out and in before them as good guides in their government, and holy example,

they must not grudge to give them the double honor of reverence and maintenance, and together with the heavy weight of their Ministry, suffer them to lie gasping and groaning under the burden of poverty and contempt, but give them all good encouragement, not thinking much, that those who impart unto them heavenly treasures, should be partakers with them of their earthly blessings: but especially, they must labor to profit by their pains, in knowledge and fruitful obedience, which is the joy of their hearts, the life of their life, and the Crown of their Ministry; lest when they see that they sow all their good seed in barren soils, and with the Prophet, and our Savior Christ himself, have just cause to complain, that they have labored and spent their strength in vain, they be forced to make choice of better and more fruitful grounds, and to employ their labors in some other place, where they may more glorify God, and receive more joy and comfort to their own hearts.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the duties of the people in hearing of the Word; and first, of such as are to be performed in their preparation.

Sect. 1 - That we must use preparation before the hearing of the Word, and wherein it consisteth.

And these are the things which are required unto the right preaching of the Word. Unto the right hearing of it, that it may be a powerful means to enrich us with God's graces, and to strengthen us unto all Christian duties of a godly life, some things are required before we hear, some things in hearing, and some things after we have heard it. Before we hear, we must use due preparation; unto which is required first, that we enter into a serious consideration of God's glorious

presence, before whom we are to present ourselves, that we may hear him speaking unto us, not of ordinary matters of small importance, but such as merely concern his glory, and the everlasting salvation of our own souls. Whereby we shall be preserved from rushing rashly into the holy assemblies, and be made careful to look unto our feet, before we enter into the House of God. For if worldly men, duly considering that they are going into the presence of an earthly King, to hear him speak of the weighty affairs of the Common wealth, or such things as nearly concern them in their own particular, prepare themselves accordingly, that they may be fit to come into such a royal presence; how much more should we use the like and greater care, when we are to come into the presence of the King of Kings, and to hear him speaking unto us of such things, as much more concern us and the everlasting good of our souls and bodies? Secondly, being to come unto this spiritual feast, we are to prepare ourselves by getting a good appetite, that we may not idly sit by and look on, when others feed on these spiritual delicacies, for the refreshing and strengthening of their souls. To which end, we must, by renewing our repentance, purge and cleanse our souls from sinful corruptions (as our stomachs from clogging and hurtful humors) which otherwise will take away our appetite, and make us loath and refuse, or eating against stomach, not able to digest our spiritual nourishment. Of which kind are wrath, maliciousness, guile, dissimulation, hypocrisy, prejudice, and forestalled opinions, and such like; seeing if these bear sway in us, it is not possible that the Word of God should take any effect, or become profitable nourishment for the preserving and increasing of our spiritual health and strength. So also we must banish out of our minds worldly cogitations about our pleasures or profits, which will distract us from hearing the Word with any attention, and out of our hearts earthly cares, which like thorns, will choke the seed of the Word, and make it utterly unfruitful in us. Moreover, we must stir up our appetite, by considering our spiritual wants, which can no otherwise be supplied, then by coming unto this feast; for as hunger, and sense of our emptiness, maketh us to long after our bodily food, so if we duly consider how empty we are of all God's graces, and feeble unto all good duties, it will much increase

our appetite to the food of our souls; and we shall go to this Market with all cheerfulness, if we consider, that here, and nowhere else, we may fit and furnish our souls with all necessaries. Again, we must examine our sins which bear sway in us, that repenting of them, we may receive the assurance of pardon in the public ministry, to our inestimable comfort, and may also be strengthened against the power of them, that we may subdue them, and not suffer them to reign in us, as in former times; being armed against them, and the temptations of our spiritual enemies, alluring, or forcibly drawing us into them, with the whole armor of God, and especially the sword of the Spirit. And this will also provoke our appetite, and make us go with cheerfulness to the hearing of God's Word, like the malefactor to receive his pardon, or the Soldier that hath been often wounded and foiled, by reason of his nakedness, to put on sufficient armor, and to receive from his Commander defensive and offensive weapons. Finally, we must prepare ourselves, and stir up our appetite, by considering the properties of the Word, which we go to hear. As first, the excellency of it, as being the Word, not of man, but of God, the Word of truth, life, and salvation. Secondly, the power and efficacy of it, as being the power of God himself to our salvation, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the very dividing of the soul and the Spirit, the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. A Word that hath always its operation, and returneth never in vain, but bringeth that to pass for which it is sent, and is either the sweet savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Thirdly, the great utility and profit of it, being a perfect and pure Law, that converteth the soul, a light that shineth unto us who sat in the shadow of death, and guiding our feet into the way of peace; heavenly wisdom, that giveth understanding unto the simple, and maketh the wise more wise; our Counselor to advise us, our food to nourish us, our weapon to defend us and repel our enemies, an effectual means to work in us all saving graces, and the way that bringeth us to eternal blessedness. Finally, let us prepare ourselves, and whet our appetite, by considering the necessity of it, seeing without it we can attain unto no good, nor escape any evil; in which regard, our Savior saith to Martha, that this one thing is

necessary, as though there were no necessity of any other thing in comparison of it. The which necessity lieth not only upon weaklings, and those who are simple and ignorant, that they may learn the truth, but also upon those who have made greatest progress in Christianity, and are richest in knowledge, that they may be moved to practice what they know, and bring it to holy use, and that the graces of God may be confirmed and preserved in them. Unless any man would foolishly imagine that he is so strong in grace, that he needeth not to eat any more food, for the restoring of that spiritual strength which is daily abated and impaired through our corruption, and the assaults and temptations of our never-resting enemies, Satan and the world. The last duty to be performed in our preparation, is, that we fervently pray unto God for his grace, and the assistance of his holy Spirit, both to his Ministers in speaking, and ourselves with the rest of his people, in hearing, that he may be so enabled thereby to speak the Word truly, sincerely, powerfully and profitably, and we to hear in a Christian and holy manner, that God may be glorified, and we edified in our holy faith, and strengthened more and more unto all the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 2 - Of duties to be performed in the hearing of the Word.

In the hearing of the Word, diverse duties are to be performed. As first, we must set ourselves in God's presence, that we may hear all things that are commanded us of him, according to the example of good Cornelius; in which regard we must not hear the Word after a careless and cold manner, but with fear and trembling, if we would have God that speaketh, take any delight in us. Secondly, we must hear it, not as the word of man, but as it is the Word of God, by which we shall one day be justified or condemned. Thirdly, we must hunger after the sincere milk of God's Word, without the mixture of human traditions, carnal eloquence, and worldly wisdom, that we may grow up thereby. Fourthly, we are to hear with all attention, having our eyes fastened upon the Teacher, and hanging upon his

lips, as the child upon the mothers breast, like the hearers of our Savior Christ; to which end we must carefully banish all worldly cogitations and wandering thoughts, and also all drowsiness and sleepiness, seeing we would not so hear our equals, and much less our superiors. Fifthly, we must hear with alacrity and cheerfulness, and shake off all dullness and carnal weariness, which makes no part of the Sermon pleasing but the conclusion only. Sixthly, we must hear with all due reverence, the Word, as being the Word of God, and not of man, as from him, and before him, in whose presence the hills and mountains shake and tremble. Seventhly, with all humility, submitting ourselves unto it, as unto the Scepter of God's Kingdom, to be ruled and directed, instructed and reprov'd by it, and not rebel against God's holy ordinance, and repine and rage against our Teachers, when they touch our consciences to the quick, and sharply reprove us for our sins. Lastly, we must hear the Word with faith and a good conscience, giving credit unto all the parts of it, as well threatening's as promises, and applying all to our own use; with an earnest desire to profit by it, and to lay it up in the closet of our hearts, that we may not be forgetful hearers, and like leaking and riven vessels that will hold nothing.

Sect. 3 - Of duties to be performed after the hearing of the Word.

After the hearing of the Word, two duties are to be performed. The first is, that publicly in the Church we join with the Minister in giving praise and thanks unto God for his mercy towards us, in feeding our souls with the bread of life, and for the liberty he hath given us to come in peace and safety into his holy Assemblies, to hear us speak unto him in our prayers, and to speak unto us by his Minister and Ambassador; and that privately at home, at least in some short manner, we renew our thanksgiving, and desire the Lord to write that which we have heard, in our hearts, by the finger of his Spirit, and to make it effectual for the enriching of our hearts with saving grace, and the strengthening of us to all holy duties. And if our

memory, ability and gifts will serve, it is profitable for us, and acceptable to God, if we can frame our prayer according to that which we have heard, confessing those sins which have been reproved, bewailing those wants which have been discovered, desiring those graces which have been commended unto us, or praising God if we already have them, and desiring grace and spiritual strength, that we may perform those duties, unto which we have been persuaded and exhorted. The second duty is, that we lay up that which we have heard, in our hearts and memories, that we may practice them in our lives. For as it is not enough to have good seed sown in our grounds, if we do not cover it that it may take root, but let the fowls of heaven take it away, nor to feed upon wholesome meat, unless we retain it in our stomachs that it may be digested, and like good nourishment applied to all the parts of the body; so it will little avail us to hear many Sermons, and never think more of them after we are gone out of the Church, and to receive this spiritual food with greedy appetites, if we keep it not, but presently cast it up again, out of hearts surfeited with worldly cares, and clogged and cloyed with the gross humors of our sinful lusts. The which (as I am persuaded) is one chief cause why the most, even amongst diligent hearers, have, after so long enjoining the light of the Gospel, so little profited either in knowledge or holy practice; namely, because they have been so careless in keeping what they have heard, and have put this spiritual treasure into broken bags, and this precious liquor into riven vessels. Now the means to retain and imprint the things which we have heard in our hearts and memories, is first to love, regard, and set our hearts upon them; for even old men (as we say) who are weakest in memory, do yet retain those things which they most affect. The second is, that we hear the Word with diligent attention, observing the method of the Teacher, and how he proceedeth from point to point, fastening the former point in our minds, by casting our eye back unto it, when as he is leaving of it, and proceeding to another. For as it is not possible that the fault of the first concoction, should be amended in the second, seeing every part and faculty is wholly taken up about its own proper work; so is it no more possible that we should remember that which we never minded, or that the

memory should bring forth that, which the understanding neglected to lay up by due attention and observation. And therefore the Apostle telleth us, that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we hear, lest at any time we should let them slip. Thirdly, this may make us rub our memories, and make us careful to imprint in them the things which we hear, if we consider that our diligent hearing of the Word will not make us happy, unless we also retain it in our memories, and practice it in our lives: for so the Apostle James saith, that if we look into the perfect Law of liberty, and continue therein, being not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work, we shall be blessed in our deed. And the Apostle Paul limiteth the promise of salvation made unto the preaching and hearing of the Word, to the condition of retaining it in our memories. I declare (saith he) unto you the Gospel which I preached, and ye received, by which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory that which I preached unto you. Fourthly, we must unto our hearing, add meditation, which is a notable means of imprinting it in our hearts and memories. Fifthly, we must confer with others, that they may help us where we are wanting, and we them, where they have failed. Sixthly, Governors of families may help themselves, and those which are committed to their charge, for the better understanding and remembering of what they have heard, by repeating the chief points of the Sermon after they are come home, by strength of their memory, or help of their notes, and examining their children and servants, and putting them to give an account of what they have heard and learned. Lastly, we must make what we have heard, our own, by applying it to our own use, and bringing it to practice in our lives and conversations; whereby we shall entitle ourselves to that blessedness which is promised to all those who both hear the Word and keep it. And so much of the first means of enabling us to the duties of a godly life, the ministry of the Word, and the things that are required unto it. The which I have the more briefly passed over, because I have touched diverse of the points before, and more fully handled some of them in another Treatise.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the second public means of a godly life, which is the administration of the Sacraments.

Sect. 1 - That the Sacraments further us much in a godly life, as they are seals of the Covenant.

The second means of enriching us with all saving graces, and strengthening us unto all the duties of a godly life, is the right use of the Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, both which do much conduce hereunto, and each of them severally. For the Sacraments are seals annexed to the Covenant of grace, purposely instituted of God to strengthen and confirm our faith in this assurance, that Christ and all his benefits do belong unto us; that in him, and for his righteousness, death, and full satisfaction unto God's Justice, he hath pardoned and forgiven unto us all our sins; that in him he is well pleased with us, and hath given unto us just title and interest to all his promises both of grace in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come; that he will give unto us his holy Spirit, and thereby write his Law in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, mortify our corruptions, and quicken us unto new obedience. Of all which benefits, the Sacraments are not only significant signs, but also infallible seals, annexed purposely by God unto his Covenant, to assure us that he will perform all his promises, and to give unto us (like a bond and conveyance legally signed and sealed) just title and interest unto all those blessings, even before we sensibly have them in possession and fruition. Yea not only so, but they also serve like instruments and conduit pipes to convey to the worthy receiver, Christ, and all his benefits. Now what can more forcibly persuade, or more powerfully enable us to the duties of a godly life, then the representing, assuring, and exhibiting of all these inestimable benefits, in the right use of the Sacraments? What can

more inflame our hearts with most fervent love towards God, then the consideration, yea sense and feeling of this admirable love of God towards us, in giving unto us when we were sinners, strangers and enemies unto him and his grace, Christ Jesus, and with him all these unspeakable benefits? And what more than love can effectually move us to a holy desire in all things to glorify and please him, and to walk worthy his love in all holiness of life and conversation? What can more lighten the burden of our labor, and make us to think all too little which we can do and suffer for him? Again, the Covenant of grace sealed unto in the right use of the Sacraments, doth singularly encourage us to lay aside all doubts and difficulties, seeing God thereby assureth us that he will, yea hath given unto us his holy Spirit, to direct and assist us in all our good endeavors, in the mortifying of all our sinful corruptions, seem they never so strong and irresistible, and strengthening us to the performance of all good duties, seem they never so difficult and displeasing unto flesh and blood. And what can more effectually move us to go on in the work of sanctification, then to have such an assistant to join with us, unto whom nothing is difficult, being infinitely able to perform and perfect whatsoever he undertaketh? What can more powerfully persuade us to do God faithful service, then to have the pardon of our sins put into our own hands, signed and sealed, so dearly purchased, and so freely given? then to have the present pledges and pawns of God's love and favor, the earnest of his Spirit, the first fruits of his graces, and the conveyances of our heavenly Inheritance, sealed and delivered into our own keeping. For who would be so sluggish, as not to do faithful and diligent service to such a glorious and gracious Master, for such liberal and bountiful wages? Finally, seeing in the right use of the Sacraments we do really and truly, though spiritually and by faith, receive Christ, that he may dwell in us, and we in him, and not only communicate with him in his divine graces imputed by God, and applied by faith, but also by virtue of his Spirit assisting this ordinance, have all sanctifying and saving graces confirmed and increased in us, whereby we are strengthened unto all the duties of a godly life: hence also it appeareth how much they conduce and further us in them; seeing we have Christ himself a co-worker with

us, who by his holy Spirit sustaineth the greatest part of the weight of that his easy yoke, and light burden, which he layeth upon us; in which respect we may take courage unto us, and say with the Apostle, that we are able to do all things, through the power of Christ which strengtheneth us; and seeing also they cherish and increase his gifts and graces in us, whereby we are moved and enabled to work together with him, in all holy duties of God's service, and of a godly and Christian life.

Sect. 2 - That the Sacraments further us in godliness, as they are testifications of our service to God.

Secondly, the Sacraments are helps unto us for this purpose, as they are solemn testifications of our service and obedience unto God, seeing they are his liveries and cognizance's whereby his servants are known from others; and the sacramental oath which he causeth all his soldiers to take, when he entertaineth them into his spiritual warfare; and the pres-money which he putteth into their hands, whereby he obligeth and firmly bindeth them to continue constant in this warfare, and to fight courageously under his colors. Now this may move us to do faithful service unto our great Lord and Master, partly because he hath so ennobled us by giving us entertainment into his Family, and graced us, by letting us wear his livery and cognizance, seeing it is a far greater advancement and dignity, to be one of his meanest servants, even a doorkeeper in his House, then to be the greatest Monarch in the earth; partly because he encourageth us to faithful and diligent service by such bountiful wages and inestimable rewards; and partly because we shall otherwise dishonor our Lord and Master, and wear his livery to do him shame; yea also disgrace ourselves, whilst we do discover our gross hypocrisy, in not answering to our profession, nor performing such holy duties as are suitable unto it; whereby we shall move the Lord, in his just displeasure, to pull our liveries over our ears, and so uncasing us, to lay open our hypocrisy to our shame, and to turn us out of doors.

This may move us also to fight courageously under his Standard, against the spiritual enemies of our salvation, seeing if we slip out of his Campe, after we have received this pres-money, and run away, we deserve death by our apostasy; or if we cowardly yield unto the assaults and temptations of our spiritual enemies, and do not fight valiantly, and perform faithful service to our grand-Captain, even unto the death, we are well worthy to be cashiered, to have no part in the glory of his victory, nor any portion of joy in his heavenly triumph.

Sect. 3 - That the Sacrament of Baptism furthereth us in godliness, as we are thereby engrafted into Christ.

More specially, the Sacrament of Baptism is to the worthy receiver, a notable means to enable us unto the duties of a godly life. First, because thereby we are sacramentally engrafted into the body of Christ, and made members of his body spiritually by faith, as we are outwardly initiated, entered and admitted by the Congregation, as members of the visible Church, according to that of the Apostle, Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. By virtue of which incision, we are enabled to bring forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness; according to that of our Savior; I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, (namely, by that life and sap of grace which he receiveth of me) for without me ye can do nothing. For as the Imp or Cion liveth not by his own life, but being cast out of the stock, dieth and withereth; so being engrafted into Christ, we live not our own life, but by virtue of that lively sap of grace which we receive from him, according to that of the Apostle; I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me; whereas he that abideth not in the true Vine Jesus Christ, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast

them into the fire, and they are burned. More specially, being baptized into Jesus Christ, we are baptized into his death and Resurrection, from which such virtue and vigor is derived unto us, that we are not only thereby washed and purged from the guilt and punishment of all our sins, but also enabled to mortify and crucify the old man, the flesh, with the sinful lusts thereof, and raised from the death of sin, to holiness and newness of life. The which is not only sacramentally signified by the outward washing and sprinkling with water, which serveth to cleanse us from our bodily defilements, by our stay, and (as it were burying) under it, representing our mortification, death and burial to sin, and our rising out of it, signifying our spiritual Resurrection to a new life, but also certainly sealed and assured, and powerfully conveyed to the worthy receiver, that is, to little children elected to salvation, potentially, the inward virtue lying hid in them, till being come to age, it be produced into act by a lively faith; and to those of years actually, who with the outward washing, apply by faith the blood of Christ for the purging of them from the guilt, punishment and corruption of their sins, and the virtue of his death and Resurrection, for the killing and crucifying of the flesh with the lusts thereof, and their spiritual quickening unto holiness and new obedience. And hereof it is, that the Apostle draweth from our Baptism effectual arguments to persuade us unto, and work in us sanctification and holiness of life. How shall we (saith he) that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, &c.

Sect. 4 - Secondly, as it is the Sacrament of our new-birth.

Secondly, Baptism doth enable us unto the duties of a godly life, as it is the Sacrament of our Regeneration and new-birth, not only signifying, but sealing and assuring, yea powerfully conveying to the worthy receiver (by the inward operation of God's Spirit, which powerfully worketh together with his holy ordinances) the spiritual life of grace, potentially to the elect Infants, as they potentially have faith, and by God's Decree are ordained to believe, and actually to those who by faith apply unto themselves Christ and all his benefits. By which spiritual life and quickening power, they are enabled, according unto their age and growth in Christ, to move and work in the duties of holiness; even as the child which is new-born moveth as soon as it liveth, first more weakly, and afterwards more strongly, as it increaseth in age and growth, in strength and stature. Neither is the virtue of Baptism thus quickening us to newness of life, to be limited and restrained to the time past, or to the present act of administration, as though it did no more but purge and cleanse us from the guilt and punishment of our sins past, and mortify our original sin in which we were born, or raise us who were dead in trespasses and sins, unto the first beginnings of spiritual life and motion, bringing us (as it were) to the birth, and then utterly leaving us to be nursed and nourished by other means; but the power and vigor of it continueth and extendeth itself to the whole course of our lives; and is an effectual means, being recalled to our minds, and afresh applied by faith, both to assure us of the pardon of all our sins, as it is the seal of the Covenant, whose virtue continueth not only at the first act of sealing, but as long as the term specified in the writing, and therefore must continue in full virtue forever, to our use, seeing it is a seal affixed to an everlasting Covenant; and also with no less efficacy to mortify daily more and more, all our sinful corruptions, and to quicken us unto holiness and new obedience, when upon any occasion we apply unto us the death and Resurrection of Christ, signed and sealed unto us, and for our perpetual use in our Baptism; and do review our spiritual evidences, and the great Charter of God's Covenant, wherein he hath not only given Christ unto us, and all his benefits, but also hath promised and assured us that he will give his holy Spirit to continue with us unto

the end of the world, who will apply unto us the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection, not only for the pardon of our sins, in respect of their guilt and punishment, but also for the washing away daily of the pollution of it, and subduing of the flesh and the lusts thereof, and for our continual quickening and further growth in all duties of holiness and righteousness.

Sect. 5 - Thirdly, as it is our restipulation in the Covenant of grace.

Thirdly, it is a means to help us forward in all duties of godliness, as it is our restipulation in the Covenant of grace, whereby having received from God the promise of the remission of our sins, grace and glory, we for our part promise unto God again, that we will receive Christ and all his benefits by a true and lively faith, bringing forth the fruits thereof in unfeigned repentance and amendment of life, and that utterly renouncing Satan, the world, and our own sinful flesh with the lusts thereof, we will wholly dedicate and consecrate ourselves, or souls and bodies to the service of him who is our Creator and Redeemer. The which our vow and Covenant made unto God, is a powerful bond to restrain us from all sin, and to tie us unto the performance of all duties of God's service, seeing if we do not perform the condition of the Covenant between him and us, we can have no true joy and comfort in our lives, because we can have no assurance that we have any right and interest unto any of God's gracious promises made unto us in Jesus Christ. So often therefore as we have occasion to call to our remembrance, our vow and promise made unto God in baptism, and especially when we are present at the celebration of this holy Sacrament, and hear it again repeated and made in the name of infants admitted unto it; if we conscionably labor to make a right use of our Baptism, it will put us in mind of our Covenant then made with God, and renew our desires, resolution, and endeavor of performing that service in the duties of a Christian life, which we have vowed and promised unto him, lest we should be found Covenant-breakers, and dalliers with God, who will

not be mocked, thereby deluding ourselves of all blessings and benefits, respecting this life and the life to come, which in the Covenant of grace are promised unto us. Where, by the way we may observe, that those who withdraw themselves, and depart out of the assembly when the Sacrament of Baptism is administered, do not only thereby sin against God, the Church, and the party baptized (as I have before showed) but also are very injurious unto themselves, in that they lose a good opportunity of calling to mind and renewing their Covenant with God, and deprive themselves of one special help, whereby they might be enabled to perform the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 6 - That the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a powerful means to further us in Christian duties, first, because thereby our Communion with Christ is confirmed, and secondly, our faith strengthened.

So likewise the Supper of the Lord, rightly celebrated and used, is a powerful means to enable and help us forward in the performance of all Christian duties. First, because thereby our union and Communion with Christ, is more and more strengthened and confirmed; seeing God doth offer and give, and we take and apply unto ourselves by the hand of faith, under the visible signs of Bread and Wine, Christ and all his benefits; his Body crucified, and his Blood shed, that they may nourish our souls unto everlasting life; according to that of our Savior; He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him; and again, He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. Now the more that this our union with Christ is strengthened and confirmed, the more powerfully do we perform all Christian duties, seeing from him all grace is communicated unto us, and all virtue and quickening life, whereby we are enabled to bring forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness. Secondly, it strengtheneth us unto all good duties, as it is a special means for the strengthening and increasing of our faith, which was the chief end

for which it was ordained. For seeing the Lord hath not only committed his Covenant to writing, but for the further ratification of it, hath annexed unto it his seals, the Sacraments, there is now no place left to doubting; seeing it is impossible that the Lord, who is Truth itself, and his promises, Yea, and Amen, should fail in any of them, being thus established and confirmed. In which regard, the Apostle calleth the Sacraments, the seals of the righteousness of faith, because as seals, amongst men, are annexed to writings, to give them security, and better assurance of the performing of Covenants agreed on between them: so the Lord hath instituted his Sacraments, and annexed them to his Covenant, not to confirm it, which is so infallible, that it needs no confirmation, but to strengthen our feeble and weak faith, which needs all helps and means to keep it from wavering. Now the more our faith is confirmed, the more rich we grow in all saving graces, seeing it is the fountain from which they flow, and the more we abound in all holy duties, and fruits of new obedience, seeing it is the root from which they spring.

Sect. 7 - Thirdly, because it is the spiritual food and nourishment of our souls.

Thirdly, because the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the spiritual food of our souls, whereby they are nourished and strengthened in life and grace unto eternal salvation, even as our bodies are nourished with corporal food, and thereby strengthened and enabled for all actions and employments: So our Savior saith; My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; not to feed the body, but to comfort the soul, to preserve our spiritual life, and to strengthen us unto all duties of holiness and righteousness. And as the bodily life languisheth, and strength decayeth, if we refuse our corporal nourishment; so the vigor and life of our souls cannot continue, if we feed not upon Christ by faith; according to that vehement asseveration of our Savior; Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in

you. Yea, this Supper of the Lord is not such a spare meal, and bare Commons, as only holdeth life and soul together, and doth not revive the spirits, increase the strength, and fit us for action and employment; but it is a plentiful feast for our souls, which maketh us grow in grace and spiritual strength and stature, unto a perfect age in Christ, making them strong and vigorous unto all Christian duties of God's service. Whereof it is, that as Baptism is called the Sacrament of our imitation and new birth, so this of our augmentation and growth in grace; affording unto us plentiful nourishment for this end. For as God is so bountiful in affording man means for the preserving his bodily life, that he alloweth him such things, not only which are absolutely necessary, but also for delight, and not bread alone to strengthen man's heart, but also wine to make it glad, and oil, to express this joy in the face and countenance. So he hath dealt much more bountifully for our souls, providing for their nourishment a plentiful feast, the strengthening Bread of Christ's Body, and the cheering and gladdening Wine of his precious Blood, the delicious viands and dishes of his spiritual benefits, and saving graces, and sweet comforts of his holy Spirit; and not only setteth these things before us to look upon, but giveth unto us gracious entertainment, inviting us to feed upon them, not only unto necessity, but also to delight. So that our welcome is no less worth than our cheer, and (as the Spouse speaketh) his love better than wine. Yea, unto his feast he addeth a banquet of spiritual comforts, embracing us with the arms of his love, cheering us with the consolations of his Spirit, and ravishing our souls with the sweet feelings of his favor, and such inward joy; that being with the Spouse thus brought into his Banqueting-house, and having for a Canopy over our heads, his Banners of love, we are ready, as it were in an ecstasy to cry out, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of love. Now how can our poor souls, being thus royally feasted and cherished at the Supper of the great King, but be inwardly replenished with all thankfulness towards God for his so rich mercies? What can they do less, then enter into a serious consideration with themselves, what they may return unto God, that they may express their love and gracefulness, for so many and

inestimable favors, without any desert vouchsafed unto them; saying with the Prophet David, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? And finding themselves to be utterly unable to make any other requital, then by remaining thankful debtors, what can they do less then conclude with him, that they will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord, praising and magnifying his mercies in the sight of all the people? And finding ourselves preserved in spiritual life, grown in God's graces, and strengthened and fitted for all good employment, by the royal bounty of our heavenly King, feasting us with such cordial restoratives, and delicious food, above the price of silver or gold, or any other corruptible thing; how ungrateful should we be, if we did not employ this strength which he hath given us in the duties of his service, that we may glorify his holy Name, and be accepted of him, by doing that which is pleasing in his sight?

Sect. 8 - Fourthly, because it is an action which we do in remembrance of Christ.

Fourthly, the right use of the Lord's Supper much conduceth unto a godly life, as it is an action which we do in remembrance of Christ, and are thereby put in mind how much he hath done and suffered for us. For who can lightly esteem of any sin, which cost Christ no less than the price of his precious blood? Who will not bewail his sins past with bitter grief, abhor his present corruptions with mortal hatred, and utterly renounce and forsake them for the time to come, who duly considereth that they were the nails which fastened our Savior Christ to the Cross, and that unsupportable weight, which made his soul heavy to the death, pressed out of his innocent body that bloody sweat, and extorted from him that lamentable complaint, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Who will be hired with the base wages of worldly vanities, to defile his soul again with the filth of sin, which could no otherwise be cleansed and purged then by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, of infinite more value

than ten thousand worlds? And so on the other side, who can be slack in the service of so gracious a Savior? Or be sparing in his pains to glorify him, who for his redemption hath not spared his dearest blood? Who would not worship him in all the duties of holiness, who hath purchased his happiness at such a rate as men and Angels were not able to discourse? Who is so unthankfully slothful, that will not spend his sweat in his service, and his tears, because he cannot spend so much as he should, and even his blood to make up what is wanting in them both, for him and his sake, that hath cleansed our bodies and souls from the ingrained spots, and incurable leprosy of sin, with his bloody sweat, yea full streams of his precious blood? Who will now grudge to do works of mercy, or to feed the poor members of Jesus Christ with his spare food, and to clothe them with his cast apparel; which remembereth that this bread of life came down from heaven to be our food, and hath not spared to feast us at his own royal Table, with his own body and blood for our spiritual nourishment unto eternal life? That he who is the lively and express Image of his Father, and equal unto him in glory and Majesty, disrobed himself of this glorious garment, and took upon him the shape of a servant, yea was content to be stripped of those poor clothes he had suiting with his mean condition, and whilst he bore our sins, to bear our shame, hanging naked upon the Cross, that he might clothe us that were spiritually naked, with the rich and glorious robe of his righteousness and obedience?

Sect. 9 - Because thereby we are occasioned to renew our Covenant with God.

Finally, the Lord's Supper rightly used, is a notable means, to confirm and strengthen us unto all duties of a godly life; because it giveth us occasion in our preparation, (that we may come as worthy guests to the Lord's Table) to renew our Covenant with God, by renewing our faith in Christ, our repentance for our sins, our love towards God and our neighbors, and all other saving graces in us. We

renew our faith, by meditating upon God's infinite mercies, and Christ's all-sufficient merits, the gracious and indefinite promises of the Gospel, and the truth and omnipotency of God, whereby he is willing and able to perform them; upon God's Commandment, enjoining us to believe, and his bounty and goodness, in giving his Word and Sacraments made effectual by his Spirit, whereby he enableth us to do that which he commandeth. We renew upon this occasion our repentance also, by bewailing our sins past, and strengthening our resolution, to leave and forsake them for the time to come, and to serve God in the contrary duties of holiness and righteousness. And seeing our great wants and imperfections in all God's graces and Christian duties, we promise and vow in ourselves, and unto God, that we will carefully use all good means whereby we may attain unto them in more perfection. So likewise after the receiving of this Sacrament, we take occasion to examine ourselves, how we have profited and increased in spiritual strength and growth of grace, by being feasted at the Lord's Table with this food of our souls; and being mindful of our promises made before we come to the Lord's Table, we become more diligent in using the means whereby God's graces may be perfected in us, and we strengthened unto all good duties. And that we may not appear to be Covenant-breakers with God, and to have received his grace in vain, we are made more careful and conscionable in looking to all our ways, for the avoiding of all those sins wherewith formerly we have been overtaken, and practicing those duties which we have heretofore neglected, and so to carry ourselves in the whole course of our lives, that we may at all times and in all things please the Lord, whom we have found and felt so gracious unto us. In all which respects, who doth not plainly see, that the often resorting to the Lord's Table, if we come unto it duly prepared, is a most effectual means to enrich us with all God's graces, and to strengthen us unto all good duties of a godly life? And therefore they are most injurious unto their own souls, who seldom come to this spiritual feast, and take every slight occasion of defrauding them of their due food, seeing hereby they make them droop in their spiritual life, to languish and wax faint in

all saving grace, and to become utterly, both unable and unwilling, to perform unto God any sincere and cheerful service.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the third public means of a godly life, which is Prayer.

Sect. 1 - That prayer is God's ordinance to obtain his gifts and graces.

The third means whereby we may be enriched with all saving grace, and strengthened unto all the duties of a godly life, is Prayer; Of which I shall not need to say much in this place, having before entreated of it at large. Only it shall suffice to show, that it is a singular means ordained of God, for the obtaining of grace and strength to serve God in all Christian duties. For of ourselves we have no ability unto anything that is good, no not so much as to think a good thought, or to entertain into our hearts a good desire, but whatsoever we have in this kind, it is the gift of God, according to that, What hast thou that thou hast not received? And that of the Apostle James; Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. Now the means which God hath sanctified for the obtaining of all those gifts and graces which he hath promised, is fervent and effectual Prayer; for though he be most bountiful and ready to bestow all good things, yet not to the idle and slothful, but to such as acknowledging them to be his gifts, do sue and seek unto him for them; and though he infinitely abound with all blessings, yet he communicateth them only to those that crave them at his hands; according to that of the Apostle; The same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him: and that of the Psalmist; The Lord is near unto all those that call upon him, to those that call upon him in truth. And the reason is, because such only do glorify him in his gifts, seeing those alone, who have obtained his blessing by Prayer, will acknowledge him the Author of them, and return unto him to give him thanks. Hence it is, that being willing to bestow all good things upon his children, and unwilling that they should neglect their duty, or have them without suite; and taking delight to converse with them, he withholdeth his gifts till they ask them, that they may

have this occasion to resort unto him. And because through their negligence, he would not keep from them anything, which he knoweth good and necessary, over-long; like a most loving, yet wise Father, he leaveth not the matter to our own foolish and wayward will, but by express commandment enjoineth us to call upon him, and encourageth us in these our suites by promising beforehand, that he will hear and grant them. Ask (saith he) and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. And again; Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. So the Apostle telleth us, that this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hears us whatsoever we ask, we know also that we have the petitions that we desired of him. In which regard, the Apostle exhorteth, that we should be careful for nothing (namely, with a carking and distrustful care) but that in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known unto God. In which regard, the Lord may be truly said to be the Author of all good gifts, and Prayer, the hand whereby we knock at the door of his grace, and when it is opened, receive his blessings from him. He the lively and inexhaustible fountain of all good; and Prayer, the bucket whereby we draw it from him. He, a rich treasury of all grace and desirable riches; and Prayer, the key that openeth it unto us, in the Name and mediation of Jesus Christ. To this purpose, one of the Ancients speaketh fitly; Prayer (saith he) in an admirable manner conduceth to a holy life, and worthy God's service, and being begun, doth much improve it, and like a treasure, storeth it up in our minds. For if any man endeavoreth to do anything belonging to a right course of life, Prayer being his guide, and preparing the way before him, he shall be sure to find a commodious and easy passage, &c. And it is a sign of madness, not to be persuaded that it is the death of the soul, if we do not often cast down ourselves at God's feet. As the body without the soul is a dead carrion: so the soul, if it flee not to God by Prayer, is dead, miserable, and loathsome.

Sect. 2 - That by prayer we obtain God's Spirit and the graces thereof.

More specially, Prayer is the chief means on our part, whereby we obtain his spiritual gifts and graces, by which we are enabled to perform the duties of a godly life: For by it we obtain the Spirit of God, who is the Author of all grace and godliness, seeing, as our Savior hath taught us, the Lord will give his Spirit to those that ask it. And if we want the graces of the Spirit, the Scriptures admonish us to use Prayer, as a special and chief means whereby we may obtain them. So the Apostle James; If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. And the Apostle to the Hebrews, setteth us in this course for the obtaining of all grace; Let us (saith he) come boldly to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Yea, these spiritual graces, whereby we are enabled to serve God in all holy duties, are things absolutely good for us in some degree and measure; and therefore we may absolutely pray for them, without interposing any condition; first, because our heavenly Father is so infinitely gracious and true of his promise, that he will deny nothing unto us that is good; and therefore much less these things which are most necessary, and in an high degree of goodness. For if we being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall our Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Secondly, because he hath commanded us to pray for these spiritual graces; and therefore it is not to be imagined, that the God of all bounty and goodness, would ever have enjoined us to ask those things, which he is unwilling to give: neither will any wise father draw his children to come with suits unto him, by giving them repulses; only it may be, that the Lord, to enlarge our hearts, and to make our desires more fervent and earnest, doth for a time withhold these graces, at least in respect of our sense and feeling; but if we persevere in prayer, and continue importunate suitors, we are sure to obtain them in the end, and that in greater measure, seeing he that by holding his hand back hath enlarged our desires, and made us more empty and hungry, hath promised also to fill and satisfy us. To which purpose Augustine speaketh excellently; So long

(saith he) as the Lord doth not take away from thee thy prayer, he will not remove from thee his mercy; for he that giveth thee his Spirit, that thou mayest pray, will also give unto thee that, which by help of the same Spirit thou doest desire. By all which it appeareth, that prayer is a principal means to obtain all grace and strength at God's hands, for the well performing of all holy duties. Whereof it is, that the Saints in all ages have so ordinarily used it for this end, in the behalf both of themselves and others. So David, in many places of the Psalms: Show me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Commandments, and I shall keep them unto the end. And the Apostle Paul; The Lord make you to increase, &c. to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God; And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas without prayer there is no hope of any growth in grace; for as in nature all things that grow have in them an appetite and attractive force, wherewith they draw that nourishment unto themselves, whereby they come to growth and augmentation: so in the spiritual growth, none receive any increase of grace, but they who have an appetite and spiritual desires, which they express by the attractive force of prayer, whereby they draw from God, the fountain of all goodness, spiritual nourishment, and all things needful to the furthering of their growth in Christ.

Sect. 3 - That public prayer is most effectual for the obtaining of all God's graces.

Now as prayer generally is a notable means to further us in all duties of a godly life; so especially that which is public, when as many of God's Saints and servants being met together in his holy Assemblies, do jointly with one heart and voice, implore the gracious assistance of his good Spirit, whereby they may be enabled to serve him in all

Christian duties. For if the prayers of one alone do offer unto God an holy kind of violence, (as we see in the example of Moses) so as he seemeth unable to deny and reject them, because he hath graciously bound himself, by his free and infallible promises, to hear and grant them; how powerful must the prayers of the whole Congregation needs be to prevail with God, in any suit made according to his will, seeing he hath tied himself to hear and help them by more special promise; according to that of our Savior, If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. So the Lord hath promised that he will cause his servants to rejoice in the granting of their suits by special favor, which they shall make unto him in his own House: I will bring them (saith he) to mine holy Mountain, and make them joyful in my House of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine Altar; for mine House shall be called an House of prayer for all people.

Upon which promises made by God, Solomon, at the consecration of the Temple, groundeth his prayer, that the Lord would in special manner hear the suits and supplications of his servants publicly assembled in his Temple to call upon him. And hereof it is that the Apostle contenteth not himself with his own prayers, or the private suits of others, that he might still be preserved for the service of God, and of his Church, but desireth that the Church of Corinth should join together in prayer for him, that the gift bestowed upon him by the means of many persons, might give occasion unto many, of giving thanks also in his behalf. For as much fuel and fire laid together, doth make the flame and heat so much the more vehement; and many small streams meeting in the same channel, grow great and irresistible: So the fire and fuel of our zealous and fervent prayers joined together in the public Congregation, maketh a flame that scorning all stop, mounteth up to heaven; and when we jointly pour out our souls before God, like many waters met in one current, they have the force of a great torrent and irresistible flood, which bear down all before them, and never stay, till falling into that

infinite Ocean of all mercy and goodness, they are graciously received and accepted of him. And therefore let no man proudly attribute so much unto his private devotion, that he should be moved thereby to neglect the public prayers of the Congregation, as needless and of less efficacy; seeing they are a much more principal and potent means to prevail with God, then our private and proud devotions, scorning such excellent helps, which may well kindle in us that elementary and flashing flame of blind and ungrounded zeal, which lasting but a while, serveth for no use, but to set the Church on fire with hurtful Schisms and furious contentions, but will never kindly warm our hearts with that heavenly heat of fervent zeal, which maketh us fit and forward unto all Christian duties, and the substantial parts of God's service. In which regard I may well say to such, as proudly presuming of the strength of their own devotions, thus single themselves from the Congregation by their private duties; as the Wise man in another case; Woe unto him that is alone; for if he falleth, and faileth in this duty, through want of attention, and wandering thoughts, faintness of faith, and lack of fervency, there is none by to help him; whereas praying in the Congregation, we mutually supply one another's defects, one being devoutly diligent, when another groweth cold and remissly negligent, and he rising again, as ashamed of his foils and falls, and recovering the fervor of his zeal and devotion, requiteth the other with his assistance, when he beginneth to faint and grow weary. Herein like unto soldiers, who being singled from one another, are easily overcome, but joined in a battle, do mutually second and succor one another, one fighting, when the other fainteth, and he with renewed strength giving a fresh charge, bringgeth of the other far engaged, when through weakness and weariness he is able no longer to bear the brunt. And thus much of the third public means of a godly life, to wit, prayer. Concerning the fourth and last, which is the reading of the Scriptures, I will speak when I come to entreat of private reading, because many things to be spoken are coincident to both, and I would not distract them in my Discourse. Only let it be remembered, that whatsoever can be said of the benefit and efficacy of private reading, is in a higher degree of excellency verified in that which is public, because

being a ministerial function, ordained of God, for the common good of the whole Church, and every particular Congregation, it is more powerful to all good uses than private reading, God's more special blessing by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, always more effectually accompanying his more excellent and public ordinances, than such as are private, and of an inferior nature. And therefore as the Word publicly preached is more powerful and profitable, than a Sermon privately read in our own houses (as I have showed) not in regard of the substance or matter contained in both, nor only in respect of elocution and action (wherein preaching excelleth reading) but chiefly because God's blessing accompanieth more effectually that ordinance unto which he hath given the preeminence; so by the same reason, public reading is to be preferred before private, not only because the Minister ordinarily readeth with more judgment and understanding, more plainly and distinctly, giving every word and sentence their due weight, emphasis and accent, and thereby giving such light to the understanding, and life to the affections of the hearers, that such reading is not much inferior to a mean comment; but chiefly and principally (as I said) because it is a ministerial function, upon which we may expect a larger blessing than upon our own private actions. The which I touch by the way, to show unto those their error in judgment, and fault in practice, who highly esteem, and diligently exercise themselves in their own private reading of the Scriptures, and yet so despise public reading in the Congregation, that they will hardly, or not at all vouchsafe their presence, or if that, yet not their reverent and diligent attention.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the private means of a godly life: and first of Christian watchfulness.

Sect. 1 - That we must not rest upon the public means only, but use the private also.

But howsoever, we are to ascribe to the public means, the chief preeminence, as being of greater virtue and efficacy, for the enriching of our souls with all saving grace, and strengthening of them unto all Christian duties of a godly life: yet we must in any case take heed, that we do not (as it is the custom of many cold and careless Christians) content ourselves with them alone, and rest upon them as being alone sufficient for all purposes. But we must also with no less diligence, care and good conscience, adjoin unto them the use of private means to help us forward in our spiritual growth. First, because God hath enjoined us the use of them as well as of the public, and the Saints from time to time, yielding obedience herein unto God, have made them their daily exercise, as we shall see when we come to speak of them in particular. Secondly, because they add strength to our faith, and fuel to our devotion, whereby we are enabled to perform unto God public service with more life and zeal, delight and profit: whereas if we neglect private duties all the week, and suffer our hearts to be taken up with worldly things, they will be quite out of frame for spiritual exercises, and hardly brought unto any religious duties of God's service. But when we present our bodies in the Congregation, we shall leave our hearts at home, about our earthly affairs, and drawing near unto God with our lips, shall in the meantime have our hearts far removed from him; offering unto him a dead and formal, cold and heartless service, wherein he taketh no delight. Thirdly, because God's public service cannot sometime be enjoyed at all, as in the days of persecution, and is always stinted and limited to one or few days in the week, when as our souls, no less than our bodies, need their daily bread, and to be refreshed continually in their spiritual strength, which is abated through our natural corruption, and many slips and falls into sin, as also with the daily and hourly temptations of the devil and the world. In which respect these private means have this preeminence above the public, that though they are not so powerful, and yield less nourishment; yet we may have them at our pleasure, and feed upon them as oft as we will, supplying what is wanting in their virtue and efficacy, by their daily and continual use. Finally, by the private means we are fitted and prepared for the well-performing of the public; as by reading,

prayer, meditation, &c. we are enabled to hear the Word preached, with profit, seeing they not only enlarge our hearts, that we may hear it with delight, reverence and attention, but also fasten it in our minds and memories, and make it fruitful in our lives; and not only help our understandings, that we may better conceive of what is spoken, being well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, but also inflame our affections with the love of God's public service, when as we have thought beforehand of the excellency, profit and necessity of it. So likewise by these private means we are made more fit for public prayer; whereas thereby we are made better acquainted with our wants which need supply, our sins to be confessed, and the benefits received, for which we are bound to return unto God praise and thanksgiving; and by often conversing with God in our private prayers, we are more encouraged to go with boldness and confidence unto the Throne of grace; unto which we cannot attain, if we estrange ourselves from him, by our seldom approaching into his presence. Finally, we cannot come as worthy guests to the Lord's Table, unless by our private exercises of meditation, examination, and prayer we be prepared, whereby we renew our faith, repentance and charity towards our neighbors, and come furnished with such saving graces as are needful and necessary for the receiving of the Sacrament with fruit and comfort. And therefore it is no marvel if those who content themselves only with the public means of salvation, and altogether neglect these private helps, leaving all their Religion and devotion at the Church door, and never looking after it till their next return, do prove such unthriving Christians, weak in knowledge, feeble in grace, and slack and faint in all the duties of a Christian life. For as we would not wonder to see one lean and feeble in body, that should content himself with liberal sustenance one day in the week, and fast all the rest: so there is as little cause to marvel at the small growth, spiritual leanness, and weakness of these careless Christians, after they have long enjoyed the public means of salvation; seeing they rest wholly upon them, and neglect all private duties (as it were) their daily sustenance, and so by long fasting are enfeebled in their strength, and abated in their appetite, that they can neither receive the food publicly offered, nor yet digest and turn it into nourishment

when they have fed upon it. Whereas our souls need more continual and daily nourishment than our bodies, seeing there are no fewer causes of the impairing and abating of their strength.

Sect. 2 - That Christian watchfulness is not a bodily, but a spiritual exercise.

Now these private means are manifold: All which may be reduced unto two kinds, both which contain under them diverse particulars: the first are such private helps and means as are to be used by ourselves alone; the second sort are such as may be used both by ourselves, and also with others joining with us. Of the former sort; the first is Christian vigilance or watchfulness, which well deserveth the first place, because being rightly known and practiced, it will serve as a guide to direct and lead us in all the rest. Whereof my discourse need not to be so large, as the argument is excellent and necessary, seeing it is so religiously and learnedly handled in a Treatise lately published, that were not this Work imperfect without it, I should have needed to have said nothing of it, seeing little can be added, which hath not been better said already. But that we may proceed in handling of this point, I will consider the nature of this watchfulness, and the means which enable us unto it. In the former, we will examine what it is, and wherein it consisteth, and the ends whereto it tendeth, or the objects about which it is exercised. For the better explaining of the first point, we are to know, that waking, watching and watchfulness, and contrariwise, sleeping, and neglect of watching, are not here used in their native and proper signification, but are metaphorical words, borrowed from the state and disposition of our bodies, and from thence transferred to our souls and spiritual estate. For we are said to sleep, whilst we continue in the state of unregeneration, dead in trespasses and sins, or when being recovered by the quickening power of God's Spirit, regenerating and reviving us, we do, in respect of some acts and operations, relapse again into our former condition. And we are then

said to awake, when we rise out of this estate, either in our first conversion, or when we renew our repentance, after our falling into sin, and do again recover the operations of spiritual life. And finally, we are said to watch, when being, through our natural corruption, inclined and disposed to fall into our former sleep of sin, we do with all care and circumspection observe ourselves, that we be not overtaken with spiritual sloth, but that we may continue waking, and able and active for the well-performing of all Christian duties, and of our spiritual life in grace. In which regard, their ignorance and error is much to be pitied, who imagine that they have well observed and kept the Christian watch, unto which we are exhorted in the Scriptures, when as having abridged themselves of their sleep and natural rest, they have thereby wasted and wearied their bodies, and weakened their corporal strength; this error arising out of another, that the flesh (by which the Scriptures understand our original and natural corruption, the body of sin and death) is nothing else but the body itself, and that mortification of the flesh, consisteth chiefly in the macerating and tormenting, pining and pinching of our bodies, by depriving them of all necessaries, and among others, of their natural rest and sleep; the which error I have at large refuted in another place. But we are to know, that as we may nourish the flesh, and consume the body; and contrariwise, nourish the body, and mortify the flesh: so we may take our bodily sleep (as all the faithful have done in the state of Regeneration) and yet maintain the spiritual watch; and watch even whole nights, as Judas that betrayed Christ, the soldiers at his Sepulcher, and thieves and adulterers, that lie in wait to make spoil of their neighbors goods and chastity, and yet sleep and snort in the deep lethargy of sin and wickedness. So that it is not the bodily watchfulness or sleep that is commanded or forbidden; for of this, as of all of like kind, the Apostles saying is verified, namely, that bodily exercise profiteth little; yea it hurteth much, if we rest in it as the deed done, or do it as a work satisfactory and meritorious; not subduing the flesh, but puffing it up with pride and presumption, nor enabling us to God's service, but making the body unfit to be a ready instrument for the soul, whilst by immoderate watching it is weakened and enfeebled, and becometh

more dull and drowsy, more lumpish and uncheerful to all good duties of a godly life.

Sect. 3 - The former point proved by the Scriptures.

And yet I deny not but that there may be good use of bodily watching, when as it is moderate and seasonable, not only in respect of civil and moral affairs, as the dispatching of our necessary business, ministering to our friends upon their bed of sickness, and such like, but also as it conduceth unto spiritual ends; as when it furthereth us in keeping our spiritual watch, and is not rested in as a bodily exercise, but referred and destinated to an holy and religious end. As when with David, Paul, and Silas we abridge ourselves of sleep, that we may praise God by singing of Psalms, or lifting up in silence our thankful hearts unto God for extraordinary benefits; or when with our Savior Christ, and his Church in persecution, we spend the night in prayer and other religious exercises. And thus our Savior requireth of his Apostles bodily watchfulness to a spiritual end; Watch and pray (saith he) that ye fall not into temptation. But yet the Christian waking and watching, which in the Scriptures is so much commended unto us, is not corporal, but spiritual, or only corporal, so far forth as the Spiritual thereby may be advanced and furthered. For which the Word of God is so clear, that it needs not the light of any other Comment; Awake thou that sleepest, and arise up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Out of which sleep of sin when they are awakened, he exhorteth them to keep the Christian watch: See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. And again, Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. So having commended unto us the spiritual armor, he willeth us to pray always, and watch thereunto with all perseverance. And yet more plainly, Awake to righteousness, and sin not. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quite yourselves like men, be strong. Neither doth the Apostle inhibit bodily sleep and natural rest, but carnal security

and sleep in sin. Ye are (saith he) children of light and of the day; not of night, nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober, &c. putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Sect. 4 - What the Christian watchfulness is.

By all which it appeareth, that the Christian watchfulness which is commended unto us in the Scriptures, is not bodily and natural, but supernatural and spiritual. Now let us consider in the next place what it is, and wherein it consisteth. Concerning the former: The Christian and spiritual watch, is a heedful observation of ourselves in all things, and a serious, careful, and diligent circumspection over all our ways, that we may please God by doing his will, and neither commit any sin which he hath forbidden, nor omit any duty which he hath commanded. The which description setteth forth unto us the nature of the Christian watch, as it is commended unto us in the holy Scriptures. Thus the Lord enjoining this watch by Moses the Captain of his people, saith; Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart, all the days of thy life. And our Savior prescribing it, doeth express it in these words, Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is; watch ye therefore, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. So the Apostle expoundeth that phrase, of awaking out of sleep, and arising from the dead, in the next words; See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. And exhorting the Watch-men of the Church, to keep diligently this watch, he willeth them to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over which, the holy Ghost had made them overseers to feed the Church of God, which he had purchased with his blood.

Sect. 5 - That this watch is to be kept in all things.

Now if we would know wherein this observation and circumspection consisteth, and in what it is to be used and exercised; the Apostle telleth us, that it must not be in some few things only, the rest being neglected, but in all things whatsoever; Watch thou in all things; so that we must keep this watch at all times, in all places, upon all occasions, when we are alone, and when we are in company, abroad and at home, in the works of our callings, and in our recreations, when we have to deal with others, and when we are exercised in our own business; in civil affairs and moral actions, and in our religious duties which we perform unto God, as hearing, reading, praying, meditating; according to that of our Savior; Take heed how ye hear, watch and pray. And seeing the devil layeth baits and snares to catch us in all places and in all things, we must be very heedful and circumspect, that we do not fall into his nets of perdition. When we are alone, we must take heed that we be not idle and unprofitable, wholly taken up with worldly thoughts and sinful imaginations, nor overtaken by Satan's temptations, enticing us to the committing of secret sins, seeing solitude exempteth us from the fear, either of shame or punishment. When we are to go into company, we must look to ourselves, that we be not corrupted with evil examples, and vain and rotten communication, and that we do not thus corrupt others, but edify them by our savory speeches, and holy conversation. When we look to be taken up in Christian conferences, we must watch over ourselves, that we fall not, through self-love over-weening our own gifts, into pride and vain-glory, nor through pride break out into anger and contention. When we go to compound differences between neighbors, we must take heed, that we be not partial to either side for worldly respects, nor through stiffness and obstinacy, cause more discord instead of making peace. When we are going to a feast, let us set a watch over our appetite, that it do not draw us to gluttony and excess; but that we so use God's greater blessings, as that we be fitted by them to do him better service. When we are about to do the works of mercy, we must take heed of pride and affectation of human praises, or that we have in them any

opinion of meriting thereby anything at God's hands. When we are to pray, or hear the Word, or to perform any other religious duty of God's service, knowing that in them also Satan layeth his snares, and spareth for no pains to make these exercises unprofitable, and even turn them into sin; let us observe our watch when we go about them, that we may be well prepared, and perform them with all reverence and attention, faith and fervency of spirit, carefully looking to our minds and hearts, that they be not hindered in these duties with worldly distractions, and wandering thoughts, dullness, drowsiness, and carnal weariness. In a word, there is nothing wherein this watch is not to be kept, seeing in all things, through Satan's wiles, and the deceitfulness of our own hearts, we are endangered unto sin; either sailing in the matter of our actions, or in our manner of doing them.

Sect. 6 - That we must watch over all the powers and parts of our souls and bodies.

Neither must this watch be kept over some of our parts only, neglecting the rest, as over the body alone, but not the soul, or the soul, and not the body, but over the whole man, that in all our powers and parts, inward faculties and outward actions, we may please God by doing his will. But yet the more accurate and diligent watch must be over the soul, as being the more subtle and excellent part, according to that express charge of Almighty God; Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently: implying, that though this watch must be kept over the whole man, yet the soul, which is the better part, must be looked unto with greatest care and circumspection. Thus we must watch over all the special faculties of our souls, as over our reason and judgment, that they be not darkened with ignorance (for if the light be darkness, how great is that darkness?) nor corrupted and misled into errors and heresies. Over our memories, that they neither retain those vanities and sinful impression which should be razed and blotted out, nor forget those things which God hath entrusted to their keeping. Over our consciences, that they be

pure and clean, purged from dead works, and that they be not slack in doing their duty, in excusing and accusing, nor we negligent in giving heed to their evidence. Over our wills, that they go not before, but wait upon holy reason, choosing and embracing that which it commendeth, and refusing and rejecting that which it condemneth and disalloweth. But especially, we must keep this careful watch over our minds and imaginations, which naturally are evil, and that continually, being most disordered and licentious, and not to be kept within any compass, if we leave them unto their own liberty. And therefore if we would keep our souls in good plight and free from danger, we must not foolishly imagine that thought is free, or that we may suffer our phantasies and imaginations to take their full scope and pleasure, in roving and ranging which way they list; for if they thus get the bridle (as it were) between their teeth, they will run with us in a headlong course into vanity and sin; whereby displeasing God, we shall move him to give us over to our own imaginations, and to the temptations of Satan, suggesting into them horrible blasphemies. For when he findeth them (Dinah-like) wandering abroad, and from under the guard of God's protection, he defloureth and defileth them with hellish pollution, and turneth the pleasure of their liberty into horror and grief. Moreover, by giving liberty to our thoughts and imaginations to range whither they list, and not accustoming to keep them in any compass, and within the bounds of God's fear, we shall not be able, when we most desire it, to bring them into any order, but they will be ready to disturb and distract us in our best duties. For like runaway servants, they will be to seek when we most need them, and be ranging about worldly vanities, when we would have them wholly exercised in religious duties. Or if with much pains we do bring them home, and bind them to their task, being inured to liberty, and delighting themselves in roving abroad, they will, to recover their lost pleasure, break all their bonds, run away from us, and be taken up with worldly cogitations, so as we shall not be able to hear the Word, or pray, or meditate, or perform any other religious duties, without being distracted and interrupted in them with these earthly thoughts and wandering imaginations. From which if we would be free, our best course is to watch over our

cogitations and phantasies at other times, and to keep them under command, that they may be exercised about things profitable. For if we usually give them liberty to range whither they list, custom will cause an habit, and this liberty will grow to licentiousness, so as we shall reduce them into no order, nor make them fit for any good employment. Neither is it enough, that we restrain our thoughts from roving after worldly vanities, but we must also have them taken up and exercised in spiritual, heavenly, or at least civil and moral Meditations about the affairs of our honest callings; for if they be not busied about these, Satan will thrust in the other, and finding them empty of any good thing, he will easily replenish them with those that are evil.

Sect. 7 - That we must chiefly watch over our hearts.

But above all other our internal parts, we must keep our watch with greatest care over our hearts, according to the Wisemans counsel; Above all keeping, or with all diligence keep thy heart, for out of it are the issues of life: and the admonition of the Apostle; Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. For the heart is the treasury either of all good or evil, and out of it the tongue speaketh, and the hand worketh. It is the fountain of all our words and actions, and if it be corrupt, it will defile them too; but if it be cleansed and purified by faith, it will also purify the streams which flow from it. It is a vessel apt to receive all liquors good or evil, and therefore our care must be to replenish it with the best, and then to cover and keep it close, that nothing be spilled and lost, and lest it receive soil, or have any evil thing infused into it; for as the Wiseman observed, dead Flies taint the whole pot of precious ointment. It must be kept carefully as an enclosed Garden and Vineyard, that all annoyances being kept out with the fence, it may bring forth good fruits and ripe Grapes pleasing to God's taste; and not suffered to lie open as a high-way, where all things are trampled under-foot or stolen away, and nothing

suffered to thrive which is profitable for use. Now by heart, here I chiefly understand all the affections and desires, both concupiscible and irascible, all the passions of love, hatred, hope, despair, joy, sorrow, anger, and fear. And by keeping of them, their holding in subjection unto reason, itself being first made subject to the Word and will of God, and the right employing of them about their fit and proper objects, only loving that which is good, and hating that which is evil, rejoicing in the testimonies of God's love, and sorrowing for sin, because he is displeased with it, hoping in God's mercies, and despairing in our own strength, fearing God, in respect of his mercies and judgments, and being angry with that only wherewith he is offended and dishonored. And if we thus keep our hearts in tune and order, they will make sweet music in God's hearing; but if the affections and passions rebel against reason, and fall at variance one with another, we can expect nothing but jarring discords and tumultuous confusion. If we keep them locked up (as sometime Aeolus the winds) under the command of reason, our hearts and minds will be calm and quiet; but set open the gates, and leave them to their liberty, and nothing will follow, but storms, tempests, and shipwreck of our souls upon the rocks of sin. Blow away these clouds and foggy mists, and we shall in our little world have a clear sky, but let them over-cast and overcloud reason, which is the Sun in our firmament, and what can follow but darkness and disorder, stumbling and falling at every stone of offense? But especially we must watch over our hearts, that we may keep out carnal concupiscence from entering, and that we may withstand and shut the door of our hearts against the first motions and inclinations unto sin; even as we would keep out of our houses in the plague time, infectious air; or in the time of war, our mighty and malicious enemies from entering into our City or Country. Or if they be entered at unawares, we must repel them presently, at their first appearing upon our Coast, and give them no time to fortify and make themselves strong; we must crush this Cockatrice in the shell, and when they are young, dash this Babylonish brood against the stones.

Sect. 8 - That we must chiefly cleanse and keep our hearts from those corruptions which are most dangerous.

Now as we must observe a careful watch in keeping out, or cleansing our hearts from all sin and corruption, so above all, that they do not nourish in them such as are most dangerous to our souls health. As first and principally we must beware of those sins and vices, unto which, through our natural corruption we are most inclined, the which we shall discern by our often falling into them, by our loathness to leave them, and after we have resolved to part with them, and have already broken from them by unfeigned repentance, by our hanging after them in our carnal love, which maketh us, after we are forced to leave them for the safety of our souls, to look back unto them (like Lots wife towards Sodom) with a desire to return, were we not beaten from them with the fear of God's Judgments. By which signs, when we have discovered them, we must with greatest care watch over our hearts, that we be not again overtaken of them; first, because we have greatest cause to hate and abhor them, seeing by them we have most dishonored and displeased God. Secondly, because they have most often wounded our consciences, and given us the greatest foils. Thirdly, because they have most disturbed our inward peace, and deprived our hearts of spiritual joy in the assurance of God's love. Fourthly, because we are still most prone to fall into them, by reason that our corrupt natures are so much inclined towards them; and our carnal love doting upon them, are ready upon all occasions to renew their league and give them entertainment. And therefore as with greatest care and vigilance, we arm ourselves against such enemies, as have a strong party in our own City, and many secret Traitors, which are always ready to open the gates and let them in; so must we keep the narrowest watch, and bend our chiefest force against such sins as our flesh and carnal lusts do most affect, and are in greatest league and liking with them, seeing these secret Traitors are still in readiness to give them entertainment, and betray our souls unto them, if we do but a little intermit our spiritual watch. Secondly, we must with singular circumspection take heed of those vices and sins, which do most

ordinarily wait upon our special callings, seeing by reason that we are daily conversant in them, they do make against our souls most often and fierce assaults; and the rather, because by our many foils and falls they become customable, and harden our hearts in them, our often sinning searing the conscience, and taking away the sense of sin. And thus Magistrates must watch over themselves, that they do not pervert judgment, by taking bribes and rewards, and that they have no respect of persons, nor for fear or favor do any injustice. Thus Lawyers must take special heed, that they do not for their fees blind the eyes of the Judge by their false and corrupt pleading, painting over a foul cause with fair glosses, and that they do not protract suites, that they may grow rich out of their Clients poverty. And Physicians, that they do not deal unfaithfully with their patients, and delay the cure for their own advantage. And Divines, that they do not for worldly lucre become non-residents, starving their people's souls, to fill their own purses, and purchase fields with the price of blood: And that they be not slothful and negligent in feeding their souls that are committed to their charge, following Peters counsel to Christ; Master, spare thyself. And Tradesmen, that they do not use deceit in buying and selling, nor tell untruths, to put off their wares at a higher rate. And finally, thus must Artificers watch over themselves, that they do not their work deceitfully, only for sale, and unserviceable for use. Unto which special circumspection, in respect of our callings and the sins incident unto them, the Scriptures exhort. Thus John the Baptist persuaded the Publican's, whose calling was to live by toles and customs, to take heed of exacting more than their due; and the Soldiers, that they should beware of offering violence unto any man, but be content with their own wages. And our Savior having to deal with rich landed men, willeth them to take heed of covetousness. And the Apostles Paul and Peter, speaking unto Ministers and Pastors, exhort them to take heed to their flocks committed unto their charge, that they did feed them with the bread of life, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Finally, we must watch over our hearts, that they be not corrupted and drawn away from God with the sins of the times and Country in which we live, both because we are apt to follow a

multitude in doing evil, and are easily misled by bad examples, our corruption, like tinder, receiving and nourishing these hellish sparks; and being fallen into these sins, we are apt to continue in them without feeling or remorse, the multitude of offenders taking away the sense of sin. And therefore, as in infectious times and places we are not willing (unless we be fools) to have the plague for company; but the more the contagion is spread, the more we increase our care that we do not come into places infected, or if we be constrained through the necessity of our calling to live in them, yet we take heed that we do not consort with those that are visited, further then necessity and charity requireth, and carefully and continually use our best preservatives to keep out the infection, or if we be tainted, the best Antidotes and Cordials to expel the poison with all speed, before it have seized upon the heart: so must we use the like or greater care, when we live in places and times infected with special and heinous sins, that we shun those that are tainted with them, or use our best preservatives to preserve us from their infection; or if we be touched in the common contagion, that we do not nourish the poison in our hearts by carnal love, but expel it with what speed we can, by rising again in unfeigned repentance; seeing the danger here as far exceedeth the other, as the soul the body; the evils of sin, the evils of sickness; or death which is endless and everlasting, that which is corporal and momentary. And thus we are to watch over our souls, hearts and internal faculties. The like watch we must keep over our all outward parts, and first over all our senses, the which are the gates of our souls, by which all things enter, nothing almost being in the understanding, heart, and memory, which hath not found admittance by the senses. And therefore as those who desire to preserve the city in safety when it is besieged, do keep most diligent watch about the gates, suffering none to pass in or out, but only known friends, without due examination whether their coming be for good or ill: so being besieged on all sides by our spiritual enemies, we must keep a straight watch over our senses, which are the usual passage by which they send their forces to surprise us, admitting nothing to enter, without due trial taken, whether it be a friend or foe to our salvation: for as long as we thus watch the gates, and keep

them fast locked and barred against all evils, the City of our souls, and Castle of our hearts, can never be sacked and spoiled by all the might and malice of our spiritual enemies. Now this watch over our senses doth chiefly consist in two things. First, in restraining them of their liberty, and not suffering them to range and rove at pleasure, and whither they list, nor to satisfy themselves, even unto satiety, with sensual delights, and full fruition of their several objects; but oftentimes stopping them in their course and full curvetting, let us call them to account, whether the things which they are exercised about, are as profitable to our souls, as pleasant to our senses; or contrariwise, if they do not, like sweet drinks, convey into our souls some deadly poison, and bring more hurt and hindrance to the life of grace, then joy and comfort to the life of nature. Secondly, when we allow our senses to take their pleasures, we must carefully observe, that they delight themselves only in things lawful, both in respect of matter, measure, and manner, not suffering our eyes to gaze upon hurtful vanities, and lascivious and wanton objects, nor our ears to hear scurrilous jests, and such rotten speeches as will corrupt good manners, nor our taste to draw us on, by delighting in pleasant meats and drinks, to excess, gluttony and drunkenness; but as we may, to satisfy nature, and to refresh and comfort our hearts, give some liberty unto our senses to enjoy their delights; so our care must be, that we not only make choice of lawful objects, but also that they be exercised about them in a right manner; and so moderated in respect of the measure, that our hearts do not surfeit of them, nor be glued by carnal delight unto the earth, and so made unfit for spiritual exercises and heavenly meditations. But we must so use these sensual pleasures, as not abusing them, to cheer the spirit, and not pamper the flesh, as comforts in our pilgrimage, to make us to go on with more cheerfulness in our way, and not as impediments to hinder us in our journey, by fastening our hearts unto the vanities of the world.

CHAPTER X.

Of Christian watchfulness over the senses, our tongues and actions.

Sect. 1 - Of watching over our senses.

More especially, we must keep this careful watch over our eyes, which are the windows of our souls, through which they behold all earthly objects, not suffering them to rove about at pleasure, and to glut themselves with delightful sights, but restraining them as much as we can, that they do not behold that in this kind, which it is not lawful to covet: For of seeing comes loving; and of loving, lusting and desiring. We must keep them from beholding anything that may be unto us a ground of temptation, whereby we may be drawn into any sin, or which may be a distraction unto us in God's service, and hinder our well-performing of any Christian exercise, but let us, as near as we can, make choice of such sights as will more profit the soul, than please the sense. Thus Job watched over his eyes, and because he would be sure to keep them within compass, he leaveth them not to their own liberty, but keepeth them under covenant, that they should not in any wanton manner, so much as look upon a woman. And this is that which Solomon meaneth, where he saith, that the wise man's eyes are in his head, but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. Not that they do not all alike stand in their heads, but that a wise man leaveth not his eyes loose to their own liberty, but ruleth and governeth them with wisdom and discretion, not suffering them to behold unlawful objects, or those which are lawful, unlawfully, either in respect of manner, or measure; whereas a fool useth no restraint, but suffereth them to rove into all the corners of the world. Into which folly David fell, when he suffered his eyes to gaze their fill upon the beauty of another man's wife, this folly drawing him on to commit a greater folly in Israel; and therefore having lamentable experience of his own frailty, he keepeth afterwards over them a surer watch; which yet not being sure enough, he desireth the Lord to watch over him, and to turn away his

eyes, lest he should behold vanity. With like care we must watch over our ears, to keep them from hearing anything which is vain and sinful; tending to the corrupting of our souls, or the hindering of them in the growth of grace: As all filthy communication and speeches tending to God's dishonor, and our own, or our neighbors hurt, all insulting and unsavory talk, bitter taunts, and unchristian and spiteful jests, all whisperings, backbiting and slandering, and all such discourses as feed the flesh, and starve the spirit, wed us to the world, and wean us from God. For though like the Sirens songs they tickle and delight the ear, yet they wound the heart and conscience with sin, and bring us into such a spiritual frenzy, that we are ready to leap over-board into a sea of perdition. And therefore we must stop our ears against these bewitching sorcerers; and not for the pleasing of our carnal sense, hazard the destruction of our precious souls. The hearing is called the learned sense; and happy are they, who by their care and watchfulness provide for themselves profitable and good Masters, of whom they may learn saving wisdom; and not such as teach nothing else but vanity and sin. And the ears like conduit-pipes convey unto the soul, either the clear streams of the water of Life, or the filthy puddles of sin and death; and therefore let us be careful to bring them daily to be filled at God's Fountain, lest the devil abuse them, to drain the filth out of the polluted sinks and channels of wicked mouths. Thus we must watch over our taste, that we do not, to please the palate, use such excess in our diet, as will disable us to Christian duties; and that the end of our eating be chiefly the refreshing and comforting of our bodies, that they may be fit for God's service who hath fed them, and not the pampering of the flesh with sensual delight. For if we give way to our appetite, this short and brutish pleasure will bring upon us innumerable evils: As upon our bodies, sicknesses and short life; and upon our souls and bodies both, sloth and idleness, lumpish heaviness and unaptness to any good action, drowsy dullness, or vain mirth and futilous babbling, shortness of memory, and blockishness of understanding, wanton dalliance and inflammation of our hearts with unlawful lusts. And thus finally we must watch over our sense of touching, that we do not, to please it, enslave ourselves to effeminate daintiness,

thinking that we are quite undone, if we may not tumble at our ease upon our beds of down, and go (like those in Kings houses) in soft raiment; or (like Dives) be clothed in Purple and fine linen every day. But let us inure this sense to man-like hardness, that we may not think it strange and intolerable to lie hardly, and go barely, if Christ who suffered so much for us, do call us to suffer a little for the testimony of his truth. And much more must we restrain this sense from all unlawful objects; as unchaste kisses, lascivious embracement's, and wanton dalliances, which tend to the inflaming of our hearts with unclean lusts, and make our bodies, which are the Temples of the holy Ghost, polluted brothel-houses, and filthy styes for wicked spirits.

Sect. 2 - That we must watch over our tongues.

Secondly, we must keep a careful watch over our tongues, according to the example of the Prophet David; I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. For the well-ruling and ordering of our tongues is a matter of great moment, for the furthering or hindering of us in the course of a Christian conversation; according to that of Solomon, A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. If we use it well, it will be our glory, as being a notable instrument of glorifying God, whilst we speak to his praise, and those that honor him, he will honor; but if we abuse it unto sin, it will become our shame, seeing thereby we dishonor God who hath given it us, and all good things. If we order it wisely, and speak things profitable and worth the hearing, we shall edify our brethren: For the lips of the wise disperse knowledge; and a word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver; that is, pleasant and profitable, like works of gold curiously and artificially graven by a cunning workman; but if we vent nothing but filth and folly, bringing up (as it were) our excrements by a wrong way, we shall annoy our hearers, with our rotten and unsavory speeches, and by our evil words, corrupt their good means, as the Apostle speaketh.

If we speak wisely and to edification, we shall, in profiting others, have the comfort of it in our own hearts: For as Solomon speaketh, A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good is it, both to the speaker, and to the hearers? But when a man hath pleased himself, for the time, with scurrilous jests (the foam and froth of wit) it is his sin and shame, and leaveth nothing behind it but sorrow, and the tormenting sting of an evil conscience. If our discourse be religious and honest, and such as becometh Christian gravity, it is a good sign and comfortable evidence unto us, that we are just and upright in God's sight: For the mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. And, If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body: but if our talk be corrupt and unsavory, it is a sign of a rotten and wicked heart: for as our Savior telleth us, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. In a word; Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it, shall eat the fruit thereof: and as our Savior telleth us; By our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. In which regard it standeth us upon, to keep a narrow watch over our mouths, that we offend not in our speeches; and to resolve with David, that our tongues shall speak of righteousness all the day long; so speaking and doing, as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Sect. 3 - That this watch consisteth in the right ordering of them.

Now this watch over our tongues must tend to the right ordering of them, both in respect of silence, and of speech. For we must not only restrain our tongues from evil and corrupt communication; but also order them aright in speaking that which is good, taking care not alone to speak good things, but also in a good manner, when as they are seasonable and profitable in respect of circumstances, time and

place, the causes moving us, and the persons hearing us: not pouring out good speeches without discretion, but observing measure, gravity and modesty, not thinking it enough to speak that which is good, when some others are present that could speak better. And therefore, as we do not suffer pots and glasses of sweet waters, to have their full vent, but keep their mouths close stopped, to preserve their sweetness for such times wherein it may most seasonably be used; so though our hearts be full of sweetness, and (as the Psalmist speaketh) inditers of good matter; yet we must not vent it with open mouth, which will make it lose much of its sweetness, but let us keep it in, till we have got some seasonable time, when as we may hope to spend it to some good purpose. For which moderating of our tongues by seasonable silence, and avoiding of too much talking, the wise Solomon giveth us good caveats and counsel: In the multitude of words (saith he) there wanteth not sin, (seeing a man that speaketh much, venteth some evil, or commonly is tainted with pride and self-love in speaking that which is good) but he that refraineth his lips, is wise. And again, He that hath knowledge, spareth his words, (so that he hath but a show of knowledge that lavishly spendeth them) and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit, knowing when to speak, and when to keep silence. And even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips, is esteemed a man of understanding. In which regard Job wisheth earnestly that his friends would hold their peace, that it might be imputed unto them for wisdom, because they spoke many good things, yet not to the purpose, nor did prudently fit them to Job's person or state, which being so grievously afflicted and dejected, needed (if they would have spoken seasonably) cordials of comfort, and not bitter purges, or the distasteful infusion of gall and wormwood. And the Apostle James exhorteth us, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. To which purpose (as one observeth) God hath wisely appointed a double guard to keep in the tongue, the lips, and two row of teeth, that it might be restrained from breaking out by this double fence, and might be preserved from slipping, being seated by nature in such a moist and slippery place. And as we must keep this watch over our tongues in respect of keeping silence; so also in respect of speech; for

our tongues are not given us to this end chiefly, that we should restrain them and say nothing, but that they might be our glory, in glorifying God by setting forth his praise. And the Wise man telleth us, that as there is a time to keep silence, so also there is a time to speak. And here our first care must be, that according to the Psalmists counsel, we keep our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking guile. And as the Apostle admonisheth, that we suffer no corrupt communication to proceed out of our mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and that we use neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks. But especially, let us watch over our souls, and our tongues, that we do not (as it is the common custom of the most) abuse them to slanders and reproaches, backbiting, and sharp censuring of our neighbors; but taking all things, doubtfully spoken and done, in the best part, excusing that which is tolerable, commending that which is good, and extenuating faults of frailty and infirmity, let us approve ourselves to be truly charitable, by making our love to serve as a cover to hide a multitude of sins. Yea, so far should we be from wronging our neighbors, by being the authors of evil reports, that we should not lend our ears to others that spread them, but approve ourselves by this sign, to be Citizens of heaven, that we will not receive a reproach against our neighbors, nor so much as vouchsafe to take it up, though we found it by the highway side. For (as one saith) he is blessed that hath armed himself so against this vice, that no man dare detract from any before him. And in the next place we must watch over our tongues, that our speech may be always with grace, seasoned with the salt of wisdom and Christian prudence, which teacheth us to know how we may answer every man, and speak to their profit and edification. The which wise and religious ruling of our tongues, is a matter of great moment, and no less difficulty; For as the Apostle James telleth us, though the tongue be but a little member, yet it is a world of iniquity, and boasteth of great things. And as a little fire is sufficient to inflame great store of matter: so the tongue defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell; and such an unruly evil, full of

deadly poison, as no man can tame by sole strength of nature. And yet such is the necessity of the well-governing of it, that all our Religion is to no purpose without it. For if any man amongst us seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's Religion is vain. In which regard we must keep over it the straighter watch; as we use to curb and keep in a head-strong horse, with so much the sharper and stronger bit; and seeing no man can with his own circumspection rule it sufficiently, but that it will break from him at unawares, and the Lord only is sufficient to manage and direct it, according to that of Solomon, The preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord; therefore we must pray with David, that he will set a watch before our mouth, and keep the door of our lips; and that he will so open our lips, that our mouth may show forth his praise.

Sect. 4 - Of our watchfulness over our works and actions.

Lastly, we must set this diligent watch over our works and actions, that they may in all things be conformable to the Word and will of God, whilst we do that which he hath commanded, and leave undone that which he hath forbidden. Thus the Wise man exhorteth us, not to be rash and unadvised in our courses; but to ponder the path of our feet, and let all our ways be established, turning neither to the right hand, nor to the left, and removing our foot from evil. And this he maketh to be a note of a man truly wise: for whereas a silly man, being over-credulous, is rash and headlong in all his enterprises, A prudent man looketh well to his going: and whereas the fool rageth and is confident, a wise man feareth and departeth from evil. And because our ways are, through the malice of our spiritual enemies, on all sides beset with snares, wherewith, if we be not very circumspect, we shall easily be caught; therefore in this regard he saith, that he is blessed that feareth always, and seeing we daily tread upon slippery places, whilst we are managing our worldly affairs. Hereof it is, that the Apostle commending unto us this watchful care, willeth him who

thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Now this care and watchfulness respecting our actions, provideth, first, that we spend none of our precious time in sloth and idleness, (for by doing nothing, we shall quickly learn to do that which is ill) but that we be always exercised in some good employment, respecting God's glory, or our own, or our neighbors good, as I have showed at large before, and therefore here thus briefly pass it over. Secondly, that with all care and circumspection we keep ourselves from all sinful actions, and though through Satan's temptations, and our own corruption, we have conceived sin in the heart, yet let us there smother it, as in the womb, and not consummate and perfect it, and (as it were) by acting of it, bring it unto birth. Finally, we must watch over our works and actions, that we may not only shun evil, but also do that which is good, that thereby we may glorify God by the light of our godly lives, adorn our profession, edify our neighbors by our good example, and make our own calling and election sure. But of this also I have spoken before.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the ends at which we must aim in the Christian watch.

Sect. 1 - Of three special ends of our Christian watch.

And these are the things wherein our Christian watch chiefly consisteth, and about which it is exercised. The next point to be considered, is, the ends at which we must principally aim in it, the which are diverse. The first and chief is, that we may please God in all things, for which use, this watch is most profitable and necessary. For seeing naturally our ways are wholly corrupt, so as we can please him in nothing, it is not possible, without singular care and

circumspection, that we should so carry ourselves in our whole conversation, as that all our actions may be acceptable in his sight. Secondly, we must thus watch over ourselves, that we may daily more and more mortify our corruptions, especially those which bear greatest sway in us; and that we may avoid all manner of actual transgressions, and those, above all the rest, wherewith we have been most often overtaken, because Satan and our own corruption are most ready to use those weapons of iniquity to foil and overcome us, which they have found by experience most potent to prevail against us. Nor must we think any sin so small that we may neglect it, seeing the least is strong enough to make way for greater. Neither must we only watchfully avoid the sins themselves, but also all the occasions and means which may allure and draw us unto them. For where God hath forbidden any vice, there he also forbiddeth the occasions and means of it, which if we neglect and run willfully into temptations, it is just with God, when we thus tempt him, to withdraw his grace, and to leave us to the Tempter; and then what can follow but our shameful foils and falls? For who can carry fire in his bosom, and not be burnt? Who can hope to live unto old age, that maketh it his daily sport, to be dallying with the means and occasions of death? And therefore if we would preserve our souls from being defiled with the filthy strumpet of sin and vice, let us carefully shun her unchaste embracement's; yea (as Solomon speaketh) let us remove our way far from her, and come not near the door of her house. And if we would not walk in the ways of sin which lead to destruction; Let us not so much as once enter into the path of the wicked, nor go in the way of evil men, but avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. If we would not do the devils works of injustice, we must not so much as receive his wages, but shake our hands from holding of bribes. If we would not become evil and vain in our thoughts and actions, we must shut our eyes from seeing evil, and turn them away from beholding vanity. Thirdly, we must keep this watch, not only that we may avoid all sin; but also that we may perform all Christian and holy duties with all diligence and constancy, not contenting ourselves to do some, and neglect others, or to be earnest in them sometimes, and soon after careless and slothful; but observing all, and in all

seasons. Yea, this watch must extend itself, not only to the matter of Christian duties, but also to the manner; as that they be done in love and obedience to God, that we may thereby glorify him in faith and with a good conscience, with alacrity and cheerfulness, in sincerity and truth, without all hypocrisy, dullness, and weariness; And finally, that we do them prudently and seasonably, with due respect to all circumstances of persons, time, and place. In all which respects, if we do not carefully keep the Christian watch, it is not possible but that we shall continually fail, both in the matter and manner of our duties: seeing we are naturally averse and backward unto them, sluggish and slothful, rash and indiscreet in doing of them; and therefore if we do not carefully watch over our hearts, we shall upon every slight occasion neglect them altogether, or grow cold and careless, slack and remiss, drowsy and soon weary in performing them. Whereas, if keeping this watch, we stir up and re-enliven God's graces in us, when they are ready to languish and die, and (with the Ostridge) hasten our speed, by adding unto our wings of faith and love, the spurs of God's fear, we shall, without thinking of weariness, run much more swiftly and surely in the ways of God's Commandments.

Sect. 2 - That we must watch over ourselves, that we be not circumvented by our spiritual enemies.

Finally, in this our watch we must carefully take heed, that whilst we set ourselves to perform the duties of a godly life, we be not hindered by the temptations of our spiritual enemies, or at least so disturbed and disabled, that not doing them in that manner as we ought, we lose all the fruit of our labors. In which respect, our Savior exhorteth his Apostles to join watching with their prayer, that they might not fall into temptation, not only understanding thereby a bodily watchfulness opposed to natural sleep, but also the spiritual watching opposed to carnal security, the sleep of the soul, with both which they were at that time overtaken. For howsoever the

consideration of the multitude, might, and malice of our spiritual enemies, is a motive sufficient to make us stand watchfully upon our guard, seeing they assault us on all sides with their engines of battery, lay secret ambushments in every corner, and fill all places so full of their nets and snares, that without singular circumspection we cannot avoid them: yet seeing they never bend their malice and might so furiously against us, as when they see us exercised about Christian duties, that they may either discourage us, or make them unprofitable; who seeth not that we had here need to keep a double watch? Like wicked thieves, often fleshed with blood and cruelty, they are always ready to do us a mischief, and to beat us even to the death when they find nothing about us; but then they double their watch and diligence, in surprising us by the way, when as we are going about the service of our heavenly Master, and carry with us the rich treasures of his graces; in which regard, we must be no less vigilant for our own safety, then they for our destruction; for our perseverance in the ways of godliness, and preserving of our spiritual riches, then they to stop us in our course, and to spoil us of all our wealth. The devil, like a roaring Lyon, goeth always about, seeking to devour us, and therefore it behooveth us continually to watch and to be sober; but then he is most watchful in sowing his tares, when he seeth that our heavenly Husbandman hath sown his good seed and wheat of saving graces in our hearts. The world always maligneth those whom Christ hath chosen out of it; but in nothing doth it show greater malice against them, then when they most seriously set themselves to do God faithful service, as we see in the examples of all ages. The flesh is always ready to betray us into the hands of them both; but never doth it more spitefully play its prizes, then when it seeth us exercised in religious duties; carrying away our hearts with a thousand distractions, and like a massy and heavy weight pressing us down, maketh us lumpish and heavy, unwieldy and soon weary in our Christian race. In which regard, we must at all times watch to defeat their malice, but we must double and triple it, against this triple opposition of the devil, the world, and our own flesh, when we intend to perform any Christian duties.

Sect. 3 - That we must keep this watch in all places, and at all times.

In all which respects, we are to keep a careful watch over ourselves in all places, when we are at home, and when we are abroad; when we are alone, and when we are in company; in the Church and open streets, and in our own houses and private Closets; seeing there is no place free from danger, by reason of those inward corruptions and secret traitors, which we carry everywhere about us, and those outward enemies, the devil and the world, which are ready in all places to set upon us. So likewise there is no time exempted from this watch, neither youth nor old age, day nor night, but it must be kept continually, according to that; Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life. For the causes of it are continual, and therefore the watch must not be intermitted. At all times we must labor to please God, and not by fits, and obedience at all times must be yielded to him. At all times sin must be shunned, unto which we are prone by nature, and all virtues and Christian duties to be embraced and practiced, when any good occasion is offered, unto which naturally we are backward and averse. No time is exempted from the Christian warfare, nor secure and safe from the assaults of our spiritual enemies. And therefore we must continually stand upon our guard and keep our watch, that we be at no time unfit for any of these purposes, lest being surprised upon a sudden, we be easily vanquished by our spiritual enemies. Besides, through the intermission of our watch, we do not only lose the present time, which should be spent in the service of God, but also endanger ourselves to lose much more, before we can again set our watch in good order. For our hearts having broke the bounds of God's fear, will not without much labor be restrained of their licentious liberty; our devotions being once cooled, will not without much fire and fuel recover their lost heat. And sooner might we with well-ordered hearts, have performed the duties of God's service which we intend, then bring them in frame and rightly prepare them,

when through neglect of this watch they are out of tune. Finally, we must keep this watch in all estates and conditions, in the time of health as well as in sickness, as well when we are rich, that our wealth do not wedge and fasten our hearts upon the world and earthly things; as in our poverty, that we use no unlawful means to become rich. In our prosperity, that we forget not God, nor love his gifts better than the giver; and in our affliction, that we murmur not through impatency, but draw nearer unto God when he correcteth us.

Sect. 4 - That we must watch over our brethren.

Neither is it enough that we thus watch over ourselves, but we must also with like care and circumspection watch over our brethren; seeing the Lord hath not committed us to our own single watch, but hath enjoined us to be mutual observers and keepers one of another; not curiously to pry out one another's faults, to censure and aggravate them, but charitably to take notice of them, that we may help to amend them. Thus the Apostle enjoineth us, to consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works, and that we should exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of us should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For this care and watchfulness being an inseparable effect and fruit of Christian charity, extendeth itself, not only to our own persons (for this were nothing but self-love) but as far as it stretcheth, that is, to all our neighbors. Thus David took notice, not only of his own sins, to mourn for them, but saith that rivers of waters did run down his eyes, because other men did not keep God's Law. Yea, this his care extended to his enemies; My zeal (saith he) hath consumed me, because mine enemies have not kept thy Word. But though our care must extend to all, yet we must keep this watch in a special manner over those who are committed to our special charge; as the Housholder over his family, and the Pastor over his flock, according to that of the Apostle, Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock,

over the which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers, &c. Which whoso neglecteth, and taketh care only for himself, he is worse than an Infidel, and plainly discovers that he is of Cain's speech and spirit, thinking it enough to look to himself, and scorning to be his brothers keeper.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the reasons whereby we may be persuaded to keep this Christian watch.

Sect. 1 - That this watch is necessary, because God requireth it.

The next point to be considered, is the means whereby we may both be stirred up, and also enabled to keep this Christian watch, which are partly reasons that may move us to undertake it, and partly helps enabling us to perform it. The reasons which may persuade us unto this watchfulness, are diverse; all which may be reduced unto two heads. 1. Because it is most necessary. 2. Because it is exceeding profitable. The necessity of it appeareth diverse ways. First, because God hath expressly required it; Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, &c. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves, like unto them that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, ye may open unto him immediately. So Joshua exhorteth the people, to take diligent heed to do the Commandment and the Law, to love the Lord their God, and to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him, and serve him with all their heart, and with all their soul. And our Savior Christ exhorteth all to watch and pray, because we do not know when the time of his coming should be. And stirreth up the Church of Sardis to be watchful, and to strengthen the things

which did remain and were ready to die. The which his Commandment, he powerfully and effectually presseth by diverse parables; as of the goodman of the house, who carefully watcheth the coming of the thief, that he may not rob and spoil him. Of the wise and faithful servant, who watcheth for the coming of his Lord, that he may find him employed in his business, who being found faithful, is richly rewarded for his care and diligence. And of the evil servant, who neglecting this watch, is fearfully punished. And of the ten Virgins, whereof five were wise, and five foolish; the wise watching diligently for the coming of the Bridegroom, and being found prepared, were received with him into the bridal Chamber of joy and happiness; the foolish, through their careless negligence, being taken at unawares and unprovided, were excluded from his glorious presence for evermore. So that no duty is more straightly enjoined and earnestly enforced then the spiritual watch, to the end we might observe it with the greater care and diligence, or if we neglect it, having had so many and effectual warnings, we might be left without excuse.

Sect. 2 - Other reasons showing the necessity of keeping this watch.

The second reason to enforce the necessity of this watch, is taken from our estate and condition here on earth. First, because through our corruption we are exceeding weak, and full of frailty and infirmity, by reason whereof we are prone unto sin, and easily overcome with the temptations of our spiritual enemies, if we neglect the keeping of this watch, and be taken unprovided. The which reason our Savior useth to enforce the necessity of watching and praying. Watch and pray (saith he) lest ye fall into temptation: The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. So the Apostle in this regard, willeth him that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall; and exhorteth us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. And the Wiseman pronounceth him blessed, who in the sight and sense of his own frailty and infirmity, feareth always. For

as it is necessary for those who have weak and sickly bodies, to observe a strict diet; and for those Citizens, who being besieged by mighty and malicious enemies, and have many breaches in their walls, to be very diligent to make them up again, and in the meantime, to keep a careful and strong watch over those weak places, because their enemies are ready to take all advantages, and to give the fiercest assaults where they are likeliest to have the speediest entrance and least resistance: So we upon the same grounds, must think it necessary to double our watch, because our souls are sickly, and full of wants and weaknesses, and many breaches are made in the chiefest Bulwarks of our own strength, by the cruel and continual assaults of our spiritual enemies. Secondly, our care is necessary in keeping this watch, because naturally we are drowsy and sleepy, like those in a Lethargy, who need to have some continually standing by, and to keep them awake, by pricking and pinching them, that they may not fall into the sleep of death. Yea, and after that we are regenerate, and are espoused unto Christ, we are apt with the five wise Virgins, to nod often, and take a nap, when as we should wait for the coming of our Bridegroom. And if he did not awake us daily, by his Spirit knocking at the door of our hearts, and his gracious call sounding in his Word, saying unto us, Awake, thou that sleepest: and Open unto me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, we would quickly fall into our old Lethargy of carnal security. In respect of which drowsiness of nature, by reason of the relics of sin remaining in us, we are unfit to keep the spiritual watch, unless we continually rouse up ourselves, and shake off this sloth of carnal security. And therefore as it is said of the Nightingale, that being to delight herself with her night songs, and fearing lest falling asleep, she should endanger herself to birds of prey, doth set her breast against a thorn, to keep her waking; so we, being to sing the songs of Zion, and to spend our time continually in holy duties, must use all good means to keep us waking, because we are every hand-while apt through our sluggishness, to take a nap, and thereby to endanger our souls to those ravenous and hellish fowls, who take their chief delight in the works of darkness, and are ready to seize upon us, if they find us sleeping. Thirdly, this watch is necessary, in regard of the wickedness

and deceitfulness of our own hearts, which are ready continually to withdraw themselves from God, to start aside like a deceitful bow, when we aim at any good duty, and so make us to miss the mark; and to break from us when we set ourselves to perform any religious exercises, distracting and pulling our minds from them, that they may wander about in worldly cogitations. And therefore seeing it is such a slippery Eel, we must take the surer hold of it, seeing it is such a false and flitting servant, which hath often deceived us, accompanying us into the Church, and even unto our Pews, and then secretly slipping from us, that they may spend the time allotted to God's service, in ranging abroad about worldly vanities; there is no way but to set it before us in God's presence, and to keep it continually under the straight watch of a vigilant eye, that it may not slip away at unawares, as it hath done often in former times. And this the Lord requireth as necessary in this case; Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside; that is, lest you heart deceive your heart, your corrupt and deceitful heart, prevailing against your heart which is sanctified and regenerate; for neither can the world, nor the devil draw us away from God, till our sinful flesh and corrupt nature betray us into their hands. And of this also the Apostle giveth us warning; Take heed (saith he) brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Fourthly, this watch is necessary, because without it we are apt to relapse into our former condition of the sleep of sin. For we are in this life like men not thoroughly awaked, but between sleeping and waking, so as we may say with the Spouse, I sleep, but my heart waketh: and if we be not continually using all good means to keep us waking, we will but open our eyes and shut them again, and (as it were) but turn us to the other side, and so return to our former sleep. We are like men but newly recovered out of dangerous diseases, which have great need to look unto themselves, seeing upon every slight cause, the least taking of cold, or distemper through ill diet, they are ready to relapse into their former sickness. We are like weaklings, that can but hardly go, and yet must needs travel in slippery places, or (as it were) aloft upon a narrow beam, where we often slip, and are sure to catch grievous falls, unless we carefully

watch over ourselves, and look diligently to our footing; and being fallen, are sure to perish, unless we rise up again, and recover ourselves by unfeigned repentance; according to that of our Savior; Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, or else I will come against thee quickly, &c. The which relapses and falls be most dangerous unto our spiritual life, because they make our estate worse than it was before our conversion, when as we were sick in sin and death, seeing we are but like men who in their departure are dazed (as they say) and wakened by the out-cries of the standers by, who revive not to live, but to die again, and so to endure the pains of a continued sickness and double death; in which respect our Savior Christ saith, that the end of such is worse than their beginning. And the Apostle Peter affirmeth, that it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn out of it, like the dog to his vomit, or the washed sow to her wallowing in the mire. Lastly, in regard of ourselves this watch is necessary, because without it we can have no assurance that we are spiritually enlightened and awakened out of the sleep of death. For this is the difference which the Apostle maketh between the faithful and the unbeliever, that these still lie sleeping and snorting in the dark night of ignorance and error, doing in the dark, the works of darkness, and wholly neglecting the Christian Watch; but the other being children of the light, and of the day, do not sleep as do others, but watch and are sober; and being of the day, do the works of the day, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. And as there are great and manifold causes respecting ourselves, which make this watch necessary; so also in respect of the enemies of our salvation, who being powerful and political, far mightier than we, and yet many to one, do labor by all means to work our destruction. The which argument alone should keep us waking, (for when should we watch, if not in the time of our Christian warfare, when as we are beset on all sides with such dangerous and malicious enemies?) especially if we consider that the chief commander of all these forces, Satan, that roaring and ravening Lion, never slumbereth nor sleepeth, but goeth continually about, and watcheth all opportunities of working our

destruction. And therefore if they be so watchful that they may work our ruin, by casting us into the deep sleep and spiritual lethargy of sin and death, how vigilant and careful should we be, by preventing their malice, to escape this imminent and desperate danger?

Sect. 3 - That this watch is most profitable, because it helpeth us much to the leading of a godly life.

The reasons which may induce us to keep this watch respecting our profit, are also diverse. First, because it helpeth us much to the leading of a godly life, in which we thrive and profit, or decline and go backward, as we either keep and observe, or intermit and neglect this Christian watch. For when we watch over ourselves, God likewise watcheth over us, and by the assistance of his holy Spirit, enableth us to stand against all temptations, and to go forward in our Christian course: but when through our slackness and negligence, we run willfully into temptations, he leaveth us to be foiled of them, that we may learn the next time to take better heed. More especially, the Lord will enlighten the eyes of our minds, that we may discern the right way in which we should walk; according to that of the Apostle, Awake, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. And seeing the way, we shall have our faith so strengthened, and our courage and resolution so confirmed and increased, that we shall manfully proceed in it, notwithstanding all opposition; whereof it is that the Apostle conjoineth and linketh all these together as inseparable companions; Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quite yourselves like men, be strong. For as those who for want of heed and circumspection fall into secret ambushments at unawares, are soon discomfited, and by running away, leave to their enemies an easy victory; whereas those who by their watchfulness discover them, are no whit daunted in their courage, because they can easily avoid them; or defeating the stratagem of their enemies, can circumvent and catch them in their own snare: so is it also in the Christian warfare; wherein the discovery of our enemies policies, by

our careful watch, is a principal means of preventing them, the finding out of their secret ambushments, more than half the way unto assured victory, and the very sight of their nets lying near their stales, and of their deadly hooks of sin lying hid under the baits of worldly profits and pleasures, are sufficient warnings to make us shun and escape them, if we have any care of the salvation of our souls. So that there is no readier and surer way to avoid all manner of sin, the bane and poison of our souls, then by our watch to espy the danger when it is offered unto us in these golden cups; no means more forcible to make us fly the hellish embracement's of this painted strumpet, then by our diligent watch and circumspection, to pull off the deceiving vizard of momentary gain and delight, and to behold her in her natural deformity and ugly filthiness. Whereas contrariwise, the neglect of keeping this careful watch, is the ready way to all wickedness; the mind being let loose to vain and sinful thoughts, the heart to sinful concupiscence and unlawful lusts, the tongue to light, wanton and wicked words, the hands to act the works of darkness, and the whole man exposed to the dangerous assaults and temptations of our spiritual enemies, wherewith being vanquished, we are easily led captive into all sin. Of which we have lamentable experience in Noah, Lot, David, Peter, and many others, who whilst they carefully kept the spiritual watch, triumphed over the enemies of their salvation, and went on courageously in the ways of godliness; but when they did but for a little while intermit and neglect it, received dangerous and shameful foils. But most evidently doth this appear in the example of our first parents, who so long as they observed this watch, continued constant in their integrity; but remitting their care and circumspection, and letting loose their ears to hear the voice of the Tempter, their hearts to admit, through fond credulity, his false suggestions, their eyes to gaze on the forbidden fruit, their hands to touch, and their mouths to taste it, they were soon overcome, and caught both themselves and for all their posterity, a fearful fall. And therefore if they fell in the state of innocence by intermitting this watch, who can neglect it in the state of corruption and imperfection, and yet hope to stand? Finally, it conduceth and furthereth us much unto a godly life, as it maketh us

fit and ready for the well-performing of all Christian duties. For when all our parts are hereby kept in a good and constant order, they are always prepared for all good employments; and if we take care that our Instruments be well stringed and kept in tune, no more remaineth but to touch them with a skillful hand, and there will be a melodious harmony between the heart, tongue, and outward actions. And therefore David demanding how a young man might order his steps, and cleanse his ways, that they might be pure and upright in the sight of God? Doth thus resolve the question, that it is to be done by taking heed thereto according to God's Word.

Sect. 4 - That by this watch we are made constant in the course of Christianity.

Secondly, this watch is exceeding profitable, not only as it preserveth us from all sinful ways, and fitteth us to walk in the ways of godliness, but also as it enableth us to be constant in this course, and to persevere in it even to the end. Seeing hereby we are strengthened against all discouragements, avoid or leap over all impediments, that like stumbling blocks are cast into our way, and are prepared and armed against all the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and all other oppositions which might encounter us in our Christian course. Thirdly, it is a notable means of Christian security, so as keeping this watch, we may with David, grow so confident, that though we should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet we will fear no evil, because God also watcheth over them, who thus watch over themselves, so as having once set their watch, they may lay them down securely and take their rest, because the Lord maketh them to dwell in safety. So also upon the same grounds it causeth unto us inward peace, even peace with God, and the peace of a good conscience, when as by help of this watch we carry ourselves so in all things, as that we and our works are accepted of him, and pleasing in his sight. The which peace cannot be impeached with the malice and might of all our enemies; for if God be with us, who can be against

us? If he speak peace unto our consciences, though all the world should proclaim war, it needs not to dismay us, for though thousands fall on one side, and ten thousand on the other, it shall not hurt us or disturb our peace; for either the Lord will be a wall of defense, and tower of strength to preserve us from all danger, and to make us shot-free even at the Canons mouth; or else we shall be, with Josiah, taken away in peace, although we fall by the hands of our enemies. From which security and peace, ariseth spiritual joy, unspeakable and glorious, when as we are sure that nothing can hurt us, or hinder our salvation, but all things, even afflictions themselves, shall work together for the best. Now what is this, but to have a heaven upon earth, when as in this momentary life those eternal joys are begun in us? For as the Apostle telleth us, The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. Fourthly, by this Christian watch we are fitted to bear all estates, so as the great sails of prosperity shall not over-set us, whilst we take heed unto our hearts, that they be not withdrawn from God, and fastened upon worldly things; nor be forced by the storms of afflictions, to strike sails, and desist in our course towards our heavenly Country, much less to dash against the rocks of despair, being assured that they are the signs of our adoption, evidences of God's love, and that by these manifold tribulations we shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Fifthly, by this watch we are made ready for the coming of Christ unto Judgment, and prepared to enter into the joy of our Master, as we see in the parable of the faithful servant, and the wise Virgins; so as when the time approacheth, the terrors of it need not to daunt us, but rather expecting him with his reward in his hand, we may with confidence and joy hold up our heads, because our full Redemption draweth near. Finally, by this watchfulness we are assured of blessedness; seeing our Savior hath pronounced such as thus watch for his coming, blessed in so doing. Blessed (saith he) are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them, and make them owners of all his goods. In which regard he calleth them Blessed, blessed, and the third time blessed, to show that they are thrice blessed, and

even perfected and consummate in blessedness which keep constantly the spiritual watch, and are thereby always in readiness and prepared for his coming.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the means whereby we may be enabled to keep the Christian watch.

Sect. 1 - The first means is temperance and sobriety, and the second, the fear of God.

The last thing to be considered in this spiritual watch, is the means whereby we may be enabled to keep it; the which I will but briefly touch, because they are so fully handled in the fore-named Treatise. The first means are sobriety and temperance, the which as they much further us in the natural watch, so are they singular helps to enable us unto the spiritual. Whereof it is that in the Scriptures they are joined and enjoined together, as mutual causes one of another. Be sober and watch. We are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. And our Savior Christ persuading us to this spiritual watch, and arming us against the deep security of the latter days, giveth us in charge, as a notable means to cause the one, and prevent the other, that we take heed unto ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that Day come upon us at unawares. Which means of watchfulness when Noah and Lot neglected, they soon fell into a dangerous sleep of sin. Neither must this temperance and sobriety extend only to meats and drinks, seeing we may be drunk with the intoxicating cups of pleasures and carnal delights, and surfeit upon worldly prosperity

and earthly things, when we do too hungerly affect them in our desires, and set our hearts immoderately upon them; but they must reach also (as I showed before, when I spake of sobriety) to the right ordering of our minds in the use of all temporary blessings, in a due manner and measure, so as they may be helps and not hindrances unto us in all the duties of a godly life; which if we neglect, we may surfeit and be spiritually drunk, though we be never so temperate in the use of meats and drinks. The second means to make us watchful is, to nourish in our hearts the true fear of God, not a servile fear, which will make every slave watchful over his ways, for fear of the whip; but a filial and childlike fear, which will cause us to keep over ourselves, in all things, a diligent watch, that we may do nothing displeasing in his sight, who so loveth us, and whom we so love; and contrariwise, that we may so carry ourselves in the performing of all good duties, as that God may be well pleased in us, and we in him; he delighting to do us good, and we delighting to praise his goodness. Of which filial fear the Psalmist speaketh; There is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared. And this is the fear which the Lord promiseth in the covenant of grace, that he will put it into the hearts of his children and servants, that they may not depart from him. This is it which (as the Wise man telleth us) causeth men to depart from evil; as we see in the example of Job, who is said to be a man, fearing God, and eschewing evil. And therefore David desiring to restrain men from sin, putteth (as it were) into their mouths the bridle of God's fear; Stand in awe (saith he) and sin not. And contrariwise, if this fear be not in us, and our hearts be taken up with carnal security, we presently neglect to keep any watch, (like a City which feareth not the approach of any enemies) and rush, without care, into all wickedness. And this the old Serpent knew well, who having no hope to prevail against our first Parents, so long as being afraid of God's threatening, they kept their watch; he persuaded them first to cast out this fear by unbelief, whereby becoming secure, they were easily drawn into transgression. This made Abraham think that the Egyptians were ready for all wickedness, because the fear of God was not in the Land. And the Psalmist telleth us, that the transgression of the wicked persuaded him to conclude, that there was no fear of God

before their eyes. And finally, the Apostle having repeated a whole bead roll of many sins, which had defiled every several part of wicked men, maketh the same conclusion with the Psalmist, that because they were destitute of God's fear, this was the cause which made way for all the rest.

Sect. 2 - The third means is the remembrance of God's Judgments.

The third means is, often to call unto our remembrance God's fearful Judgments executed upon all sinners, but especially upon such as have continued in their wickedness with careless security, and wholly neglected to keep this watch; as of the old world, who lived in all reckless security, eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying, and giving in marriage, so doing these things, as that they neglected all things else which were necessary for their safety and salvation, until Noah entering into the Ark, they were all swept away with an universal deluge. Thus also Sodom and Gomorrah living in their sins with all security, were attached with God's fearful Judgments when they least thought of them, and were wholly destroyed with fire and brimstone. Thus Babylon exceeding in security, as much as in all other sins, had those punishments which she least feared, inflicted upon her. Thus the Lord threatened the Church of Sardis, that if they would not watch, he would come as a thief against them; that is, bring upon them suddenly unexpected judgments, with which, when they neglected this warning, they were afterwards fearfully surprised. But of this point I have spoken at large in another Treatise; only let it suffice here to show, that as neglect of God's Judgments maketh us secure and careless; so the often calling of them to mind, is a notable means to make us watchful, that we may not have the like, or greater inflicted upon us. The which is the principal use that our Savior intended in propounding the former examples of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, fearfully punished, because they securely went on in their sins, that we might not be overtaken with the like, but that continually watching and praying, we might be thought

worthy to escape them, when God cometh in his visitation to take notice of our ways. And thus also the Apostle having called to remembrance God's heavy Judgments inflicted upon the Israelites, saith, that all these things were written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come, that by flying their sins, we might escape their punishments, and thereupon inferreth this use, that we should not presume on our own strength, but that he who thinketh he standeth, should take heed of falling.

Sect. 3 - Of the fourth means, which is, to remember the day of death.

The fourth means is, that we continually remember the day of our death, not as though it were far off, but near approaching, and even knocking at our doors. For our lives are short and momentary, and this short time so uncertain, that we have no assurance that we shall live another day, no not so much as the next minute. When we go abroad, we know not whether we shall return home; nor when we are at home, whether we shall live to go abroad; when we go to bed, we cannot tell whether we shall ever rise; and when we rise, whether we shall again go to bed. For many have been thus suddenly taken away, going well out of doors, and never returning; lying down securely to take their rest, have been found dead the next morning. Now seeing that which befalleth one, may happen to any, and that which hath been the case of many, may probably betide any one; let it be our wisdom to stand continually upon our watch, that we may be found in readiness, seeing it is a matter that concerns us no less, then the everlasting salvation or damnation of our souls. And seeing we are not sure of living another day, let us think that every day may be the last, and so take occasion to watch carefully over our ways, that we may, when God pleaseth to call, be prepared to go unto him with cheerfulness and joy: and when we are enticed to commit any sin; as to love the world immoderately, to increase our riches by fraud and deceit, or violence and oppression, to swear, lie, and profane the

Lord's Day, to drink drunken, commit filthiness, or any other sin; let us say unto our own souls, Would I commit this or that sin, if I were sure that this day were my last? Far would it be from me, if I were thus persuaded. And therefore let me be now as far from giving way willingly unto any of these, or the like sins, seeing, for ought I know, it may be the last minute. And thus when we find ourselves slack and backward unto any duties of God's service, let us examine our own hearts, whether we would not shake off all sluggishness, and go about them with all care and diligence, if we were persuaded that we should not live another day; and then if we be wise, we will be as circumspect and careful that we neglect no good duty which may bring comfort to our hearts, peace to our consciences, and assurance of salvation to our souls; seeing many as lusty as we, being well in the morning, have been dead before night.

Sect. 4 - The last means is, to meditate often on the day of Judgment.

The last means, which I will here touch, is, that we often meditate upon that great and terrible Day of the Lord, when he shall come with thousands of his holy Saints and Angels to judge both the quick and the dead; when as we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Of which Day, because we are uncertain when it will be, we should always keep our spiritual watch, that we may, whensoever Christ cometh, be found ready. And this use our Savior himself maketh of his assured and yet uncertain coming: Of that day and hour (saith he) knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father only: Take ye heed therefore, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is; lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. So likewise the Apostle Peter; The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And surely, if we would but seriously consider with what ravishing joy at that Day the hearts of all those shall be possessed, who, like wise and faithful servants, shall

be found watching and waiting for the coming of their Lord, when as he who hath pronounced them blessed already, shall then enter them into the full fruition of blessedness, and make them joint -owners of all that he hath, the unspeakable joys, inestimable riches, and triumphant glory of his Kingdom; and on the other side, with what shame and confusion of face, vexation of spirit, and horror of conscience, they shall be plagued and tormented, who with the evil servant have securely gone on in their sins, and have utterly neglected the spiritual watch, hoping that the Masters coming was far off; we would be moved hereby to shake off all carnal security, and think no care and diligence too great in keeping this watch, that we may not be taken unprovided and unprepared at the coming of our Lord. And these are the means, which if we carefully use, will much help us in keeping this watch. But let us take heed that we do not rest wholly or chiefly upon our own watchfulness; seeing when we have done all we can, we shall with the wise Virgins be overtaken sometimes with drowsiness, and intermit our watch; but seeing if the Lord, the great Watchman of Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, do not watch over the house of our earthly Tabernacle and City of our souls, all our watching is but in vain, let us often and instantly pray unto him, that he will continually watch over us, and enable us with his grace and holy Spirit, to watch over ourselves and wait upon him; knowing assuredly, that if he give over his watch, and leave us to our own, we shall soon be overtaken of carnal security, and fall into the dangerous Lethargy of sin and death.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of Meditation, which is the second private means of a godly life, what it is, and the causes thereof, with the reasons which may move us to this holy exercise.

Sect. 1 - The reason why it is here handled.

The second private means whereby we are enabled unto the duties of a godly life, is Meditation. For howsoever reading of the Word, and of other holy writings, doth go before it in order of nature, because it enlighteneth the mind, and teacheth us how to meditate, and also prepareth and ministereth unto us matter of Meditation, the which must be first known, before we can think and meditate upon it, or make use of it, by working it upon our hearts, wills, and affections: yet seeing it is an action done by ourselves alone, and the other is a duty, which may and ought to be performed both by ourselves, and others with us; I will reserve the handling hereof, till I come to entreat of the rest, which are in this respect of like nature. Concerning Meditation, it is so much beaten upon, and thoroughly handled already, both by more ancient Writers, and also modern, who of later times have spent much study and pains about it, and whose works are extant, both in our own and other languages, that it might well have saved me a labor, this Treatise now beginning to swell above the bounds and banks, which in my first intentions I had prefixed unto it. Yea so exactly, sweetly, and savorly is it handled, in a complete Treatise purposely written of this Argument, by One, who in his kind leaveth all others far behind him, being such a skilled Physician for the soul, that he is able by his Art to join pleasure with profit, eloquence with holiness, wit with spiritual wisdom, and to make wholesome Physic, and even purging Medicines as pleasing to the patients taste as banqueting dishes; that I should have been ashamed, and even quite discouraged to have written (as it were an Iliad's after Homer) anything of this Argument, did not the necessity of perfecting this treatise impose it upon me, in which, being an essential member, It could not have been wanting without a maim. In which regard, rather than I would leave the Reader in his studious course to a new disquisition, I have made bold with this learned Author, to borrow some materials for my building, of him who is so rich to lend, and to enrich my Cabinet with some of his Jewels, (though set out after a homely manner in mine own foils) seeing

these spiritual treasures are of such a nature that community hindereth not propriety, and he that lendeth, hath never the less.

Sect. 2 - What Meditation is, and how it differeth from other exercises of the mind.

But that we may proceed to our purpose; Meditation in a general signification, is nothing else, but to think and consider of anything often and seriously. And as we here more strictly take it, restraining it to a special subject, Meditation is a religious exercise of a Christian, wherein he purposely applieth his mind to discourse diversely upon some divine subject, spiritual or heavenly, that hereby he may glorify God, and further his own salvation, by improving the light of his understanding, increasing the sanctity of his heart and affections, and the better enabling him unto all duties of a godly life. The which description, in some sort both showeth the nature of Meditation, and also distinguisheth it from other acts and exercises of the mind which may seem somewhat like unto it. For it differeth from cogitation, which is but a simple act of the mind, thinking of its object slightly and overly, and so leaving it; whereas Meditation is more advised and serious, and reflecteth its light upon the heart, will and affection, to direct them in their choice, both in choosing and embracing that which is good, and the refusing and abhorring of that which is evil. It differeth also from consideration, which is exercised in deliberating about something doubtful, true or false, good or evil, that discerning it aright, we may know whether to take or leave it: but Meditation is conversant about things in some measure known in the understanding, that by this further discourse of reason, they may not only be better known, but also that this knowledge may reflect upon the will and affections, and be made more effectual for our use in the well ordering of our lives. It differeth also from Prayer, in that howsoever both are the speech of the mind; yet in that, we speak to our own souls, but in this, we speak directly to God himself. Notwithstanding, there is such affinity between them, that in the

Scriptures they are both signified by the same word, and often taken the one for the other. For they have both for the most part one subject-matter, and both alike effectual for the obtaining of all things needful; seeing whether we confess our sins unto God, or acknowledge our wants, or crave supply in a Meditation directed to our own souls, or in a prayer to him he alike heareth both, and is alike ready to satisfy our desires in what form soever they are presented unto him. Neither do we confess our sins, or lay open our wants for his better information, to whom they are known already, but that we ourselves may take notice of them, and coming to a more thorough sense and feeling of them, may have our hearts inflamed with fervent desires to have our sins pardoned, and our wants supplied, which are no other than prayers in his estimate, in what form soever they are expressed. Finally, howsoever in nature there is small difference between Meditation and Contemplation, yet as the Schools define it, there is some in degree; Meditation being an exercise of a lower and meaner nature, within the reach of all Christians which will put out their hand unto it; Contemplation more high and heavenly, fit only for such as by long exercise have attained to much perfection: That, exercised about any spiritual object, not only originally in the understanding, but also imaginary, and brought unto it by the Ministry of the senses, as the creation of the world, the death and passion of Christ, and such like; but this about things chiefly intellectual, sublime, and heavenly; as the nature and attributes of God, the Trinity of persons in Unity of essence, the joys of heaven, and others of like nature. Finally, it is an exercise, which of the most is performed with much difficulty, because of their weaknesses and want of use, being hindered in their spiritual flight, by having the weight of earthly cares and distractions (as it were) hanging at their heels, and the wings of their souls somewhat besmeared with the lime of worldly vanities; but this, of great Proficients, who by much practice have brought their Art into an habit, and are able with ease, yea with much pleasure and delight, to soar (with the Eagle) an high pitch in their heavenly thoughts, and to spend herein great part of their time, not stooping towards the earth, but when they are forced by natural necessity; which being satisfied,

and their bodies and minds somewhat refreshed, they do, as weary of the earth, raise up their souls, and renew their wonted flight.

Sect. 3 - Of the efficient cause or person who is to meditate.

The efficient cause, or person who is to perform this exercise, is the Christian only, and the man regenerate; for holy things must not be touched with profane hands, seeing they do not sanctify them, but are polluted with their uncleanness. Neither can they that are dead in sin, do the actions of the living, and are so far from performing this holy duty in any acceptable manner, that they are not able so much as to think a good thought. Neither is it enough that we be once purged from their guilt and punishment in our justification, by the death and bloodshed of Christ applied by faith, or that we be freed from the corruption of sin, in the first acts of our sanctification; but seeing we do daily renew our sins, and thereby defile our souls and bodies, we must daily cleanse them by renewing our repentance, and not presume to undertake this holy work, living and lying in our spiritual defilements, but we must wash our souls (as sometimes the Israelites their clothes) before we presume to approach unto this mount of Meditation, wherein God hath promised to be seen; and to cleanse the Tables of our hearts with the tears of true contrition, before we go about to have any holy impressions written in them. And seeing sin, like a thick cloud, doth dim and dazzle the eyes of our minds, so as we cannot see holy and heavenly things, we must first dispel them by unfeigned repentance, before we can receive any comfort of divine and heavenly light. And being to entertain our Bridegroom Christ, in his spiritual presence, into our hearts, (as it were) into our houses, and to solace our souls in a more here communion and familiarity with him, we are first to purge them from all noisome defilements, which will make our company loathsome unto him; and though we cannot so sufficiently purify them, that they may be worthy to entertain so pure and holy a ghost, yet at least, in a sincere affection let us labor to do the best we can,

that it may not appear to be a fault of negligence, but of our spiritual poverty and impotency, which disableth us to give him any better welcome. The formal cause of this exercise, is a serious cogitation, or intentive deliberation; Neither is this work of the Lord to be done negligently and slightly, letting the reins loose to our cogitations, that they may wander whither they list, but we are to intend the whole powers of our mind unto it, and to set them strictly to this holy task, not suffering them to wander abroad whither they please, but to apply themselves to that which they have undertaken, until they have brought their work unto some good perfection. The subject-matter of our Meditation is something divine, spiritual, and heavenly: unto which our thoughts, for the time it lasteth, are to be restrained, and not suffered to wander after, or to intermingle with them any worldly things. The final causes or ends of it, are the glory of God, and our own salvation, both which are advanced, when as we handle after an holy manner in our Meditations, some such holy and spiritual matter, as may tend to the bettering of our judgments, and increase of our inward sanctity, by working in our hearts the love and fear of God, zeal and devotion in his service, an utter hatred of sin, and a sincere purpose to please him in all things, and to glorify his Name, by performing more carefully and conscionably all the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 4 - That Meditation is an exercise which belongeth to all Christians.

And thus we see generally what Christian Meditation is, and the causes of it; the which being a singular and effectual means of working in our hearts a great increase of all saving graces, and of strengthening us to the duties of a godly life, is not to be appropriated unto any one profession or sort of men (which were a dangerous Monopoly, tending to the inestimable prejudice of the Christian Common-wealth, when such a singular commodity as is profitable for all, is engrossed into the hands of some few) but is to

be laid out in common to all the faithful, who are any way interested in grace or godliness. Neither ought any sort or sex to think that they are exempted from this exercise, unless they think themselves so strong in grace, that all means of spiritual growth are needless, or so weak and impotent, that they hold them boot less; seeing such exemption is no prerogative, but a disfranchisement, at least, in part of their spiritual freedom, and a loss of a singular privilege, which the Lord, in that great Charter of his Covenant made in Christ, hath granted unto them. For he hath not only allowed all the faithful to have the Book of his Law in their hands to read it, or in their mouths to talk of it, but with the finger of his Spirit hath written and engraven it in their hearts, that they may continually think and meditate upon it: Yea, he hath not only left it unto us as a gracious liberty, which we may take and leave at our pleasure, but hath strictly imposed it upon all his people as a necessary duty. These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and in thy soul, and thou shall bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. So the Lord enjoineth Joshua, though a Captain and chief Magistrate, that he should not suffer the Law of God to depart out of his mouth, but that he should meditate therein day and night, that he might observe to do according to all that was written therein. And thus we are, as the Apostle exhorteth, to have our conversation in heaven, which is chiefly done, when as we chiefly mind heavenly and spiritual things, and set our affections (as he speaketh elsewhere) on things above, and not on things upon the earth. For where our chief life is, there our heart and soul should be: but we are dead to the world and flesh, and our life is hid with Christ in God; being then to appear, when as Christ shall appear in glory. Of which duty and Christian exercise, we have an example in holy David, who in many places professeth, that he meditated in God's Law day and night, that is, had his thoughts fixed upon holy things at all times, and upon all good occasions: and that they were sweeter to his soul and spiritual taste, then honey to his mouth, and that he esteemed them in his judgment, and answerably affected them in his heart, above gold, yea much fine

gold; which made him not to put it off, as a work to be done at his best leisure, but rather then he would want time to do it; his eyes prevented the night watches, that he might meditate in God's Word. And thus the blessed Virgin having heard the words of our Savior Christ, is said to have pondered them in her heart; that is, by meditating upon them in her mind, she had wrought them into her heart and affections.

Sect. 5 - The first reason taken from the excellency of this exercise.

Which examples, that we may imitate, let us consider the reasons which may persuade us unto it. The first whereof, is the excellency of this holy exercise, which advanceth us unto high and heavenly privileges. For it increaseth our sweet communion with God, the chief Goodness, in whose fruition consisteth all our happiness, and giveth us admittance into his presence, and liberty to talk and confer with him, as with our friend, about all things which concern his glory and our own salvation. It exalteth our minds and souls above the highest pitch of worldly things, and causeth us, even whilst we are upon earth, to have our conversation in heaven. It causeth us, whilst we carry about with us this body of flesh, to be heavenly minded, and partakers of the Divine nature, whilst by this near society and familiarity, it maketh us like unto God, with whom we converse in holiness and happiness. It entereth us into the first degrees of the heavenly joys, and as our state of mortality will bear, it imparteth unto us some first beginnings of the vision and fruition of God, and enableth us (with Moses) to discern, as we are capable, some small glimpses of his glory. And as his face did shine, when he had conversed with God in his bodily presence; so our souls do shine in purity, brightness, and glory, by coming near unto him, and entertaining with him this spiritual communion. And as the wax, which is yellow in its own nature, by lying long in the beams of the Sun, changeth the color, and attaineth unto a Virgin-like whiteness and purity; so we, who with the Spouse in the Canticles, are brown

and black through natural infirmities, do become more bright and beautiful, whilst conversing with our Bridegroom Christ in this near familiarity, the beams of his love and favor do shine upon us.

Sect. 6 - The second reason, taken from the profit of it.

The second reason, is the profit of Meditation, which is inestimable; seeing it is fit and useful to all purposes. For if we bind God's will and Word continually upon our heart, and tie it about our necks; when we go, it shall lead us; when we sleep, it shall keep us; and when we are awake, it shall talk with us. By the help of it, we make use of all other helps, it serving to the soul, as the stomach to the body, for the well digesting of all spiritual nourishment. In which respect, one holdeth it for no better than presumption, for any to take upon them to teach any other Arts, unless himself have first learned, and made it his own by intensive Meditation. By it we come to the sight and sense of our corruptions, which lie lurking and hidden in us, impossible to be purged and reformed, because they are not so much as discovered. By it we find out our wants, that we may use means whereby they may be supplied; and discover our weaknesses, that we may labor to get more strength. By it we discover the subtle stratagems of our spiritual enemies, that we may avoid them; and are fore-armed against their temptations, and strengthened to overcome them. By it we spy out the wiles of our own deceitful hearts, their shifts and cunning devices, their windings and turnings, roving's and wanderings; and bringing them in subjection to the spiritual part, do reduce them into some order. By it we banish vain cogitations and lusts of the flesh, and cause our minds and hearts to be taken up with such thoughts and desires as are holy and religious. It is the best preservative against all sin, and a most sovereign antidote against carnal security, whilst it discovereth our spiritual danger, and moveth us to prevent it by timely repentance. It singularly improveth our spiritual estate, by increasing saving and fruitful knowledge, inward sanctity in our affections, and the outward practice of it in

our lives. It enricheth our souls with all spiritual and saving graces, faith, hope, charity, affiance, and the true fear of God. It is the spur of our devotion, the fuel of our zeal, and the common incentive to all virtue. It is the food of our souls, by which they are spiritually nourished, and even the life of our life, as a Heathen could see by the light of nature. It weaneth our hearts and minds from the world, and lifteth them up to heaven. It maketh us to walk with God as Enoch, and (like Elias his body in the fiery Chariot) it carrieth our souls into heaven. By it, in our solitariness, we enjoy God and ourselves, and by conversing with him, we are fitted and made profitable for all good company. In a word, as one saith, all spiritual profit and progress in godliness, proceedeth from reading and meditation; for what we know not, we learn by reading, and by meditation hold it when we have it. And as it is the means of all grace and goodness in this life, so also it assureth us of all glory and happiness in the life to come. For, Blessed is the man who so delighteth in the Law of the Lord, that he doth meditate in it day and night.

Sect. 7 - The third reason taken from the necessity of this exercise.

The third and last reason is taken from the necessity of this holy exercise, the neglect whereof depriveth us of all the former benefits and privileges. For thereby we lose the comfort and joy which we have in this sweet communion with God; we become insensible of our sins and spiritual wants, and so grow careless in using those good means for the mortifying of the one, and supplying of the other. We take the ready way to continue in carnal security, and to live in our sins without repentance. We lie open to the temptations of our spiritual enemies, and easily fall into their secret ambushments at unawares, by reason we never think of them, nor of the means whereby we may escape them. We are soon deceived with our own false hearts, when as we never sound their deceits unto the bottom, and give Satan leave to fill them with worldly and wicked thoughts, and with sensual and carnal desires and lusts, when as he findeth

them like empty houses, swept clean, and cleared of all good meditations, and garnished with sloth, vanity and security, the chief ornaments wherein he delighteth. We lose piece-meal all our spiritual armor, and not repairing the breaches which have been made by the enemies of our salvation, we lie open to their assaults, and are easily vanquished in the next encounter, whilst we never think of any approaching danger. We defraud our souls of a chief part of their food, whereby they should be nourished in all saving grace, and strengthened unto all Christian duties: we lose the heat and fervor of our zeal and devotion, which being no natural qualities residing in their proper elements, cool and decline when we withdraw from them the fuel by which they are nourished. We lose the comfort of our heavenly freedom, when as we never have our conversation there, and suffer our hearts to lie groveling upon the earth without any spiritual motions, which like the pieces and plummetts of a clock, do naturally descend and sink down, unless they be often pulled up with spiritual and heavenly meditations. Finally, we put out, or cloze up the eyes of our souls, so as they cannot look into ourselves, nor into our spiritual estate, to see our miseries, that we may be humbled, nor the means of our freedom and deliverance, that we may be comforted; our poverty and defects, nor Christ's riches and full payment, our natural defects, and spiritual abilities in him that strengtheneth us, our gifts and graces, our wants and weaknesses; our sins committed, our duties neglected or performed, our dangers, and means to escape them; our way to happiness, and what progress we have made in it. And as we cannot, through this neglect of meditation, take notice of ourselves, so are we thereby estranged from God, neither seeing nor observing his nature or attributes, his mercy to love him, his justice to fear him, his power and truth in his promises, that we may believe and trust in him; the administration both of his benefits conferred upon those that love and obey him, nor of his Judgments and punishments, threatened and inflicted upon those who continue in their sins, that by this experience of others good and harms, we may become wise in choosing such a course as may gain the one, and avoid the other.

CHAPTER XV.

Of extraordinary Meditation.

Sect. 1 - What extraordinary meditation is, and the subject of it.

And thus much of meditation in general: The which, howsoever it doth not easily admit of any formal distribution according to the strict rules of art, yet it may, like prayer, be distinguished into two kinds. For as prayers are either extraordinary and at large, the which are continually to be made, and at any time whatsoever, when any fit occasion or opportunity is offered either of petition, or thanksgiving, the which we call Exclamations; or else ordinary and at set times, when as with due preparation we purposely compose ourselves to perform this duty in a solemn manner: So our meditations may be distinguished into such as are extraordinary and at large; or else ordinary and at set times, when as with due deliberation and preparation, setting all other things apart, we settle ourselves to spend some time in this religious exercise. The former sort of meditations are sudden, and continually in use, when any occasion or opportunity is offered and observed, by outward objects presented to our senses, especially the sight and hearing, or by some inward conceit in our imagination or discourse of our minds, whereof we may make some spiritual use, and raise up our minds from the earth towards heaven, in some holy meditation. The which may be done at all times, and in all employments, as in the works of our callings, or in our honest recreations, when we are in company, or solitary and by ourselves. But especially the large book of the creatures affordeth unto us most plentiful matter of this kind of meditation, when either they put us in mind of their and our Creator, or of some of his attributes shining clearly in them. In the former respect, David saith,

that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work, that is, offer unto us fit occasion of glorifying God, when as we see their excellency and order, and of admiring and magnifying his wisdom and power, who was able of nothing to make so goodly a frame and excellent workmanship. And in regard of the latter, he telleth us in another place, that they did occasionally, as good School-masters, teach him another lesson, namely, to see and admire the infinite love and undeserved goodness of God towards mankind. When I consider (saith he) the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? And thus Solomon sendeth the sluggard to the Ant, to learn of her diligence; and Isaiah a refractory people, to the Ox and Ass to learn duty and obedience; and Jeremiah the negligent and secure Jews, to the Stork, Turtle, Crane and Swallow, to learn of them to observe God's appointed times, that they might not let his judgments pass unregarded, but seasonably turn unto him by true repentance. And our Savior Christ sendeth such as vex themselves with distrustful and carking cares, to the Fowls of the air, and to the Lilies of the field, which without their care only by God's blessing and good providence live, grow and flourish. And thus he himself, from the water of Jacob's well, taketh occasion to think and discourse of the Water of Life; and from the meat that perisheth, and the Manna in the Wilderness, to meditate and speak of the Bread of Life which came down from heaven. And after the same manner may we take occasion of some holy meditation by the view and consideration of any action or occurrent, especially where we may in a lively manner behold the administration of God's mercies or judgments, in rewards or punishments, or when we seriously behold any of God's creatures. As when we see the beauty of the heavens, and the brightness of the Sun, we may take occasion thereby to think of his infinite glory, beauty and brightness that made them; when we behold their goodly and constant order, to think of his immutability. So their durableness may put us in mind of his eternity, their vast greatness, of his immensity. The earths barrenness, of our fall and sin; her fruitfulness, of God's blessing renewed in Christ, and how we

ought to answer this mercy, in bringing forth the fruits of obedience, lest being often watered and remaining fruitless, we be the second time accursed. Neither hath the Lord created his mighty host of innumerable creatures, adorned them with such beauty, distinguished them in such varieties, furnished them with such excellent properties, that we should only have a sensual use of them, wherein the brutish creatures may exceed us, but that we should take occasion by them, to glorify him in his excellent workmanship, and learn something from them for our better instruction, that we may imitate them in that which is good, or shun and avoid that which is evil in them. Which who so neglect, deprive themselves, in their use, of the best part, whereby they might receive as much profit for their souls, as they do for their bodies in that use which is common and ordinary. And thus we are to furnish ourselves with fit matter for these extraordinary and sudden meditations. But here (as our learned Artist hath well observed) some cautions are to be used: as first, that there be some similitude between the matter, and the meditation which is raised from it; that it may not be strained and far-fetched, but kindly and familiar. For want of which resemblance, our meditations will prove loose and wandering, and leave behind them no impression: whereas similitude and likeness in the matter to the meditation, will recall the one to our remembrance, as oft as we see or observe the other. Secondly, we must avoid such matter of meditation as God hath expressly forbidden, as namely, Images, to put us in mind of him, or any essential part of his worship; seeing they lead us unto idolatry, will-worship and superstition, and teach us nothing but vanity and lies, namely, to conceive of him as visible and corporal, who is incorporeal and invisible; and as circumscribable and finite, who is immense and infinite. Thirdly, seeing God hath given us such plentiful variety of matter in this kind, we must not dwell too long upon, or follow too much one thing in our meditations, which will cause satiety and weariness, but take our liberty of choice in this great plenty, provided that this liberty turn not to licentiousness, and give occasion to our minds of idle roving and wandering from one thing to another, without serious thinking of anything, that we may fit it for some good use. And finally, these

meditations must not be long and tedious, which is not agreeable to their nature, nor will conveniently suit with our company and occasions, but rather distract us from our business, and duties of our callings, which ordinarily we must tend; but they must, like exclamations in prayer, be short, as they are sudden, unless time, leisure and solitude afford us more liberty.

Sect. 2 - What ordinary meditation is, and the subject of it.

The other kind of meditation which is ordinary, set, solemn and deliberate, is, when as purposely setting apart all other business, and sequestering ourselves from all company, we do bend our mind, with all studious intention, to discourse deliberately upon some spiritual subject or part of God's Word, which we know in some measure, that by diligent insisting, serious debating, and deep musing upon it, till we have brought it to some spiritual use and good issue, we may apply it to our particular use for the further enlightening of our understandings, and the confirming of our judgments, and also for the purging and sanctifying of our hearts and affections, the stirring up of our zeal and devotion, and the bettering and amending of our lives and conversation; making choice of such place, time, gesture, and other circumstances, as may best fit and further us in this holy exercise. And this is that kind of meditation which is chiefly intended and commended unto us in the holy Scriptures, both by the precepts before quoted, and also by the examples of God's Saints and servants, as of Isaac, who is said, towards evening, to have gone out into the fields to meditate, of which that Scripture speaketh in such a manner, as though it had been his daily exercise. So David professeth, that God's Law and Word was his daily meditation, as we may see in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, wherein he not only testifieth his doing of it, but also, as by an example, proveth it, seeing that Psalm is nothing else but an heavenly meditation, the subject matter whereof is the holy Law of God. Even as in many other Psalms he meditateth upon diverse other subjects. As who are to be

esteemed truly happy, and heirs of eternal blessedness; the temporary prosperity of the wicked; the passion and sufferings of Christ; the benefits of God conferred upon his unworthy people, and many others: all which do plainly prove, that which he professeth, namely, that this meditation in God's Law was his daily exercise.

Sect. 3 - The difficulty of this religious exercise.

Which examples that we may imitate, I will first consider the reasons which may move us, and remove the impediments which might hinder and discourage us from the undertaking of this exercise, and then set down the doctrine and practice of it in a form of meditation, that so we may be instructed in the right use of it; and have a plain example to lead us as it were by the hand, and to enable us to frame the like upon other occasions. The reasons may be reduced to the same heads which I propounded in the general consideration of this duty; all which do specially and chiefly belong to this kind of meditation, as being above the other much more excellent, profitable and necessary. For if it be a privilege of excellency to come into God's sight, then much more for some good time to continue and converse with him; if we may think ourselves highly advanced, if we may for the least moment be admitted into his presence, and suffered to salute him: then how much rather, when we may be permitted to have free conference with him, and our souls in his presence? But as it is truly said of all things excellent, that they are also hard and difficult; so may both these be truly verified of this exercise, then the which, as no other is more excellent, (prayer and contemplation excepted, which exceed in some degrees in the same kind) so there is none besides them of greater difficulty. First, in that our corrupt nature is not more averse unto any other duty; both because we take our whole delight in things that are connatural and subject to the senses, and our minds are soon tired with meditating seriously upon those things which are merely intellectual and abstracted from the senses; and also because our carnal hearts, which take their chief

pleasure and contentment, in thinking upon, and affecting worldly things, are ready to murmur and repine when they are restrained of their liberty, and kept hard to this spiritual task; and to break loose and fly out every hand-while, that they may rove and wander after their wonted delights. Secondly, because in other spiritual exercises, as hearing the Word, reading and conferring with others, we have but to deal with men (as we conceive it) at least in respect of immediate actions, objects and intercourse, which we perform with greater alacrity, because the senses are exercised in them about outward things: But in this exercise of meditation we are soon wearied (as the senses exercised about excelling objects) both because the subject matter about which we discourse in our minds, is spiritual and heavenly, and also because we cast up our accounts, lay open our sins, search out our wants and weaknesses, seriously examine our hearts how we have behaved ourselves in the doing or neglecting of our duty, and laying them naked before God without all hypocrisy, confessing our sins of which we find ourselves guilty, accusing ourselves where we are faulty, discovering our wants and weaknesses wherein we are defective; all which are not done before our equals, but before the glorious King of heaven and earth (as malefactors before their Judge) whose might and Majesty, sovereignty and power of life and death may justly over-awe us. The which difficulties notwithstanding must not so much discourage us from this exercise, as the excellency must encourage us to undertake it with so much the more strong resolution and earnest endeavor.

Sect. 4 - The singular profit of ordinary meditation.

To which purpose let us further consider, that as this kind of meditation is above all other most excellent, so also it exceedeth in use and profit. For it is the spiritual food of the souls, by which they live and thrive in all saving graces, and are strengthened unto the performance of all Christian duties. It weaneth our souls from the world and worldly vanities, and sequestereth and appropriateth

them to religious uses. More especially, it enlighteneth our understanding, and maketh us in discoursing of spiritual things, to see them much more clearly and perfectly; for as we are wont to say of our bodily parts and members, Use them and have them, because their exercise is the means to continue their health, and increase their strength; so may it also be truly said of the inward faculties of the soul, the understanding and discourse of reason, which if they be used, grow more strong and vigorous; but if we accustom them to sloth and idleness, they will soon languish, and wax faint and weak in their functions and operations. Now by this enlightening of the mind, we come to a more clear knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. By it we understand more perfectly his Word and will, (in which respect meditation may be fitly called the hearts commentary) and are thereby guided in the way of his Commandments. For if by meditation we bind them continually upon our hearts, when we go, they shall lead us, as the Wise man speaketh. By it also we attain unto the true knowledge of ourselves, and of our own hearts, which are so deceitful, that they cannot otherwise be well discerned. For as our Savior hath taught us, such as the thoughts are, such also is the heart; such as the streams are, such likewise is the fountain from which they spring. And therefore evil thoughts do argue an evil heart; even as contrariwise, good thoughts, and holy meditations, do show that the heart is good also. For howsoever our words and works are liable to much hypocrisy, because in them we may often aim at worldly respects, and to approve ourselves unto men, rather than unto God; yet it is not so with our thoughts, which are only known to God and our own consciences, and not subject to the view and censure of any other. By it we come to the knowledge of our manifold corruptions, and the malignity of our natures, and to discern the blindness and worldliness of our minds, the perverseness of our wills, the security and hardness of our hearts, and innumerable other vices and corruptions which otherwise would be unknown unto ourselves, even as they are now unknown to others. Yea, by this disquisition we do not only find out this noisome filth and heaps of uncleanness (as it were) in secret corners; but also are set awork, to urge out of our

hearts and minds, these wicked thoughts, and filthy lusts, which would otherwise, like pernicious humors in the body, lie lurking in them, and be the causes of our souls sickness, and innumerable evils; and being emptied of these wicked thoughts and noisome lusts, we are hereby moved, and stirred up to replenish our minds and hearts with heavenly cogitations and holy desires, and when we have admitted them, to hold them fast, that the other may not return and recover their possession. Moreover, by this Meditation our memories are exceedingly strengthened, and made faithful Registers of good things. Our consciences are preserved pure, when as hereby we are kept from falling into any known sin, or if we have fallen through infirmity, do not lie in it, but purge away these spiritual defilements by faith, applying unto them the blood of Christ, and by rising out of sin through unfeigned repentance. Our judgments likewise hereby are much improved, quickened, and confirmed, whilst as one saith; It distinguisheth things confused, and collecteth them being scattered, searcheth out secrets, and seeketh after truth; examineth things probable, and findeth out such as are feigned and colored; disposeth of things to be done, and thinketh and considereth of that which we have done. Our wills likewise hereby are purged from their stubbornness and rebellion, and by conversing with God, learn to frame and fashion themselves in obedience to his most just and holy will, and to choose and refuse good and evil, according to the direction of holy reason.

Sect. 5 - That this Meditation effectually worketh upon the heart and affections for the sanctifying of them.

And as it thus powerfully worketh upon the superior faculties of our souls, so with much more efficacy upon our hearts and affections. For it not only purgeth our hearts from unclean and noisome lusts, and replenisheth them with holy and heavenly desires; but also mollifieth their hardness, and maketh them soft and tender; and as the wax, when it lieth in cold places, groweth so hard and stiff, that it

will break, rather than bow; but being laid in the Sun, becometh soft, ready to melt, and fit to take any impression; so when we neglect this duty, our hearts being estranged from God, become hard and obdurate; but when by Meditation we draw near unto him, the beams of his favor shining upon our hearts, do make them soft and flexible, and so fit for any holy impression which he is pleased to make in them. And thus when our hearts are dead and dull, this holy exercise will quicken and revive them, and when they begin to be drowsy, through carnal security, it awakeneth and rouseth them up, that they do not lie snorting in the sleep of sin. It doth as much as any other Christian exercise, work upon our affections, purging them from worldliness and sensuality, and sanctifying and fitting them for God's service. It inflameth our love towards God and all spiritual and heavenly things: for as in worldly matters of looking, cometh loving; so here by meditating upon these greater excellencies, and taking (as it were) a full view with the eyes of our mind, of their beauty and perfection, we come to have our hearts inflamed with their love, and long after nothing more than their fruition. It kindleth also our zeal and devotion in God's service, when as thereby we come to see, that it is the main end of our coming into the world, that all other labor is utterly lost, and all our strength is spent in vain, which is employed in the pursuit of worldly vanities that profit not; and finally, that whatsoever pains we take in God's service, is to good purpose, being richly rewarded in this world and the World to come. It worketh in our hearts affiance in God, when as we consider of his truth in his promises, and all-sufficiency in performance; and a true and son-like fear of him, when as we think seriously of his infinite love, his sovereignty, power, and glorious Majesty. It draweth us on to perform sincere obedience, not only passive, in suffering what God inflicteth, when we consider that it proceedeth from love, and tendeth to our good, and the furthering of our salvation; but also active: for who will not willingly serve such a Master, that duly meditateth on his goodness in himself, and bounty towards us? Besides, by meditating upon God's Law, we are drawn on to keep it, when as we consider the excellency of it, and the benefits and fruits of our obedience; and as evil thoughts are a strong inducement to

bring us to evil works; so also it is in those that are good. For as the Apostle James seemeth to make it, the thoughts are the first seeds which are suggested into our minds and hearts, the which being entertained with delight, do cause (as it were) the first conception of our actions; and this is done, when the affections are tickled and allured with the things, that by the thoughts are propounded unto them; which are as ready to embrace what the judgment approveth, as the hungry stomach such meat as is commended unto it by the taste. And the affections moving and inclining the will, do nourish the conception, as the child in the womb, till it come to perfect shape, whereupon consent following, it is brought to the birth, and produced into act, opportunity serving as the Midwife, the will, as Vice-roy to reason, having command over all the inferior powers and parts, and enjoining them to execute that which the mind first suggested, the affections embraced, and itself liketh and approveth. Finally, as it draweth us on to obedience, so it maketh us constant in it; because it is not grounded upon Book-knowledge, or that which entering by the ear, goeth not much further, but floateth in the brain, and never descendeth into the heart, the which faileth and vanisheth upon many occasions; as the scorching heat of persecution, the temptations of the devil, the sophistical wiles of cunning heretics, which overturning such a speculative knowledge (as it were) the foundation, do bring all to ruin that is built upon it; but it is settled upon such a knowledge, as is wrought into the heart and affections by Meditation, which will not lose their hold of those good things and sweet comforts, of which they have tasted and thoroughly fed upon, to the nourishing of the soul in all grace and goodness, and strengthening of it unto all holy duties; although the knowledge of the brain, being too weak to withstand such opposites, doth utterly fail, both in offensive arguments, and defensive answers. In a Word, this Meditation is most profitable for all parts and purposes. For as one saith, It purifieth the mind, that is, the first fountain from which it springeth; it governeth the affections, it directeth the actions, correcteth excess, composeth our manners, orderly amendeth and graceth our lives, and finally, conferreth experimental and feeling knowledge, both of things divine and human.

Sect. 6 - That the exercise of Meditation is very necessary.

Finally, this exercise of Meditation is no less necessary then profitable; for it is the food of our souls, or if you will, the stomach and natural heat whereby it is digested, which preserveth our spiritual life; without which we can no more continue in good liking and well-being, then our bodies without meat. For as they may live for a good time in a weak estate and poor plight, if they cast up their food soon after they have eaten it, by virtue of some small relics that remain behind, but can never be fat, healthy, and strong, if the meat be not retained, concocted, and applied to the several parts: so our souls may live the spiritual life of grace, by hearing and reading the Word, though for want of Meditation, and thinking upon it afterwards, they retain little of their spiritual food, but cast up all again, saving some relics, which upon occasions will come into their minds; but they cannot be in good plight, and increase much in spiritual growth and strength, unless they digest what they hear and read by Meditation, and make it truly their own, by applying it to themselves. And as those beasts that have that property of chewing the cud, are never in good health, but when they are either feeding or chewing; so is it to be thought of us, though we seem to feed never so eagerly (seeing it may as well be a disease, as the goodness of our stomachs) if we take no care afterwards to ruminate and meditate upon it. Neither hath it only the necessity of food, but also of Physic, for the preserving and well ordering of our spiritual lives. And if we would but duly consider, how full our hearts and inward parts are of noisome lusts, and the corrupt and glutinous humors, of vice and sin; how false and fickle, how slippery and wandering, how soon weary of good things, and how ready and prone to all evil; we would easily conclude that it were more than necessary, that besides our ordinary diet, we should sometimes use this wholesome Physic, which is most effectual to purge out all these corruptions, and to prevent and cure these spiritual diseases; and to set purposely some time apart for this holy exercise, that we may keep our hearts in good order, and avoid

the mischiefs which these corrupt humors of sin will bring upon our souls, if we suffer them to lie still lurking in us, and take no care to be purged of them. Finally, this exercise of Meditation hath in it the necessity, not only of sustentation, but also of defense; as it is a notable means to spy out the wiles and subtleties of our spiritual enemies, to discover their might, and our wants and weaknesses, and to fit unto us the spiritual armor, without which we cannot stand in the day of battle; and consequently, the neglect thereof, a ready way to lay us open to all danger, by denying one of our best helps, and giving opportunity to our enemies of all advantages.

CHAPTER XVI.

Containing answers unto diverse objections made against this exercise of Meditation.

Sect. 1 - The objection of difficulty acknowledged and answered.

And thus I have spoken more largely of the profit and necessity of this holy exercise, then some, perhaps, will think either necessary or profitable; because I well knew how averse and backward our corrupt nature is unto it. In which regard, we no more need to be instructed in the knowledge of it, how we may do it aright, then strong motives and inducements to enforce the practice of that we know. For when our judgments are enlightened in the right use of this exercise, we are still ready to frame excuses, to blind and delude our reason, and to stop the cry of our consciences, when they accuse us for the neglect of so necessary a duty; and even when we are ready to go about it, our sloth and security pretendeth such necessary impediments, and casteth such stumbling blocks in our way, that we are discouraged from proceeding in it. As first, we are ready to allege,

that it is a matter of great difficulty for us that are in the world, to sequester our minds wholly from worldly things, that they may be wholly taken up with those which are spiritual and heavenly, and are so far out of the reach of our natural abilities. And surely it cannot be denied, but that this duty, as all other things excellent, is hardly achieved; for being but children in knowledge, and weaklings in grace, it is no more easy to attend any serious exercises, profitable for our souls health, then it is for boys to banish out of their minds childish vanities, and to apply themselves wholly to their studies, that they may get learning, and become good scholars. But this must not make us to neglect this exercise, but considering how excellent, profitable, and necessary it is, we must be so much the more earnest in our resolutions, and diligent in our endeavors, to set ourselves seriously about it, by how much it appeareth to be of greater difficulty. To which purpose, let us know, that as children find most discouragements, and greatest difficulty in attaining to learning in their first entrance, but afterwards, when they are come to some proficiency, find it more easy, and tasting the sweetness of it, go on in their studies, with cheerfulness and delight: so the greatest difficulty is in the first beginnings of this holy exercise; seeing use and practice will make it easy and familiar; and the sweetness which we shall find in it to our spiritual taste, and the fruit and benefit which we shall reap by it, richly recompensing all our labor, will take away all tediousness, and make us to perform it with all cheerfulness. And as those which have been trained up in the delightful studies of Poetry, Philosophy, and History, in the Universities, can hardly apply themselves to the study of the Law, yet do at the first bend, and even enforce their minds to it, being encouraged with golden hopes, and afterwards coming to practice, proceed with delight, when they become sensible of the gain; so our minds, having been inured to wander about earthly things, which are most pleasing to our carnal appetite, can hardly apply themselves to spiritual and heavenly Meditations, which are harsh and unpleasant to our corrupt nature; but even then we must with an holy violence bend our minds unto them, being encouraged with our more than golden hopes; and then without doubt, when we have made some good proceedings in our

spiritual practice, the sensible sweetness which we shall relish in it, and the manifold benefits, and plentiful fruits which we shall reap by this exercise, will encourage us to proceed in it with much comfort and delight.

Sect. 2 - The objection of natural want and weaknesses in performing this exercise answered.

Secondly, we are apt to pretend our natural weakness and imbecility to perform so high and hard a duty, as the ignorance of our minds, the averseness of our hearts, the coldness of our zeal, devotion, and such like. But these wants and inabilities should not discourage us from this exercise, but move us to use it so much the rather, because it is a chief means ordained of God to increase our strength, and to bring us to more perfection. We do not, because we are weak and sickly in our bodies, abstain altogether from food and Physic, but the rather use them, that we may recover our health and strength. Yea, when our appetite is small, we force ourselves, that by eating a little at once, we may get a stomach. We do not shut the windows, because the house is dark, and we dim-sighted; but are ready the sooner to open them, to let in the light, of which we stand in need more than others, in respect of our natural defects, that we may the better dispatch our business; and the colder we feel ourselves, the more necessary we think it to come unto the fire, or to use some exercise, that we may recover our natural heat. And so in like manner, the sight of these defects should not hinder us from this exercise; seeing it is the means to enlighten our minds with more knowledge, to get spiritual health and strength, whereby we may be enabled to perform this and all other good duties daily in more perfection; and to warm our cold and frozen hearts, that we may perform service unto God, with more heat of godly zeal and fervor of devotion. Besides, though we be not able of ourselves, so much as to think a good thought, yet if in obedience to God we use this his holy Ordinance, he will enable us

unto it, being all-sufficient to make us both to think and do whatsoever he requireth at our hands.

Sect. 3 - Their objection answered, who pretend want of matter to meditate upon.

Thirdly, we are ready to object want of matter to meditate upon, and that we are so barren in our invention, that the fire of our devotion is ready to go out as soon as it is kindled, for want of this fuel to nourish and preserve it. But this is to excuse one negligence with another, seeing the Lord hath set before us, and even put into our hands the large Volume of his Creatures, and the Book of holy Scriptures, in both which, there is abundant matter of Meditation, if we had but the hearts to view and read them; besides, the consideration of our own misery, our manifold sins and corruptions, wants and imperfections, God's manifold mercies, and innumerable blessings vouchsafed unto us, the administration of his judgments, and such like, of which I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. And therefore there being no want of good seed, we have no cause to complain of anything but the barrenness of our hearts, and their averseness to good things, if they bring not forth, in this kind, plentiful fruits. The which, as it is to be bewailed with true sorrow, that we who have matter enough to think and meditate upon in worldly things, for a whole year together, though none be prepared to our hands, being herein such quick Workmen, that we can both gather our straw, and burn our brick in full tale, should be so barren of matter, when we come to think of things spiritual and heavenly; so it must move us with so much the more diligence and earnestness to read and study the Scriptures, and to observe the works of God, and finding our emptiness, to resort to God's store-houses (like the Egyptians to Joseph's) that we may be filled with such provision as he hath made for us, and have no more cause to complain of want.

Sect. 4 - Other hindrances removed.

Fourthly, we are hindered from performing this duty by manifold distractions both inward and outward. Of the former kind is the indisposition of our hearts to spiritual and heavenly things, and their readiness to be carried away from them (when they take them into their consideration) after worldly vanities. The which so much discourageth many, that they neglect this duty altogether, because they find themselves so unfit to perform it. But our wants and weaknesses should not drive us further from God, but make us rather draw nearer unto him, and by earnest prayer to crave the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, that we may be enabled thereby to serve him better. Neither must our imperfections and distractions in performing Christian duties, move us to neglect them altogether, for this is that which the devil would have: and if we thus far yield unto him, we shall be sure to perform nothing that is good, seeing he will never let distractions and discouragements to be wanting unto us; but being thoroughly humbled in the sight of our infirmities, and bewailing our wants, let us labor daily after more perfection. And to this end let us use due preparation before we undertake this exercise, of which I shall speak afterwards. Secondly, let us keep the Christian watch, before spoken of, over our hearts, and repel these distractions at their first entrance. Thirdly, let us pray against them, and desire the Lord to strengthen us, that they may not prevail to pull away our hearts from him. Fourthly, we must at other times restrain our hearts and minds, that they may not wander whither they list, and keep them under some command, that they may not be to seek when we would employ them about holy duties. Fifthly, we must fit the length of our Meditations to the strength of our devotion, and let them be enlarged as it increaseth. Which means, when we have used, let us set upon this exercise; and if our distractions are so great and many, that they would give us leave to think upon nothing else, let us make them the matter of our Meditation, accusing our hearts for their looseness and worldliness, their deadness and backwardness to all good duties, that so we may bring them to unfeigned repentance.

Sect. 5 - That company and worldly business should not hinder us from this exercise of Meditation.

The outward distractions, which are alleged as necessary impediments of this holy exercise, are the company of friends, who coming to visit us, take up that time which should be spent about it, the multitude of business, which affordeth us no leisure, and want of convenient place, wherein we might be privately by ourselves, to perform this duty which cannot be done in the company of others. But for the first; no company should be so dear unto us, as that it should cause us to break off our communion and society with God. Or if to avoid incivility and giving offense, we do intermit this exercise, and put it off to another time: this must not make us to neglect it altogether, but we must set ourselves about it when our company is gone, and redeem this loss by doubling our diligence in this holy exercise. And for our business and employments, we are, according to our Saviors counsel, to think this one thing necessary, and to be preferred before all other, and first to seek the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, esteeming no business so necessary, as the enriching of our souls with spiritual grace, and using the means which may further and assure us of our salvation; accounting those employments worldly, carnal, and not worthy our pains, which shoulder and thrust out spiritual exercises. And yet if our important business should wholly take us up, and that the necessity of our estate and calling should so strictly at all times bind us unto them, that we had no leisure for religious duties, there were some color (and but a color) of excuse: but the fault is not in the multitude of our employments, but either in our want of wisdom and providence, that we do not rightly dispose of them, and allot to all sorts of duties their seasonable times; or in our worldliness and immoderate love of earthly things, which maketh us think all time lost that is not spent about them, and that we are quite undone, if but a little while we intermit our diligence in seeking of them. For God by one Commandment doth not cross another, nor bringeth us into such

straits, but that we may (if it be not our own fault) have seasonable time of yielding our obedience to them all. He would have us look to our state, and provide for our families, but he would not have us so immoderate in our care and labor, that we should mind nothing else, and have no leisure for religious duties, seeing he is both able and willing to provide all necessaries for us and them, if casting our care upon him, and relying upon his providence, we set apart seasonable time for both. And therefore he would not exempt Joshua (though as a man would think, wholly taken up in the wars, and in the government of a mighty people) from spending some good part of his time in this duty of meditation. And we see that David himself, though wonderfully employed in war and peace; the government of a whole Kingdom, and the care of his own family, did yet much exercise himself in this religious duty. Yet say (which we ought not to do) that our worldly business must have the precedence; if we would not have it appear to be a false, frivolous and carnal pretense, devised of purpose to hide our utter neglect and contempt of religious duties; let us at least allot unto them some of that time which we can spare from our worldly and necessary employments, and set ourselves about this exercise when our business is over. Or suppose they will take up the whole day, let us allot to this use some small part of the night, and make bold to borrow some little time from our sleep, that we may not by the utter neglect of this duty sleep in sin, and so much intend the refreshing of our bodies, as that we suffer our souls to droop and languish, by with-holding from them their spiritual food, and the comfort of their communion and secret conferences with God. For if wicked men are so vigilant and diligent in plotting and performing evil towards others and themselves, that they are content to allot the time of their rest, to labor in these works of darkness, and as David saith of them, devise mischief upon their bed. Yea, if their minds be so intentive, and their hearts so wholly set upon it, that unless they have devised or executed some mischievous design, their sleep departeth from them, as Solomon speaketh: how much rather should we be willing to spare some time from our sleep, that we may spend it in some such holy and heavenly meditations, as may enrich us with spiritual grace, enable us to God's service, and

help us forward in the way of salvation? Finally, suppose that we are so wholly divided between business and sleep, that neither night nor day we can find any time for this holy exercise; yet we have no color of excuse, if we do not set apart some time upon the Lord's Day, which may be spared from public duties in the Congregation, and private with our families, to be spent in meditations, seeing then in what state soever we be, whether bound or free, Masters or servants, rich or poor, we cannot reasonably pretend any such excuses of distraction by our worldly business, all which we are bound to set apart, and to consecrate ourselves wholly, our actions, words, and secret thoughts to the service of God, and to use all good means which may enrich us with grace and further our salvation; and this especially among the rest, for though our case and state may be such, that we are necessarily restrained from God's public service in his holy assemblies, as we see in the example of David, and of captives and prisoners, the sick, and seafaring men, and some servants; yet all men, and in all conditions, may on this day spend some time in holy meditations, upon some things which they have observed out of God's Word, or works. As for that last pretense of wanting a fit and private place for meditation, by reason that we are straitened in our dwellings, and have always some with us in the same room, who would hinder us in this exercise; it is of so small weight, that it is scarce worth the answering. For there is no man that earnestly desireth to perform this duty, who may not at one time or other, find some convenient place for the doing of it. For if he have no room in the house, he may with Isaac, walk abroad into the fields: or if dwelling in the City he be debarred of this privilege, he may as David exhorteth, commune with his own heart upon his bed, and be still; of which his precept he propoundeth himself for an example in diverse places of the Psalms, wherein, as thinking the day too short, or too much taken up with other employments, he professeth that he spent also some part of the night in divine meditations. And so much concerning the reasons which may move us to this exercise, and the impediments which hinder us from undertaking and performing it.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the circumstances of Meditation, as the place, time, and gesture of the body.

Sect. 1 - Of the place of meditation.

IN the doctrine of meditation (which is the next point to be handled according to that order which I before propounded) I will entreat, first of the circumstances of this duty, and then of the substantial parts of it. The circumstances are either the subject place, or the adjuncts, which either respect the time of it, or the disposition and gesture of him that meditateth. The place ought to be private, that being solitary and alone, we may be free from outward distractions, which would hinder us in this exercise, and that being wholly sequestered both in mind and body from all worldly impediments, we may entirely and seriously devote ourselves to the service of God in the performing of this duty. And thus Isaac when he would meditate, walked solitarily in the field; our Savior retired himself sometime to the Desert, sometime to the Mount of Olives. David meditated upon his bed, Daniel in his chamber, and by the river of Ulai, Peter upon the house top. So that there is no place limited to this exercise, seeing God is present everywhere, and will be found in all places alike, if we seek him with devout and holy hearts. And therefore it is not much material whether we meditate either upon our bed in the morning, evening, or in the night watches, or in our secret closets, or in the fields, and in our retired walks. Only these two things are to be observed in our choice of the place; first, that it be free from company and noise; for our meditation must be a soliloquy with God and our own souls; and secondly, this private place must be such, as in our experience we find freest from distraction, and fittest to further us in our devotion. In which regard (as I take it) those places are most convenient, wherein there are

fewest objects to draw away the senses with unusual delights, seeing they are ready to carry to the imagination, what they observe with pleasure, and that being distracted, withdraweth also the mind and heart from this exercise. And consequently our closet and chamber, or our ordinary and usual walk abroad, where nothing is to be observed but that which is common and often seen, are to be preferred before such places, wherein there is variety of new and pleasing objects, and one ordinary place better then diverse and many, because we can there soonest, and with most ease recollect our thoughts, and being gathered, keep them together without distraction.

Sect. 2 - Of the time, that it must not be continual, but as we get fittest opportunity.

Concerning the time of this set and solemn meditation, diverse things are to be observed. First, it must not be perpetual and continual; for howsoever the other kind of meditation, which is sudden, short and occasional, may be at times performed when we have any opportunity; yet this serious and solemn kind cannot be so, in regard of our weakness which cannot bear it and endure the labor, and in respect of other duties which we are bound to perform as well as this, both religious and civil, and must be all done in their due and seasonable time. In which regard it is to be esteemed so far off from a state of Angelical perfection, which is wholly taken up with contemplation, that it cannot be excused nor wiped from the blemish of deserved blame, because many other duties as necessary in their due time and place, are utterly omitted and neglected. Besides, the object of this exercise being spiritual, divine and supernatural, is far too excellent for the weak sight of our minds to be always gazing on, or if it should, it would soon be dazzled and dulled, yea distracted and quite lost; like the bodily eyes with beholding the Sun in his full brightness. Yea, as this exercise must not be continual, so neither should it be over-common: the which as it causeth weariness and

satiety, they loathing, and this remissness and slack performance, which faileth as much in the manner, zeal and devotion, as it exceedeth in time and number; so doth it by assiduity lose in our judgment that esteem, and in our hearts that awful reverence, and fervor of affection which is due unto it; and so becometh cold and formal, heartless, and useless; like physic, which being ordinarily taken, becometh familiar to nature, and so worketh not any extraordinary effect. Neither can the most men be often exercised in this duty in a set and solemn manner, unless they cause other necessary duties of Christianity, and of their callings, to give way unto it with great loss and inconvenience. In which respect, great difference is to be made between the rich and wealthy who have much spare time, and poor men who live by their daily labor, and have little time to spare for the performance of many religious duties no less necessary. And amongst those who have worldly necessaries without bodily toil; me thinks there should be some difference in the frequency of this exercise, between ordinary Christians, and us of the Ministry, and that we should more often apply ourselves unto it, then any other sort of men, both because spiritual and heavenly things are the chief objects about which our minds should be exercised; and because these holy meditations do more directly and immediately fit us for the duties of our callings, then they do other men in theirs. In which regard it were to be wished, that we would let few or no days pass, without some time spent in this holy duty, which will make us much more profitable both to ourselves and others. The which I speak, not to spur on any to outrun his devotion, which being left behind, will make this exercise cold, formal, and not worth the while, and much less to bridle and restrain the zeal of other men, who have will, and time to perform daily this holy duty, but only because I would not ensnare weak consciences with doubts and difficulties, by laying upon them this task as a necessary burden, which the Lord hath left free and at their devotion.

Sect. 3 - Of the fittest time for meditation.

The second thing required in respect of the time, is, that it be not left at random and at large, without any certain limits bounding it to one part of the day more than another, but then doing it, when we are best at leisure, or when some good mood or pang of devotion driveth us to it; for then we shall never be constant in this exercise, but shift it off from one time to another, at the first, rarely performing it, and at the last, neglecting it altogether. But when with good advice we have made choice of that time of the day which is fittest, both in respect of our abilities and occasions; it is our best way (not for conscience but conveniency) to keep us strictly to it, if some important cause and unexpected and weighty business do not press upon us and change our course; observing constantly (as near as we can) the same days of the week, and the same hour of the day, for the ordinary performing of this exercise. For as order in all good duties is a cause of constancy, so an orderly constancy, or constant order is a notable means of continuance and perseverance: whereas if we intermit them and do them only by fits, our false and deceitful hearts, under pretense of putting them off to a more convenient time, will make us at last wholly to omit them. For if we be unfit today, we shall be more unfit tomorrow; and indisposition, if we yield unto it without resistance, not laboring with our hearts to bring them into better frame, and to recover the heat of our cooled devotion, will quickly bring us to a loathing averseness and utter neglect. But though it be concluded that some certain days and hours must be wisely chosen, and constantly devoted to this exercise, yet what special time this should be, as what days of the week, or what hour in the day, should be set apart for it, is not so easily determined; only the Lord's Day so challengeth this duty as most proper unto it, that it cannot then be neglected in some kind or other, without sin. For the choice of other days, and set hours in them, it must be left to Christian prudence, aided by every man's own experience, which will teach us what time we can best spare from our other weighty and ordinary employments, and when we are best disposed and fitted for the devout performance of this religious duty, yet (saving other men's better judgment) ordinarily, and for the most part, the first hour of the morning (as I suppose) is fittest for it: first, because

generally the morning is fittest for all studies and exercises of the mind, when the decayed strength is repaired, and the spent spirits refreshed and renewed by our rest, and all the faculties of our souls more strong and vigorous. Secondly, because if by our weighty employments, we are scanted of time in the rest of the day, we may, to perform so good a duty, borrow an hour from our ordinary time of sleep, without any hindrance to our other business. Thirdly, because having not as yet intermeddled with worldly affairs, we may perform it with less distraction. And lastly, because meditation is a good preparative to our morning sacrifice of prayer. Yet if any man, upon other reasons, or his own experience teaching him that he is best fitted, both in respect of his devotion, and other occasions, do choose rather to meditate in the evening, I leave it as a thing indifferent to his free choice: only I would advise, that we make choice of such a time, wherein we are fresh and vigorous in our spirits and minds, and not when they, or our bodies are spent and wearied, either with bodily labor, or studies of the mind.

Sect. 4 - Constancy in this exercise.

The third thing respecting the time is, that as we must be constant in setting apart, and observing of some certain time of the day for the undertaking and beginning of this exercise; so much more in continuing our meditations the time appointed. Neither must it be performed by fits and snatches, intermingling with them our worldly thoughts, or other business, sometime intermitting, and then again afresh setting upon them: For when the mind is thus distracted between things so opposite in nature, the one is a hindrance to the other, and like the dog that runneth or hunteth after two Hares at once, it catcheth neither. Besides, when our mind is let loose to wander after earthly things, it is not easily again composed and reduced into order; but we shall stand in need of a new preparation; and so be still beginning, and never bring anything to perfection. And therefore when we have begun this exercise, we must constantly

proceed (as near as we can) without distraction or intermission, for that whole space of time which we have allotted unto it; not breaking off our meditation, until we have brought it to some issue, and received by it some spiritual refection. Now what proportion of time is to be allotted to this exercise, we cannot prescribe any certain stint or limits, but must leave it to be measured out unto everyone by his own devotion, which is not a like in all, nor in the same man at all times. Besides, there is great difference between one and another man's leisure in respect of variety of important occasions, pressing some, more than others, and every man more or less, at sundry times. Neither are we always a like fitted, but sometimes are more dull and dead to spiritual exercises, and sooner weary of them; sometimes more cheerful and heavenly-minded, and able to hold out in this spiritual race without breathing or intermission; at one time sooner prepared, and better able to perform, and at another, longer in working our backward hearts to this duty. Only this in general may be said, that our outward exercise must not in time exceed our inward abilities, nor the burden which we impose, our spiritual strength: Both because the Lord is only delighted with cheerful service, and cannot brook that which is dead and forced; and also because if we over-weary ourselves, it will cool and quench, and not inflame and increase our devotion, and make us the more loath to come the next time to take our spiritual repast, when as we did not leave with an appetite, but departed away glutted with loathing satiety.

Sect. 5 - Of the disposition and gesture of the body.

The last circumstance to be observed is, the disposition and gesture of the body, which do not a little further the devotion of the soul. In which there is required, first, that the body be composed to rest and quiet, that it do not by much agitation and violent motion disturb and distract the mind, nor by spending the spirits, and wearying of the outward parts, make the exercise tedious and toilsome. Secondly,

here is required silence, that the mind may more freely discourse with itself, without any interruption of outward noise; unless it be in case that the heart be surcharged with the heat and vehemency of our passions, and fervor of devotion, and do need some vent to give it ease. As for the gesture of the body, no certain rules can be given; but it must be left to be ordered and disposed by Christian prudence and experience. Only in general we may observe these things: First, that our gesture and carriage of our bodies be reverent, in respect of that glorious presence before which we present our souls and bodies, and the weightiness of the duty about which we are employed, seeing this may somewhat further the inward reverence of the heart. Secondly, that we use that gesture which in our experience we find most available to stir up our devotion; for these outward gestures of the body, are but the hand-maids of the mind and heart; which must give their attendance, that they may be ready to yield unto them that seasonable service, which they shall appoint as most fit and profitable. To which purpose, diverse gestures are diversely commended. Some in their Meditations prefer quiet resting of their bodies upon their bed or pallet, whereby they find their minds and souls best fitted for spiritual motion and discourse, and most free from the distraction of all outward objects. Some sitting and inclining their bodies to one side, their table or cheer supporting their elbow, and their hand their head. Some standing still, with their eyes lifted up towards heaven, the Haven of their hopes, and visible place of God's invisible presence, but yet closed to avoid distractions. Some walking, which being a healthful exercise, refresheth the body, and maketh it a more fit instrument of the soul, to perform this duty without weariness. But which of these we use, it is not much material, seeing in themselves one is not better then another, though in respect of us, they may be more or less convenient, in regard of the variety of several men's dispositions. Thirdly and lastly, it is not unprofitable to frame the gesture of the several parts, according to the matter in hand, upon which we meditate, and our inward affection in thinking of it. As when we are humbled in the sight and sense of our sins, and are ashamed and grieved, because we have by them dishonored and displeased our gracious God and loving Father,

we may with the Publican cast down our eyes upon the earth, as not worthy to look up unto heaven; and smite our breast, as lamenting the corruptions that are therein contained. When we offer unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, humble hearts, and holy desires, and beg in the name of Christ with confidence, the benefits which he hath commanded us to ask, and hath promised to give, we may lift up together with our hearts, our eyes and hands towards heaven, from whence we expect to receive the things we ask, with the hand of faith. When our hearts are ravished with the apprehension of God's gracious promises, and the sweet and delightful feelings of his love, and assured hopes of those inestimable joys which he reserveth for us in heaven, we may hold up our heads with comfort and rejoicing, as our Savior speaketh, elevate our hearts towards that place, whither our bodies and souls shall one day triumphantly ascend, and with Abraham, testify unto our own souls, and God, the Author of them, these ravishing comforts, with secret smiles, and outward cheerfulness of our face and countenance; seeing these inward feelings of God's love, are better than wine, to glad the heart, and this unction of the Spirit with these divine consolations, do make the countenance more cheerful then the choicest oil.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of our entrance into Meditation by due preparation.

Sect. 1 - That this preparation is necessary, and wherein it consisteth.

And so I come from the circumstances, to entreat of the exercise itself: In which I will consider, first, the ingress and entrance into it; then the progress, and manner of proceeding in it; and finally, the egress and conclusion of it. The ingress or entrance, consisteth in a due preparation, which the gloriousness and Majesty of God's presence, before whom this action is to be performed, the important weight of the duty to be done, the profit and necessity of doing it well, and our own frailty and imbecility, wants and weakness, averseness and great indisposition to this high and holy exercise, do necessarily require. For if we dare not, without due preparation, approach into the presence of an earthly king, to deal with him about such weighty business, as importeth us no less than our whole estates, yea our lives themselves; how much less should we presume to come into the presence of the Sovereign Monarch of heaven and earth, about such important affairs as concern our spiritual estates, and the everlasting salvation of our souls, unless beforehand we be duly prepared? And if we cannot hope to make any good music, unless we first string our Instruments, and put them in good tune: so neither shall we ever be able to make any harmonious melody in God's hearing, unless we duly prepare all our powers and parts, and put our minds and hearts, our wills and affections in good tune, and provide spiritual Songs and divine Ditties, as the subject matter of our Music, about which we are to exercise our Art and skill. In which two points our preparation chiefly consisteth; For either it is taken up, in preparing and fitting our persons for this exercise; or in provision of profitable matter, as the subject of our Meditation. In the former respect, besides that general preparation before spoken of, by renewing of our repentance, that we may not come polluted

with our sins into so holy a presence, nor touch such pure things with unwashed hands, we are with all care and diligence to prepare all and every of our special faculties and parts both of soul and body. And first, we must come with prepared minds and understandings, both in respect of their illumination and intention. For before we can meditate aright, our minds must be enlightened by God's Word and holy Spirit, that we may understand in some measure the matter on which we are to meditate, with the causes, effects, properties, and circumstances of it, without which we cannot at all perform it. Neither must this knowledge be only in speculation and theory, but also a fruitful saving knowledge, which sanctifieth the heart, and worketh it and all other parts to an holy practice, without which, this exercise cannot be done profitably, and as it ought. In the intention of our minds we must not chiefly and principally propound unto ourselves our own profit and benefit, but perform it in obedience to God, as a duty which he requireth, and whereby we are made more fit to do him service; aiming therein chiefly at the setting forth of his glory. And then as subordinate hereunto, we may, and ought to aim at the enriching of our souls with all spiritual graces, the cheering and comforting of our hearts with divine consolations, the increase of our holiness, and the strengthening of us unto all Christian duties of a godly life.

Sect. 2 - That we must chiefly prepare our hearts and affections.

Secondly, before we undertake this holy exercise, we must prepare our hearts and affections, by laying aside all worldly cares and earthly desires, which if they be retained, will interrupt and distract us in our spiritual Meditations. And as Moses was to put off his shoes before he could be admitted to hear God speaking unto him, or so much as to stand upon that ground, which was sanctified by God's presence; so must we cast off the worldliness of our wills and desires, before there can be any profitable conference between him and us. For there is such dissimilitude, yea contrariety between God and the

world, spiritual and earthly things, that when we turn us to speak unto the one, we turn away from the other; and when our minds and hearts are fixed upon the cares of this life and transitory trifles, by reason of the great distance between them, they are quite divided and distracted from those which are heavenly and spiritual: so that it is more possible to mix together gold and clay, oil and water, then the gold of divine Meditations, and the oil of spiritual thoughts, with the clay of our earthly affairs, and water of worldly vanities. The fountain of our hearts must be clear and well settled, the mud of earthly cares being sunk to the bottom, if we would behold in them any divine Contemplations; for if they be stirred and troubled, nothing will appear through this muddy thickness. And as before we can see the brightness of the Sun, the clouds must be dispelled; so before our minds and hearts can be illuminated and cheered with any heavenly light, or the beams of God's love in our spiritual Meditations, the foggy vapors and mists which rise from the earth and sea of the world, must first be blown away and scattered. Never (saith one) can heavenly contemplation join with earthly commotion: never is the troubled mind possibly able to behold those divine things, which without much difficulty it cannot see when it is most quiet. And therefore if we will meditate with any fruit and profit, we must not be more careful to sequester ourselves outwardly from company, then our hearts inwardly from worldly cares; nor (according to our Saviors counsel) to shut our Closet doors, then to shut the door of our hearts against earthly distractions, and to keep a narrow watch over them, that none may enter at unawares and distract us in this holy exercise. Neither must we only take care to exclude at this time such wicked thoughts, and such carking and carnal cares, as are always unlawful, but even those which are at other times honest and necessary, about our ordinary employments and duties of our callings; yea, those likewise which are religious and spiritual, if they be unseasonable, and nothing pertinent to the present purpose, nor any way suitable to the matter we have in hand; seeing, though in respect of their matter, they be good and holy, yet they are cunningly thrust into our hearts and minds by the tempter, who can transform himself into an Angel of light, in an ill manner,

unseasonably and unprofitably, and to a worse end, namely, to distract our present Meditations, and that by thinking on two things at once of a diverse nature, we should receive benefit by neither, nor brings our thoughts unto any good issue. In which regard, we are not utterly to banish such things out of our hearts, but only to shut them out for the time, and to let them stand at the door, like suitors, till we have dispatched with those, unto whom for the present we have given hearing, lest rushing in uncalled, and speaking altogether after a tumultuous manner, nothing be dispatched through this disorder, whereas by seasonable admittance in due course, and conferring with one after another, all may be brought to good effect. Secondly, as we must cleanse our hearts from these incumbrances, so we must deck and adorn them with the ornaments of virtue, that they may be fit to entertain so high and holy a Ghost; but especially we must deck them with humility, in which he so chiefly delighteth, that he will not only be content to confer with us for a little while, but will even dwell and keep residence with us if we be of an humble spirit. And therefore when we approach into God's presence to perform this duty, let us think and consider of his glorious greatness, and awful Majesty, and of our own baseness and vileness, weakness and unworthiness, saying in our souls with Abraham, Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. And without this humility we cannot profitably perform this duty; for as one saith; None can contemplate the wisdom of God, who are wise in their own conceits; because they are by so much distant from his light, by how much they come short of humility in themselves. For whilst the swelling of pride increaseth in their minds, it closeth the sight of contemplation, and thinking themselves enlightened above all others, they are deprived of the light of virtue. Finally, we must prepare our hearts for Meditation, by sharpening our appetites, and whetting our stomachs after this spiritual repast and food of our souls, by considering seriously of those arguments, by which formerly it hath been commended unto us. For as it is a singular help to our bodily nourishment, when we come to our meat with an hungry appetite, and that food doth us but little good which we feed

upon with loathing satiety: so also is it in the nourishment of our souls; for if we receive our food with a good stomach, we shall the better feed upon it, retain and digest it; whereas, if we come unto it with a cloyed appetite, we shall soon cast it up again, and never digest nor convert it to any spiritual nourishment. Lastly, there is some preparation also required in respect of our bodies; for as we must take heed that they be not too much pampered with excessive diet, seeing this fullness and fatness of body, causeth emptiness and leanness in the soul, dulleth the mind, drowneth the spirits, and oppresseth the heart; so must we on the other side beware, that the body and mind be not wearied, and the spirits spent with former studies and labors, so as they are wholly disabled, that they cannot, as fit instruments, perform any good service to the soul in this spiritual exercise, as being rather disposed to rest and sleep, then to take any profitable pains in this laborious employment.

Sect. 3 - Of the subject matter of our Meditations.

And thus having prepared our persons; the next thing to be done, is to provide fit matter whereupon we may meditate, without which, our Meditations are always unprofitable, and oftentimes hurtful and pernicious. In which respect, the greatest part of men do pitifully fail; for though all are willing to meditate, the mind delighting in its own motion, and in discoursing upon those subjects which it most esteemeth, and upon which the heart is wholly fixed; yet few make choice of such matter, as may be fit for their souls nourishment; but some meditate mischief in their hearts, thinking upon the readiest means, how they may achieve it with least danger; some how they may satisfy their carnal desires with worldly riches, pleasures and preferments, and raise themselves by other men's ruins; some meditate upon natural things with natural minds, never drawing them to spiritual use; some on domestical matters, how they may best contrive their business; or on civil affairs, and high points of state; yea, many men spend a great part of their Meditations, about

matters merely concerning other men, and nothing at all appertaining unto them. Upon which, and a thousand such like subjects, we may spend our spirits, wear out our bodies, and weary our minds, and yet be never the holier in this life, nor happier in the life to come. But the matter of these Christian Meditations whereof we entreat, ought to be wholly spiritual and divine, either in respect of the things themselves, or at least, the use which we are to make of them. And thus the whole Scriptures, and every part and parcel of them may be the subject matter of our Meditations, when we seriously consider of the right and natural sense and meaning of them, and draw them unto use, either for instruction, admonition, reproof, consolation, or the reformation and amendment of our sinful lives. In which kind of Meditations, whoso exercise themselves, they are by the Psalmist pronounced blessed. But besides the text of holy Scriptures, any point of the doctrine of divinity contained in them, may be fit matter for us to meditate on; of which, I will here set down some of the chief and principal, that those who are weak in knowledge, and young beginners in this exercise, may be so sufficiently furnished, that they need not to neglect it for want of matter.

Sect. 4 - That the Scriptures themselves, and the things revealed in them, are fit matter for Meditation: As the nature of God, his actions and decree.

And that we may proceed in some order, we may make the matter of our Meditations, either the Scriptures themselves, or else the things revealed in them. The Scriptures themselves are a fit subject for our Meditation, by considering that they are the Word, not of man, but of God, and so to be heard and read, loved and obeyed of us; that in this regard they are most excellent, and to be preferred above all other writings, most certain and infallible, most perfect and all-sufficient, most ancient and durable, and finally, that they are plain and easy, giving light to the simple, most profitable and necessary to salvation,

and therefore to be read and studied of all men. The things revealed in the Scriptures, are either those which respect faith, and are to be believed, or else manners, and are to be practiced. The things to be believed, are either those which concern God or the Church. The former respect God himself, or his actions and works. From God himself we may have plentiful matter of divine Meditation, as first, that there is a God, and the uses that we are to make of it; what this God is, and how he hath revealed himself unto us in his essence and persons, his attributes and names. Of which I have spoken in the beginning of this Treatise, and have briefly described God's nature and attributes, as his simplicity, infiniteness, eternity, immutability, omni-presence, all-sufficiency, which being rightly understood and remembered, will afford excellent matter of holy Meditations. The actions of God, are either his decree, or the execution of it. In the decree itself, we are principally to meditate upon our election to salvation, the causes, and effects and properties of it, especially the infallibility and certainty; and how, and by what reasons and signs, being sure in itself, we may come to be assured, that our names particularly are written in the Book of life. In the execution of the decree, which is either general or special, we have plentiful matter of Meditation. In respect of the general execution, we may meditate first of the works of creation, which were not made all at one instant, as they might as easily, if God had so pleased; but in six days; that by this orderly proceeding, we might the better be enabled to meditate upon them. And here we may meditate on the heavens, their glory and beauty, their greatness and durableness, their motions and constant order: How they are adorned with the glorious brightness of the Stars, Moon, and Sun, be-spangling this vaulty roof of God's great building, everyone exceeding another in beauty and bravery. Thus we may meditate upon the diverse regions of the air, and the creatures contained in them, the presaging Comets and fiery exhalations, the Meteors of the middle region, clouds and winds, thunder and lightning, rain, snow, hail, and frosts, whose hidden treasures and true causes none can pry into, but he that made them; the disagreeing elements joining in an excellent harmony, for the perfecting of all compound bodies. Neither doth the earth, and

creatures therein contained, afford unto us less matter of Meditation, as trees, plants, and flowers of excellent beauty, and almost infinite variety, growing from silly seeds in outward show, not differing (many of them) one from another. The excellent workmanship of the brute creatures, the endless variety of their inward forms and outward shapes, their qualities and properties, their life, sense, and motions, with the exquisite organs and instruments, every small particle having for these purposes their special and necessary use. Their generation, whereby being corruptible in themselves, they become, after a sort, incorruptible in their kinds, after their death living in their posterity. Secondly, we may meditate upon the providence of God, whereby he preserveth all things which he hath created, governing and directing them to those ends for which he hath made them, especially that main end of setting forth his glory. And that he doth thus rule and dispose, not only in a general manner, of all things, but of every particular, even such as seem to be of least moment, and most casual and contingent.

Sect. 5 - Of the execution of the Decree in the creation and government.

Again, the particular execution of God's decree, in the creation and government of Angels and men, affordeth unto us plentiful matter of Meditation. As the felicity and glory of the blessed Spirits, the Image of God in them; their alacrity and cheerfulness; their speed and diligence in doing God's will, and in ministering unto the elect for their preservation, and the furthering of their salvation. The fall and misery of the evil angels, their malice towards God and his elect, and their policy and power in seeking their destruction, by drawing them to sin, which should double our diligence in arming ourselves against all their temptations. So also we may have abundant matter of meditation ministered unto us from that which is revealed in the Scriptures concerning man. As his Creation, whereby God made man's body of the dust of the earth; the Image of God in man

consisting in wisdom, righteousness, and true holiness; his felicity in the state of innocence, the immortality and excellency of his soul, the beauty, health and vigor of his body, his dominion over the creatures, the joys of Paradise. Likewise in our meditations we may consider, that man continued not in this blessed estate, but fell from it; and that the cause hereof was sin. Where we take occasion generally to meditate of sin, what it is, how horrible, grievous, and contrary to God's pure nature, and how much in this regard he hateth and detesteth it: the fearful properties of it, both in respect of the guilt and punishment; temporal, as all the calamities and miseries of this life, and our spiritual servitude to Satan; and eternal, as the loss of heavenly happiness, and everlasting condemnation both of body and soul. More especially, we may meditate on the fall of our first Parents, what it was, and wherein it consisted, the causes of it outward and inward, and the lamentable effects which followed upon it. As God's fearful curse upon themselves, and upon the creatures for their sake, the defacing of his glorious Image in them, the sense of their nakedness, and terror of conscience accompanying it, the loss of their dominion over the creatures, their thrusting out of Paradise, the visible place of God's presence, their separation from him, and all other evils both of sin and punishment. The wretchedness of all mankind in the state of disobedience and unbelief, by reason of that corruption which followed the fall; as the participation of Adams sin, guilt and punishment. The propagation of their sin and misery to all their posterity. Their original sin and corruption of nature, both in respect of their souls and bodies. The ignorance and vanity of our minds, the error of our judgments, the wickedness and worldliness of all our imaginations; the impurity, stupidity and horror of our consciences; the loss of our freedom of will in choosing that which is good; their averseness and rebellion against the will of God, and proneness to all evil; the blockishness of our memories to receive into their keeping any good motions, and their slippery feebleness to retain them; the infidelity, security and hardness of our hearts; the corruption and disorder of our affections and passions; the pollution of our bodies, their feebleness and lumpish heaviness unto any good action. From which root of original

corruption have sprung all kinds of actual transgressions, we being made thereby utterly unable so much as to think a good thought, or to will that which is good. Whereof it cometh to pass, that our best actions in this state of corruption and unbelief, are no better than sin, how glorious soever they seem to the world. And here we may meditate of the several kinds of actual sins; those that are internal, as wicked thoughts, errors in judgment, forgetfulness in our memories, unclean and carnal lusts: and those which are external, secret or manifest, reigning or not reigning, of omission or commission, in our words or deeds, which we have committed as principals or accessories. Sins of ignorance, or of knowledge, of infirmity and frailty, or of contumacy and rebellion, which we have willfully and presumptuously committed against God. The like matter of meditation the punishment of our sins doth minister unto us: As namely, that by our sins we have made ourselves subject to the fearful wrath of God, the curse of the Law, all the plagues and punishments of this life: As all external miseries which are innumerable; respecting our estate, as poverty, penury, losses and crosses; or our bodies, as heat, cold, hunger, thirst, sicknesses and diseases, shortness and uncertainty of life and death itself. So also the internal miseries of the soul, as terrors of conscience, and griefs of mind; or contrariwise, to be given up of God to our security and hardness of heart, infidelity, final impenitency and to a reprobate mind. And finally, the eternal and everlasting punishments of body and soul in their separation from God, and the unspeakable torments of hell fire. And finally, we may meditate of the remedilessness of this our miserable condition, in respect of any created help of men. Angels, or any creature, as the top and consummation of all our misery, seeing the infinite Justice of God being offended by our sins, would not admit of any finite satisfaction. The which kind of meditations upon sin and punishment, serve not only to humble us before God, by bringing us unto a true sense of our sin and misery, to make us to deny ourselves in the work of our Redemption, and to fly unto Christ, but also cause us to admire and praise God's mercy and goodness, patience and longsuffering, who hath so long born with us in the state of infidelity, and hath not inflicted upon us all these

fearful punishments which our sins have deserved; yea, to inflame our hearts with most fervent love towards God, and his Christ, and holy Spirit, who seeing us in this wretched plight, loaded and defiled with the filth of sin, and guilty and liable to all punishments and miseries, did pity us in this miserable estate, and when there was no other means of salvation and deliverance from all these evils, wrought our freedom and redemption by the death and obedience of the Lord of life.

Sect. 6 - Of the great work of Redemption by our Savior Christ.

The which great work of our Redemption by Christ, doth above all other parts of Divinity, minister unto us most plentiful and fit matter for our meditations, as serving notably to work in our hearts a true hatred of sin, to inflame them with God's love, to work them to his fear, to kindle in them the zeal of his glory, to confirm our faith, strengthen our affiance and hope, renew our repentance, and to stir us up to perform with all cheerfulness the duties of a godly life, that by walking before him in holiness and righteousness, we may glorify him who hath redeemed and made us his own at so high a price. Now the points which here afford unto us matter of meditation, are manifold. As first, that it was necessary we should have a Savior and Mediator between God and us; seeing in his Decree of Election he hath ordained the means, as well as the end, and that none but Christ could save us, who is the foundation of our Election. In Christ we may meditate both upon his person and offices. And in his person, consider both his natures and states, both of humiliation and exaltation. Here we have plentiful and profitable matter of meditation concerning the Incarnation of Christ, his Conception by the holy Ghost in the womb of the blessed Virgin, the framing and sanctifying of his human nature, the assuming and uniting of it to the Divine nature, by a substantial union, without confusion, separation, or alteration of either nature in their properties. His Birth and Circumcision; and that this Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is the

true Messiah. So likewise we may meditate on his Office of Mediatorship; as that he is the alone Mediator between God and man. How he was called to his office, and the testimonies of it; of his Baptism, fasting in the Wilderness, and Divine unction with the Spirit above measure. Of the eternity of his Office, and parts of it, being anointed of God to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. Of his Prophetical Office, whereby he hath both outwardly revealed unto us the knowledge of God and his will, and inwardly enlighteneth our minds to conceive it, by his grace and holy Spirit; and of the confirmation of this doctrine by miracles. Of his Priestly Office, and of his All-sufficient satisfaction for our sins. Of his perfect obedience, both active, whereby he hath fulfilled the Law for us; and passive, whereby he hath suffered all those punishments which were due unto us for our sins. And this yieldeth unto us most excellent and profitable matter of meditation in all the parts thereof; as his temptations in the Wilderness by the devil, the manifold miseries which he endured, as poverty, hunger, weariness, contempt, disgraces, scoffs and bitter taunts, reproaches, slanders, reviling's, and such like, which he suffered in the whole course of his life; and those his passions and sufferings a little before his death; as his internal and bitter agony in the Garden, where his wrestling with God's wrath, and the burden of his Fathers heavy displeasure for our sins, which he had taken upon him, forced out of his most blessed Body a bloody sweat. And his external sufferings, as his betraying by his own Apostle, his apprehension by his cruel enemies, who hailed him before the Judgment seat as a malefactor, who was the Lord our righteousness; falsely accused him, who had committed no sin, and in whose mouth there was no guile, unjustly condemned him, who was just and innocent, mocked and scorned him, blindfolded and buffeted him, reviled and spit upon him, clothed him with purple, and crowned him with thorns, whipped and tormented him, crucified and killed him. And here we may meditate of this kind of death, which was most bitter and painful, ignominious and shameful, accursed and uncomfortable, seeing he suffered not only a bodily death, but the wrath of God, which is the death of the soul, and was utterly emptied (as the Apostle speaketh) of all divine comfort, and

was as a man forlorn and forsaken of God in his own sense and apprehension, which made him to cry out upon the Cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Thus also we have matter of meditation from those things which followed his death; as from his triumph upon the Cross over the wrath of God, the curse of the Law, Satan, death, hell, and all the enemies of our salvation, in respect of the virtue of his merits. From his descension and burial, whereby he was held for a time under the arrest of death. From those things likewise which were done by him in his state of exaltation; as his Resurrection, mansion upon the earth for the space of forty days, teaching and instructing his Disciples in those things which appertained to his Kingdom. His Ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, and there making intercession for us. And that which followeth of all these, as the general effect and fruit of them all, the great work of our Redemption. So have we matter of meditation from Christ's Kingly Office, by which, sitting at the right hand of his Father, in all glory, majesty and power, he reigneth over all the world, and more peculiarly, over his Church. And here we may meditate upon the parts of his Kingly Office, which are his special administration, and general and last Judgment. In the former, we may consider the government of his Church, and the abolition of the kingdom of darkness. In that we may meditate on his calling and gathering of it out of the world, and the consecration of it being gathered by his presence and protection, providing for it all necessaries, and preserving it from all dangers: where we may take occasion to meditate upon all God's blessings and benefits, both temporal, spiritual and eternal, which he hath, and will bestow generally upon his whole Church, and also upon those which he hath particularly and in special manner vouchsafed unto us, both in our preservation from evil, and fruition of good. The abolition of the kingdom of darkness is the overthrow and destruction of all his enemies, and especially that grand adversary, Antichrist, the whore of Babylon.

Sect. 7 - Of the external means of executing God's Decree of Election.

Moreover, we may have plentiful matter of meditation, from the external means of executing the Decree of our Election: As from the Covenant of grace made with us in Christ, wherein the Lord hath promised that he will be our God, and we shall be his people, the remission of our sins and salvation of our souls, grace and all good things in this life, and everlasting happiness in the life to come, upon the alone condition of faith, which being lively and effectual, bringeth forth the fruits of unfeigned repentance. So also from the means whereby this Covenant is administered, namely, the ministry of the Word, and administration of the Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; both which afford unto us plentiful matter of meditation. From the degrees likewise of the executing God's Decree of Election and Reprobation. As the love and free grace of God in Christ: and the degrees of the declaration of this love both in this life, and afterwards. The first degree in this life is our effectual calling, the parts whereof are, our election and separation from the world, God's donation, giving Christ unto us to be our Savior, and us to Christ to be saved by him; and finally, our engrafting into Christ, and union with him. From the means of executing this our calling, which is the saving hearing of the Word, the softening of our hard hearts, making them humble, contrite, penitent and sorrowful for sin, which are all preparatives to our sound conversion and regeneration, whereby we who were dead in sin, are quickened and revived by the Spirit of God, effectually applying unto us the virtue of Christ's death and Resurrection. From the work of grace thus begun in us, we may have much profitable matter of meditation. As of the illumination of our minds with saving knowledge, of justifying faith, with the causes, effects, degrees, properties and signs of it, our justification by faith in Christ, our reconciliation, and adoption; and manifold other privileges of the faithful, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. The special fruits of faith respecting our Justification, as our entrance into grace by which we stand, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, confidence, free access to the Throne of grace, peace of conscience, joy in the holy Ghost, and a holy glorying in

God's benefits. The fruits of faith respecting our adoption, as the Spirit of adoption, hope, Christian liberty. So also we have excellent matter of meditation from our sanctification, the causes, effects, degrees, properties, means and signs of it, and from the special parts of it, our mortification unto sin, and vivification to newness of life. From the imperfection of our sanctification, which is but begun in this life, and to be perfected in the life to come, and that by reason hereof the relics of all sorts of sin do still remain in us, blindness in our minds, error in our judgments, impurity in our consciences, forgetfulness in our memories, rebellion in our wills, security, impenitency, infidelity and hardness in our hearts, corruption and disorder in our affections, and by reason of all these many sins breaking out into our actions. And here we may meditate of those special sins and corruptions whereunto our natures are most prone, and wherewith we are most often overtaken; and of the means whereby we may mortify and subdue them, that they may no longer bear this sway in us as in former times. So also we have here occasion to meditate of our begun sanctity in all our parts and actions: of the internal holiness of our natures, and the change that is wrought in us by repentance from evil to good, from corruption to grace, the which is to be observed in all our inward faculties; as the holiness of our minds and understandings in their spiritual illumination, whereby they become wise and prudent in the things appertaining to God and our salvation; the purging of our consciences from dead works, and their natural impurity; the sanctity of our memories, whereby they become faithful Registers of good things; the freedom of our wills in choosing good, and refusing of evil; the suppling, softening, and sanctifying of our hearts; the rectifying, right ordering, purging and renewing of our affections; as love, hatred, confidence, hope, fear, despair, joy, sorrow, anger, zeal, and the rest. The sanctity of our bodies and outward actions, appearing in our new obedience and good works. The integrity, sincerity, alacrity and constancy of them; the parts of this obedience, which are, the denying of ourselves, and the profession of Christ. How we are to deny ourselves, namely, by resigning up ourselves wholly unto God, to be not only his servants, but also his soldiers in the Christian warfare; where we may take

occasion to meditate of that due preparation which is required to this warfare, and of the Christian armor, and of the conflict itself, consisting in the manifold temptations of our spiritual enemies, and our resistance, and of our standing and falling in it. How we are also to deny ourselves in taking up our cross and following of Christ, bearing with patience whatsoever afflictions he imposeth; and of the means whereby we may attain unto it. In respect of our profession of Christ, we are to meditate how we are to carry ourselves towards Christ himself, and how towards his members. How we are to profess Christ at all times, by invocation and calling upon God in his name and mediation. And here we have much profitable matter of meditation concerning prayer, both in respect of the doctrine and use of it, of which I have before spoken, and the particular practice of it in the Lord's Prayer, of which we may profitably meditate, proceeding from one petition to another. The profession of Christ in time of danger, which is either the profession of the mouth by Christian apology, or of the fact, by suffering persecution and martyrdom, of which we may meditate, and the means whereby we may be prepared and strengthened unto them. The profession of Christ respecting his members, is our edifying them, by instruction, admonition, exhortation, consolation and good example, or our helping and relieving them by the works of mercy and alms-deeds, whereon we may profitably meditate, and of the motives and means whereby we may be stirred up and enabled to perform them. And finally, our perseverance in grace, and in all these Christian duties, even to the very end of our lives, which is the consummation of all the rest, is necessary to be thought upon, our certainty of it, and by what means we may come to this assurance. And thus we must meditate on the degrees of God's executing the Decree of our election in this life. In respect of the life to come, he executeth it by our glorification, of which we may meditate, as it is begun or perfected. It is begun at the death of the Elect, whereby their souls being separated from their bodies, are received into the joys of heaven. The which our death is an excellent subject of meditation; as of the nature of it to the elect, the certainty of it, and uncertainty of the

time, of our preparation to it, and means whereby we may be armed against the fear of it.

Sect. 8 - Of the means of executing the Decree of reprobation.

Contrariwise, there is much matter of meditation afforded from the proper means of God's executing the Decree of reprobation in the wicked; as both from the foundation of it, the fall of Adam, and the hatred and wrath of God following upon it, and also from the degrees of executing this Decree in the wicked and unfaithful, which are proper to those which are either called or not called, or common to them both. The former are either hypocrites, or openly profane. The degrees proper to these are an ineffectual calling, and their relapse from it into their former wickedness. Here we may meditate of the degrees of this calling, which are inward illumination of the mind in the knowledge of the truth, worldly and carnal penitence, and sorrow arising from terror and fear, or sense and feeling of punishment; temporary faith, taste of heavenly gifts, and external reformation of life. Where we may consider how far a reprobate may go in Christianity, and what real and substantial differences we can observe between those shows of graces which are in them, and the truth of them in ourselves, that we may be the better assured of our sincerity and uprightness before God. The degrees of relapse in those which are thus uneffectually called, are, first, that they are deceived with sin, and the fraud of their own deceitful hearts, from whence their hearts become hardened, and from thence stubbornly perverse, and so through incredulity not assenting to the truth of God's Word, they break out to open profaneness, which is in the end accompanied with despair and final Apostasy. Upon all which we may meditate, that we may make our own calling and election sure, by withstanding the first degrees of Apostasy, watching over ourselves (as the Apostle warneth us) that we be not hardened and drawn away by the deceitfulness of sin, that there be not found in us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. The degrees of executing

this Decree in those which are not called, who for the most part are ignorantly superstitious, Idolaters, Pagans, and Atheists, are the holding and detaining of the truth in injustice, natural ignorance and vanity of mind, hardness of heart, a reprobate mind, and committing of sin with greediness: And the degrees common to both, are their pollution with all sin and wickedness in their lives, and their entrance into condemnation at their death, when as their souls being separated from their bodies, are cast in the torments of hell, and pursued with the wrath of God. On all which we may meditate, that we may take occasion to magnify God's Justice towards them in their deserved punishments; and his free grace and undeserved love towards us, who being in the same mass and lump of corruption, are separated from them, and made vessels of honor, that God's grace and mercy might be magnified in our salvation.

Sect. 9 - Of the eternal execution of God's Decree at the end of the world, &c.

Of the eternal execution of God's Decree, we may likewise meditate, which shall be at the end of the world, and is either general, respecting the whole world, as the destruction of it with flaming fire, which consideration the Apostle Peter maketh a strong motive unto godliness; that we may be found of God in peace, without spot, and blameless; and the renovation and perpetual conservation of it; or else the special execution of it in the inhabitants of the world, which shall be at the general Judgment, and the eternal retribution which followeth it. And here we may profitably meditate on this Day of Judgment, when Christ shall come in glory, to judge both the quick and the dead, and of the signs of his coming; of the resurrection of the dead, and change of the living; of the citation of all before Christ's Judgment seat; and of the diverse sentence which he shall pronounce for the elect, and against the reprobate; and of the blessed estate of the one, and the cursed and miserable condition of the other; of the eternal retribution which shall then be of rewards to the faithful, in

the full fruition of eternal life and blessedness, heavenly joy and perfect glory; of all the parts whereof I have spoken in another place; and of the retribution of punishment to the wicked in hell torments, both in their souls and bodies. And these are the things whereupon we may meditate, respecting the actions of God. Now concerning the things which we are to believe concerning the Church, there is all profitable matter of Meditation. As that there is a Church, called and gathered out of the rest of the world, as God's own peculiar people, to worship and serve him according to his will. That there is in this company a holy Communion of Saints, united unto our Head Christ, by his Spirit and a lively faith, and with one another, as members of the same body, with the bond of faith and love. That this Church is Catholic, part whereof is Militant on earth, and part of it Triumphant in heaven. That the properties of the Militant Church are to be either invisible, which consisteth only of the elect, or visible, consisting partly of them, and partly of hypocrites; that there are certain infallible notes of the true visible Church, by which we may discern it from all others, as the sound preaching of the Word, and the right administration of the Sacraments, in all the essential parts of them, according to Christ's holy institution; and finally, that there are also infallible notes of the true members, both of this and the invisible Church of Christ, on which we may profitably meditate, and by examination apply particularly unto ourselves, that we may know whether we be or no in this number. And these are the things to be believed, which we may choose for the matter of our Meditation. The things which are to be done, are all contained in the Law of God or ten Commandments, upon which we may meditate severally, and on all and every of the virtues and vices contained in any of them, but especially on those virtues in which we are most defective, and on those vices, unto which our corrupt natures are most inclined; as also on the means and helps whereby we may be enabled to embrace and practice the one, and shun and avoid the other; and on the signs, whereby we may upon due examination know whether or no we be endued with those virtues, and purged from those vices. Of all which, I have spoken in the former part of this Treatise, unto which I refer the Reader; or if he desireth a more full and perfect discourse, unto

that exact and learned abstract of the duties commanded, and sins forbidden in the Law of God, written by my right reverend and dear Brother, to whose labors I acknowledge myself most beholding for all the former heads of divinity, which I have set down, as the matter about which our Meditations may be profitably exercised.

Sect. 10 - Rules directing us in the choice of the fittest matter for our Meditations.

And thus have I showed what great and abundant matter there is fit for our Meditations; seeing any one of the former general heads or points being thoroughly discoursed on in our minds, and wrought upon and applied to our affections, according to that form which I shall afterwards prescribe, is sufficient for one days exercise; and many of them will afford plentiful matter for much longer time. And therefore, lest any should now be as much troubled with plenty, as they were before with want, not knowing what theme or subject to choose out of such great variety, and therefore being thus distracted in their thoughts, should let all alone; I will for the direction of such in their choice, propound these rules following. First, that we ordinarily and most often make choice of such matter, as we find to be most fit to stir up our devotion, to strengthen our faith, to work upon our hearts and affections, to inflame our love towards God, and kindle our zeal, to confirm our affiance, increase our hope, fear of God, humility and patience, and finally, to enable us with all cheerfulness to perform all the duties of a godly life. To which purpose, we must rarely choose such matter as is merely intellectual, and fit rather for speculation than for use and practice (though in truth, there be few points of sound Divinity, and scarce any of those before expressed, which being rightly handled in our Meditations, will not afford some fit matter, as well for the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, as for the enlightening of our minds, and increasing of our knowledge) but such as hath been matter of fact, and brought to the understanding by the imagination, and to it by

the ministry of the senses; which will more easily and kindly afford matter of Meditation to the most simple, fit to work upon their hearts, to inflame their love, stir up their devotion, and enable them unto all Christian duties, the which are the main ends of this exercise, and not the enlightening of the mind with curious speculations and fruitless knowledge. In which regard, when we find the matter on which we meditate, unfit for those uses, and relish in it little sweetness of spiritual refreshing, or feel small warmth for the heating of our hearts with love, zeal, and true devotion, we need not to insist upon it, but may pass to some other point, which is more effectual to the achieving of these ends. Secondly, we must make choice of such matter as in our discretion we think, not only in its own nature most excellent, and generally most profitable and necessary, but also such as is fittest for our persons and present state, place, time, and other circumstances. For as those who are invited to a great and bountiful feast, do not feed on every dish, nor always on such as are most costly, and generally esteemed best, but (at least, if they keep a good diet) make choice of one or two amongst the rest, which they think fittest for their stomachs, and in respect of the present state of their bodies, most likely to bring with delight to their taste, wholesome nourishment for the preserving of their health and strength: so in that great plenty of provision which I have made to entertain my guests at this spiritual feast, they must not run over many things at once, nor always prefer in their choice, such points as in their own nature exceed others; but pick out one, or some few which are most fit for their present state and condition, and most likely to yield unto them the best nourishment for the strengthening and preserving of their souls in their spiritual good liking, and better enabling them to all good duties. Lastly, seeing our souls as well as our bodies have their satiety, by feeding often or much at the same time upon the same dish, therefore having such great plenty set before us, it shall be our wisdom to take the benefit of this variety, not feeding over often upon the same dish, which made the Israelites loath Manna itself, though a heavenly food, nor too much of anything at one time, which made their dainty Quails, through satiety, to come out of their nostrils; but whetting on our appetite by change of diet

every meal; and even at the same time helping the weakness of our stomachs with some little variety, when as we find them glutted; let us, when we are weary of meditating over-long on one point, insist no longer upon it, but pass unto another. Provided always, that we do not herein give place to fickle inconstancy, nor liberty to our roving hearts, passing loosely from one thing to another, and not bringing any point to a good issue.

Sect. 11 - That we must conclude our preparation unto Meditation with Prayer.

And thus having prepared both our persons and matter, the last thing required in our preparation, is, that we conclude it, and make entrance into our Meditation by effectual prayer, for God's direction and blessing upon our intended exercise. For seeing of ourselves we are not able so much as to think a good thought, but all our grace and goodness cometh from God the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth; therefore let us not fondly presume upon our own strength, as though we were able to achieve so weighty and difficult a business without his aid; but acknowledging our own weakness and averseness to this holy duty, let us crave the assistance of his holy Spirit, which only can enable us unto it. Besides, Prayer and Meditation being of like nature, and fruits of the same regenerating Spirit, are mutual helps one to another, Meditation preparing matter for our Prayers, and bringing unto them fervency of zeal and heat of devotion, and Prayer returning again to our Meditations this borrowed fervor and vigor, when ascending into heaven, it hath fetched it from God. And as the natural heat and moisture preserve one another, and both fail when one is defective, the one perishing for want of heat, and the other for want of nourishment: Or as there is between the stomach and heart, such intercourse, as preserveth them both in their well-being, the stomach preparing matter and nourishment, for preserving in the heart the vital spirits; and the heart returning these spirits again to the

stomach, which give it natural heat and warmth, whereby it is fitted and enabled to make good concoction; so is it between Meditation and Prayer, which are mutual helpers one to another, and neither of both retain long their virtue and vigor, if either of them do fail the other. But this Prayer which is to prepare us for Meditation, is rather to be pithy and fervent, then long and in many words, seeing it is not the main duty which is here intended, but only a preparative making way unto it, wherein acknowledging our own debility and insufficiency, we are to crave the assistance of God's holy Spirit, in some such form as this which followeth. O Lord, my God, who art infinitely good and gracious in thyself, and the chief Author of whatsoever goodness there is in me, both as thou movest me thereunto by thy commandment, and enablest me unto it by thy holy Spirit, I most humbly beseech thee to pardon my manifold and grievous sins, whereby I have made myself unworthy to approach into thy glorious and holy presence, and unable to perform any duty of thy service, and purge me thoroughly from the guilt, punishment and corruption of them all, in the precious blood of Christ, that they may not be as a wall of separation between thee and me, to hide thy face, and to stop the sweet influences of thy favor from me. And seeing thou requirest this duty which I am now about to perform, and hast inclined my heart to yield obedience, O thou, who art only able to bring it to good effect, vouchsafe unto me the gracious assistance of thine holy Spirit, and thereby enable me to achieve it in some such manner, as may be acceptable unto thee, and profitable for mine own salvation. Enlighten my darkened understanding, that I may rightly conceive of thy Truth; sharpen mine invention, strengthen my memory, incline my adverse will to this holy duty, sanctify, supple, and soften my hard and rebellious heart, and enlarge it with holy and heavenly desires, inflame it with the love of thee and spiritual things, with fervent devotion, and with an ardent zeal of thy glory. Rectify the disorder of my corrupt affections and tumultuous passions; curb and keep in my wandering thoughts and roving heart, and knit them fast unto thee in the bonds of thy love and fear, that they may not range after worldly vanities, and distract me in this duty; but grant that they may be so wholly intent to this

present exercise, that I may bring it to some profitable and good issue: And so bless me therein, that I may find the fruit and benefit of it in mine own soul, by having the point on which I am now to meditate, better cleared to my understanding, for the increasing of saving knowledge, more thoroughly imprinted in my weak memory, that it may be always ready for use, and more effectually wrought into my heart and affections, that I may hereby find my corruptions more subdued and abated, the saving graces of thy Spirit increased, and my whole man more and more enabled to perform unto thee with cheerfulness and diligence all the duties of a godly life, to the glory of thine holy Name, and the comfort and salvation of mine own soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of our progress and proceeding in the exercise of Meditation, and what is required therein.

Sect. 1 - That we must proceed orderly in this exercise, laying down the grounds in our understandings and building upon them in our hearts and affections.

And thus much of our ingress and preparation to Meditation; the second point propounded, is our progress and proceeding in the exercise itself; wherein we must avoid disorder and preposterous handling of the point propounded to our Meditation, which is the author of tumultuous confusion, by which being tired, we either break off the exercise, or continue it without fruit; and contrariwise, proceed in an orderly course, first laying the grounds of this exercise, and then building upon them. To which purpose we are to know, that there are diverse ends of this exercise, as the enlightening of our

minds with saving knowledge, and the imprinting of it in our memories, which are not the main things intended in it, but as helps and means conduce unto them. For the principal ends at which we are to aim, is, that we may hereby more and more incline our wills, and work our hearts and affections to the choosing, embracing, and loving of that good, and the refusing, shunning, and abhorring of that evil, which they come to know more clearly by this discourse of the understanding, and that we may make good use of all we know in the whole course of our lives. Notwithstanding, because our wills and affections are but blind faculties, which of themselves cannot tell rightly what to choose or refuse, affect or dislike; therefore the understanding faculty, which is the eye of the soul, and the chief Captain and Leader of all her forces, must always accompany them for their direction in this exercise of Meditation. So one saith, that there is a twofold access or progress of contemplation; the one in the understanding, the other in the affection; the one yielding light, the other heat; the one in acquisition of matter, the other in devotion. Of which two, the understanding is to have the precedency in this exercise, that the will, heart, and affections, may work by it light, being led and guided, moved and excited by it, to choose or refuse, love or loath, that which it propoundeth unto them, either good or evil. But yet the chief part of our time and strength is not to be spent in the discourse of the understanding, theory, and speculation, but having attained hereby to some knowledge of the point in hand, we are chiefly to labor, that we may work it upon our hearts and affections, for the increasing of their holiness, the inflaming of our love, stirring up of our devotion, and the strengthening and enabling of us to make use of that we know, in the practice of it in our lives. In which regard, we are to stint and shorten the discourse of our understanding, that our wills, hearts, and affections may have more liberty and conveniency to attain unto their main ends. To which purpose, we must consider, that in this exercise we principally seek after goodness, which is the object of the will, rather than truth, which is the object of the understanding; and to be made more holy, rather than more learned; unto which we cannot attain by the bare discourse of the understanding, seeing simple knowledge of good

and evil, doth not make a man better or worse, but the willing and affecting good things, and the nilling and hating of the contrary. Secondly, if we do not limit and abridge the discourse of our reason, it will carry us too far in our curious disquisition after knowledge, wherein we naturally delight, as the lamentable experience of our first parents hath too plainly taught us, and the more of that time destined to this exercise, is spent and taken up by intellectual discourse, the less remaineth for our chiefest business, which is to be effected by our will and affections. Thirdly, seeing both our Spirits, and also all the powers of our souls are but finite and feeble, therefore the more we spend them in theory and speculation, the less ability they will have in the exercise of our love and devotion; even as the water which issueth from a fountain, must needs run with less force, when as it is divided into diverse streams. Finally, jejune and barren contemplation, doth little or nothing nourish the soul, seeing it is not the food itself whereby it is cheered, but only a means whereby it is prepared; and as the preparation itself of our food doth not nourish the body, but the feeding upon, digestion, and application of it unto every several part; so neither doth the discourse of the understanding and invention of matter, nourish the soul in any saving graces, seeing it is not the proper nourishment itself, but only the means to prepare it, which being received by the will, and digested and applied by the heart and affections, doth turn to our spiritual nourishment, inflaming us inwardly with the love of God, zeal and devotion, and working in us the true fear of God, affiance, hope, patience, humility, hatred of sin, contempt of the world, and all other virtues and saving graces. And therefore contenting ourselves with the simple and plain understanding of the matter whereon we meditate, and not spending our time in any nice and curious disquisition, let us employ the most part of our time and pains, in working thereby our wills, hearts, and affections, to more purity and holiness, which is the main end of this exercise, unto which, if we attain not, all our labor is spent in vain, and will bring unto us no spiritual profit. For as those Artificers and Engineers, who spend the most of their time in new inventions and curious devices, and when they have found them out, there leave them, and betake

themselves to a new search, no further using the old, for the raising thereby some profit of their invention; are ranked in the number of noted beggars; and being richest in skill, are above all others poorest in estate: whereas others, who draw all they know into use, and exercise their skill, though but plain and small, in their painful and diligent labors, that thereby they may daily add something to their state, do prove rich men, and of far more worth and credit, then those exquisite and curious Artisans: so is it in this case; those who are most intent unto curious speculations, and exceed all others in scholastical knowledge and jejune contemplations, proving for the most part mere beggars in the sanctity of the heart and affections, and in the power and practice of devotion and godliness.

Sect. 2 - That we must find out a fit theme, and then discourse upon it according to the rules of reason.

Now the right course of proceeding in our meditations in respect of our understandings, is, first, that being assisted with judgment, they do by some disquisition and discourse, find and pick out of the general stock, some fit and profitable theme, whereupon we may spend our pains and time allotted to this present exercise. And when they have pitched upon it, they are in the next place to distinguish and clear it from all other things that are of like name, but of a different nature, or hold some similitude and agreement in the general matter, but are diverse and distinct in their special forms. The which distinction in our knowledge, or between things known, is the mother of clear understanding and sound judgment, and enableth us with much perspicuity to proceed in our discourse. And when we have gone thus far, we must then employ our understanding to find out some fit definition or description of the theme or matter whereon we meditate; about which we need not to be curious, striving to reach unto the strict rules of art, but only to make our conceit in some sort capable of it, and to bring the point in hand within the compass and reach of our understandings. Which

when we have done, we must further amplify and enlarge our matter, that yet our minds may more clearly and distinctly conceive and comprehend it, and our wills, hearts and affections may afterwards work upon, and apply it for better and more plentiful use, in the inflaming of our love, and stirring up our devotion; by bringing it through the common places of invention, according to the rules of art, which being but the polishing and perfecting of natural reason, it will not seem hard or strange unto us, if we have but the help of some good directions and fit examples for our imitation. Now these places of which I speak, are the causes of all kinds, as the efficient cause, procreant or conservant, principal or instrumental, the matter of which, and the form by which it existeth, the final cause for which it is, and whereunto it tendeth; the effects and fruits of it, the subject place wherein it is, or the object about which it is exercised; the adjuncts, properties, and (as we call them) the appurtenances belonging to it; what things are diverse from it, or opposite or contrary unto it, either in relation or nature. The things whereunto it may be compared, either in quantity or quality, and by what similitudes it may be illustrated and made thereby both more easy and familiar, and more fit to make in the memory a deeper impression, and to work with greater efficacy upon the heart and affections. The names and titles of it, which being rightly given, do show the nature of the thing which is called by them. The which are best considered when we define the thing whereof we meditate, where beginning with the name of the thing defined, we may proceed to the parts of the definition. But above all other places, we are to prefer the divine testimonies of holy Scriptures, which are most effectual for the enlightening of the understanding, the convincing of the judgment, the persuading and inclining of the will, and the working of the point in hand upon the heart and affections. In which respect, it is most profitable that we call to our remembrance those places which are fittest for our purpose, to prove or illustrate the matter in hand, and to apply them for the strengthening and confirming of all the other places of invention, as proofs of them, orderly proceeding from one to another, in that method and manner before expressed. To all which purposes the testimonies of holy

Scriptures are most pregnant, powerful, and profitable; for howsoever human testimonies are above all other arguments of least authority and efficacy in any art, because their whole strength resteth upon the credit of men, who are all liars and subject to errors; yet in matters of Divinity, testimonies of holy Scripture are of greatest validity and authority, and far above all other arguments and proofs produced by human reason, seeing they are the Oracles of God, who being truth itself, can neither deceive, nor be deceived; and being sufficient to all spiritual uses, will yield unto us plentiful matter to furnish our meditations, though we were unable to make use of the other. Notwithstanding those other helps, by bringing the point in hand through all the common places of invention, especially these testimonies of Scripture being joined with all and every of them, to confirm and strengthen them, are not to be neglected, because they will much further us in our orderly proceeding, and for the amplifying and enlarging, clearing and proving the point whereon we meditate, and furnishing us with variety of matter: Yet here too much curiosity is to be avoided, in bringing every point through every head or common place of invention, because every theme whereon we meditate will not admit such considerations. As God, infinite in all perfection, and far above the reach of human reason, cannot in our meditations of him be brought through the most of those common places, seeing he hath no causes, being Jehovah, the cause of causes, and having his being in himself, giveth being to all things. Neither hath he (if we speak properly) any place, seeing he containeth all things, and is contained of nothing, nor any accidents or qualities, seeing all his attributes and properties are his Essence; nor any contraries, seeing there cannot be the like reason of things finite, and him that is infinite, and nothing can truly oppose his omnipotent nature, although they do it in show and in our weak apprehension; neither can he be compared in quantity, or quality, seeing he is above all comparison, and nothing is equal or like unto him: And finally, he is not subject to any distribution, being a most simple nature and indivisible, who hath neither Genus, nor species, parts nor members; nor unto any definition, seeing his infinite nature is unsearchable; howsoever, he may be described by that

which he is not, rather than by that he is, though he be the chief being, that we may in some dark manner conceive of him in our shallow capacity. Besides, there are other themes which we cannot bring through diverse of these heads without much difficulty, especially the specifical matter and forms, which in most things are unknown unto us. And therefore our course must be, among many places of invention, to take those which being most pregnant and profitable, do with some ease offer themselves to our meditations, as the causes efficient and effects, properties and qualities, and not tie ourselves too strictly to find out all, which would rather distract then help us in this exercise. But chiefly aiming in all this discourse of our understanding, at the right use and main end of it: which is not curiously to play the Artists, but to spend our time in a religious exercise, for the increase of our devotion, our enriching with spiritual grace, and for the strengthening of us unto all duties of a godly life; when we find any difficulty in our invention, or stop in our way, we must pass by it, and think on that which is next, and more easy to be found.

Sect. 3 - That we are in our meditations chiefly to respect our will, hearts and affections, our lives and actions.

And thus we are to proceed in the first part of meditation, which respecteth the discourse of our mind and understanding: The second part respecteth the practicing faculties, the will, heart, and affections, the life and actions, unto which in this exercise we are to have chief regard, that they may thereby be sanctified and nourished in all spiritual graces, and strengthened to the performance of all holy duties, with cheerfulness and delight. Neither is it sufficient, that we do by the former means provide plenty of spiritual food, fit for the nourishment of our souls, unless we also feed upon it, and apply it unto them for their special use. It is not enough that we prepare abundant means and matter for our spiritual good, unless we fit and apply them to those ends and uses for which we did prepare them,

whereof if we fail, all our former labor will be vain and fruitless. For as it doth not avail a man, for the preservation and comfort of his life, that his granaries and store-houses are full of all good provision, no not to have his table thoroughly furnished with all variety of meats, if he do not feed upon them; nor to have his chests and wardrobe full of apparel, if he do not put them on, nor (miser-like) to hoard up treasures in abundance, and never convert them to use, nor employ them for the relief of his necessity, and comfort of his life: so it will not profit us at all for the nourishing, strengthening and refreshing of our souls, to make provision in all kinds, and to lay it up in the storehouse of our minds and memories, if it be not applied to our hearts and affections, which are the most essential and vital parts of a true Christian, that they may nourish and comfort them, and make them active and able to perform with cheerfulness, all holy duties of a Christian life. To which purpose there is further required, after we have by the discourse of our understandings, cleared and enlarged the matter whereon we meditate, with much variety, that we now labor to bring all which we have thought upon, by special application to our own particular use, and to work and enforce it upon our hearts and consciences, that they may have a lively taste, and thorough sense and feeling of it, stirring up our affections, according to the nature and quality of the matter, either to holy love or hatred, to admiration or contempt, joy or sorrow, hope or fear, desire or abhorring, confidence or shame, and so in the rest. Thus if the subject matter of our meditation be good, both in it own nature, and unto us, we are by considering the Author and end of it, the beauty and excellency, the profit and benefit, the necessity of having it, and the misery of wanting it, to work it into our hearts, by inflaming them with the love and desire of it, by stirring them up with admiration in their pursuit, and joy in their fruition, by affecting them with hope of obtaining them, either in respect of matter or degree, and with care and fear of losing or lessening them. But if it be evil and wicked, we are, by considering the causes and fountain from which it springeth, the pernicious ends whereto it tendeth, the mischievous effects which it produceth, the deformity and baseness, the loss and misery, unprofitableness and maliciousness of it, to

work our hearts to a further detestation and loathing, to a contempt, aversion and abhorring of it, if by the temptations of our spiritual enemies it be pressed upon us, or to shame and sorrow, if they be tainted with it, and have given it admission. Neither must we content ourselves with weak motions in this kind, but we must labor to work in our hearts fervent affections, and such as discover much zeal and devotion; not thinking it enough to taste of these spiritual meats which the discourse of our understandings hath set before us, and so to leave them (as it were) standing upon the table, without receiving by them any further benefit; but we must hunger and thirst after them with longing and earnest desires, we must labor to have a thorough sense and feeling of their comfortable sweetness, yea we must swallow them down and digest them, not so much in our stomachs, as in the ventricles of our hearts, to increase the vital spirits of our souls, which may enable us to live the life of grace, and make us fit and vigorous for spiritual motion. And the more we find ourselves affected with these spiritual delicacies; and the more sweetness and benefit we relish in them, the more earnestly must we still stir up our affections to go on in this spiritual pursuit, setting up (as it were) all our sails, when we have got a prosperous gale; and when we are come to a good vein in this golden mine, we must not be satisfied when we have made an entrance, but dig into it further with more diligence, encouraging and comforting ourselves in this delightful labor with these first good beginnings.

Sect. 4 - That we must not be discouraged, though we cannot at the first feel the fruit of our meditations.

But what if we cannot, after some good endeavor, feel the sweetness of this exercise? yet we must not be discouraged and give it over, but use all good means to recover our taste and spiritual appetite; seeing the cause of the defect is in their indisposition, and not because this spiritual food wanteth sweetness. And seeing it is not a matter intellectual and subject to the discourse of the mind, but rather of

sense and practice, caused by a secret fitting and application of it to the object, which is principally done by the Spirit of God, working in our hearts, and instrumentally by a lively faith; therefore we are not to labor so much to stir up our affections, that we may relish this sweetness by discourse of reason, which worketh little upon the sense and appetite, and much less by vehement agitation of the body and outward parts to draw on passion, like Actors upon a Stage, as some have foolishly prescribed, but applying the points whereon we have discoursed by faith, let us labor to gain the relish and taste of sweetness in them, rather by prayer than by arguments. Neither let this discourage us and interrupt our exercise, but let us, submitting ourselves to the good will and pleasure of God, wait his leisure with meekness and patience, expecting when he will be pleased to descend into our hearts by his holy Spirit, to move and excite our affections, as sometime the Angel into the Poole, that he might trouble the waters. According to that in the Lamentations; It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Which if we do, we shall assuredly find the fruit of our labor. For as the Prophet speaketh of vision, so may I of this spiritual visitation; It stayeth but for the appointed time, but at the end it shall speak comfort to our hearts and not lie. Though it seem to tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Yea, if we be not discouraged with this delay, but continue our exercise in obedience to God, laboring to perform it as we are able, when we cannot do it in such perfection as we would, the Lord when he cometh to visit our hearts, will bring in his hand double wages, rewarding both our obedience and duty, and also our faith and patience, by filling our hearts with spiritual comforts, quickening their appetite, and replenishing them with holy affections. So that though (like green wood) they are not presently inflamed, but need much blowing before they can be thoroughly kindled, yet if we continue, they will, through God's blessing, recompense our labor, seeing at the last their heat will exceed and bring unto us more lasting comfort, then if they had (like wood that is sear) been quickly kindled with much less labor.

Sect. 5 - Of the means whereby we may feel our hearts affected with a lively taste and sense of the things whereon we meditate.

And thus we see how we are to have our hearts affected with a lively taste, sense and feeling of the things whereon we meditate: now the means whereby we may have it wrought in us are diverse. First, we must examine ourselves in the court of conscience, according to the rule of God's Word, how we have profited and thriven in those graces, and in the practice of those duties, or how we have been tainted with those corruptions, and how far forth we have been guilty of those sins whereon we have meditated; what defects in those graces and duties do still remain in us, or in the full and perfect mortification of our vices, and reformation of our lives, by leaving and forsaking of those sins which in our meditations we have thought upon. By which examination (as we shall afterwards show more at large) we shall come both to a true sight of our graces and holy duties in which we have profited, and of the progress which we have made in the mortification of our corruptions, which will affect our hearts with unfeigned thankfulness unto God, by whose grace and assistance we have been enabled hereunto, and with the fervent love of him who hath been so gracious unto us, and with a lively sense and feeling of our spiritual wants, and of those corruptions and sins which yet adhere unto us, that we may be truly humbled in the sight and feeling of our wants and imperfections, and labor to come out of them by hearty repentance. Secondly, when by this examination we have come to a true sight of our wants and weaknesses, and have affected our hearts with a true sense of them, we must make a humble acknowledgement of them unto God and our own souls, laying open our wants like distressed suitors, before him who is only able to supply them and our spiritual wounds of sin, and putrefied sores of corruption, before the Physician of our souls, who is All-sufficient, and willing to heal and cure them. With which humble confession our hearts will be affected with a more thorough hatred of all our sinful corruptions, and with longing desires to have

all our wants supplied, and also with true comfort, and inward joy in the assurance of their remission, and the satisfying of our desires, seeing if we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive them, if we humble ourselves, he will exalt us; and if seeing our own emptiness, we hunger and thirst after grace and righteousness, he will fill and replenish us. Thirdly, there must follow upon this a lamentable complaint in respect of the grace wherein we are defective, and the corruption and sin which doth yet adhere and cleave unto us, not so much in regard of any evil of punishment accompanying them, from which we are delivered through God's mercy, and Christ's merits, as because we have by them offended and dishonored our great and glorious God, who hath been so gracious to forgive them. The consideration whereof must affect our hearts not only with mournful sorrow, which must break out into these bitter complaints, but also with a holy anger against ourselves, which must show itself by expostulating the matter with our souls, by aggravating our sins and wants, and by rebuking their sloth and sluggishness in neglecting the means which the Lord hath plentifully afforded us for the mortifying of the one, and supplying of the other. Fourthly, upon this sight and sense of our wants and sins, and complaint of our distress and misery in regard of them, there must follow a vehement and passionate wish, whereby we are to express the fervency and earnest longing of our desires, to have that grace supplied or increased wherein we find our defect, and that vice and sin pardoned and mortified which we feel still cleaving unto us; crying out with David in a pathetical manner, O that my ways were so directed, that I might keep thy statutes! And again, My soul breaketh, for the longing that it hath to thy judgments at all times. And with the Apostle Paul, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The which wishes and longing desires will affect our hearts with much comfort in assurance of fruition, seeing the Lord hath promised to satisfy the desires of those that fear and serve him. Fifthly, upon this must follow an utter denial of ourselves and our own strength, and an humble acknowledgement of our impotency and insufficiency, either to supply the defect of that good thing which we desire, or to remove that evil, and subdue that corruption, which

though we hate, doth notwithstanding still adhere and cleave unto us, confessing with the Apostle, that we are not sufficient as of ourselves so much as to think a good thought, and that whatsoever sufficiency there is in us, we have received from the Lord, who alone worketh in us both to will and to do. The which acknowledgement, being made with humble hearts and broken spirits, is most necessary and profitable; for to whom should we acknowledge our impotency and weakness, rather than unto him who is able to manifest his power in our infirmities, and to give us such spiritual abilities, that we shall be enabled to do all things which he requireth, through the power of him that strengtheneth us. Sixthly, after this humble confession must follow earnest Petition, whereby we must crave with all fervency at the hands of God, that he will so assist us with his grace and holy Spirit, and bless unto us all good means which we use for the increasing of that virtue in which we are defective, and for the strengthening of us to that good duty, unto which in ourselves we find an utter disability, or for the mortifying of that vice and corruption, which in our own strength we are not able to subdue and overcome; attributing unto him the glory and praise of his own power and all-sufficiency, whereby he is able; and of his goodness, love, and truth, whereby he is ready and willing to supply by himself whatsoever is wanting and defective in our abilities. The which fervency of our suits, we must in sincerity of heart enforce with all importunity, urging and aggravating our own impotency and need of God's help, and his sufficiency to do what we desire, and truth, whereby he hath bound himself to perform it. Lastly, out of the consideration of this all-sufficiency and truth of God, we must raise up our souls which were humbled in the sight and sense of our wants, and impotency to supply them, with firm confidence, and breaking thorough all doubts and difficulties, assure ourselves that God, who is so able and true of his Word, will graciously grant these things which he hath commanded us to ask; and that as he hath enlarged our hearts with hearty love and fervent desires, after the more full fruition of that good, or freedom from that evil whereon we have meditated, so he will perfect his own good work, replenish that room which himself hath prepared, and satisfy those holy desires,

which by his good Spirit he hath wrought in us. Which confidence may move us to rejoice in the Lord, and to glory after an holy manner in the assurance of our victory over our corruptions, and of our fruition of those graces, wherein as yet we are defective and imperfect.

Sect. 6 - Of the egress and conclusion of our Meditation.

The last point to be considered in this exercise of Meditation, is our egress and conclusion, which must not be sudden and abrupt, seeing this were neither comely nor profitable, but deliberate and by degrees. And as Orators prescribe in the Art of Rhetoric and elocution, that we should begin with a low voice, quiet affections, and action, and so rising by degrees till we come to our highest pitch of extension and earnestness, both of inward and outward motion, not to break off abruptly in this height, but remitting both voice, affection, and action, by degrees: so must we do in this case; for having begun our Meditation in intellectual discourse, with quiet minds and calm affections, and raised them to that height of fervency and devotion, whilst we have labored to attain unto a lively sense and feeling of spiritual taste, in the matter whereon we have meditated, we must not make an abrupt conclusion, but with some remission of our former fervor, compose our minds and hearts to their former quietness and calmness. And first, we must cast back the eye of our minds to review our former exercise, and to examine how we have performed it, and what fruit and benefit our hearts and souls have felt and tasted in it. And if we find that it hath well succeeded, we are to congratulate with our own souls, in the joyful fruition of so great a blessing, and to give the whole glory to God, by whose help only we have so well prospered in this exercise; rendering unto him with cheerful hearts, all praise and thanksgiving, for the gracious assistance of his holy Spirit, whereby he hath directed us in our course, enlightened our minds, confirmed our memories, inflamed our hearts and affections with his love and true devotion, giving unto

them a lively taste and feeling of spiritual comfort, in the things whereon we have meditated. The which our thanksgiving we may enlarge from the subject matter of our Meditation, as if it be some point of doctrine, for enlightening our minds in the knowledge of that truth, and inflaming our hearts with the love of it; if it be some grace and virtue, for revealing the beauty, excellency, profit, and necessity of it to our understandings, for causing us to embrace and love it with our hearts and affections, and for working it in some measure in us by his Spirit; if it be a duty, for teaching us his ways, and enabling us to walk in them; or if it be a vice and sin, for discovering to our minds, the deformity, heinousness, and danger, and working our hearts to a true loathing and detestation of it. But if we have found many wants and weaknesses in the performing of it, as dullness, and blindness of mind, wandering thoughts, and worldly distractions, coldness of devotion, deadness of affection, and by reason hereof, little taste of sweetness, and of the fruit of all our labor, we are to crave pardon at God's hands, and to be humbled in the sight and sense of our own weakness and corruption. And then laboring to find out the causes of this untowardness, let us resolve to use our best means to remove them against the next time, that we may perform this exercise with more fruit and benefit. Finally, we may conclude this whole exercise, by recommending ourselves, our souls and bodies into the hands of God, which some Writers on this Argument do call Oblation or offering, whereby we consecrate and devote ourselves wholly unto God, desiring no longer to live unto the world or our own flesh, but unto him, that we may do him service, and in all things please him; denying our own wills, that they may be submitted unto his, and craving his protection against all enemies who would hinder us in this our resolution, and direction and assistance in the whole course of our lives, that all our thoughts, words, and actions, may be suitable and answerable, both to our general profession of Christianity, and to those conceits, desires, and resolutions which we have expressed in our last Meditations. And so reposing ourselves with holy and quiet security, upon the care and providence of our gracious Father, we may profitably conclude this exercise, by singing to God's praise some part or verse of David's

Psalms, suitable to our present disposition, or the subject matter of our former Meditation.

CHAPTER XX.

An example and pattern of Meditation, the subject matter whereof is true and unfeigned repentance.

Sect. 1 - The reason of this choice: what repentance is, and the causes thereof.

Having thus set down the doctrine of Meditation, it now followeth, that I propound an example of it, according to the former rules and directions. Where first we are to make choice of the subject matter whereon we purpose to meditate, and then to discourse of it with our understanding, and to feel the virtue and efficacy of it in our hearts, the which must be done in a Soliloquy between us and our souls, or rather of the soul to itself, after this manner: Now that thou hast (O my soul) sequestered thyself from all society, that thou mayest have some secret conference between thee and thyself, in the alone presence of God and thine own conscience; make choice of some fit subject whereon thou mayest spend thy pains and time with most profit for thy spiritual good, that laying a good foundation, thou mayest erect thy building with more ease and fruit. And what fitter matter, upon this present occasion canst thou choose to think upon, then upon that excellent grace and duty of repentance, which is the first beginning of a godly life, and after it is begun, accompanieth it unto the end, as a chief agent in all this work? Upon what better argument canst thou meditate then upon this, which the Prophets and Apostles have so much beat upon? Yea, which our Savior Christ himself thought so necessary and profitable, that he did not only

make it the subject of his own Sermons, but being to ascend, commended it at his last farewell to his Apostles, as the chiefest theme, next unto faith, upon which he would have them to preach in his Name. A duty that belongs unto all, and is never unseasonable; always necessary: An Evangelical grace and chief fruit of faith, in which it liveth, without which it is dead. So that as faith is the life of our souls, by applying Christ unto us, in whom we live, so repentance, in respect of our sense and feeling, which can no otherwise judge of the hidden root, but by the outward fruit, is the life of this life. As faith is the only condition of the Covenant of grace, which assureth us of all good things temporal and eternal; so repentance as a counter-bond, assureth unto us this assurance, and by a sensible infallibility and outward evidence, persuadeth us that we perform this condition of believing in Christ, and apprehending all the promises by faith unfeigned. Now that thou mayest (O my soul) proceed in some order, what is this repentance, but an Evangelical and saving grace of God, wrought in thine heart by his holy Spirit, applying by faith (as by his instrument) Christ and all his benefits, which inflaming thine heart with fervent love, doth make thee look upon him whom thou hast pierced, to bewail thy sins, as the chief causes of his death, to hate and forsake them, and to turn unto God, offering unto thee grace and pardon, by amendment of life, and bringing forth the fruits of new obedience. So that it is a grace and free gift, and no natural endowment which cometh by inheritance, or else procured by thine own purchase. It is the gift of God, who giveth unto thee all good things. It is a gift of his free grace, preventing thee when thou didst never so much as think of it, by putting into thy mind the profit and necessity of it, and into thy heart some desire of receiving it, preparing and fitting thee for it, by the preaching of the Law, working humiliation, contrition, and legal sorrow, and fitting thy mind and will, that they might consent and obey the motions of the Spirit, outward in the Word, and inward in the heart and conscience; working it first in thee, by changing the mind and heart, and turning them from sin, unto holiness and righteousness, co-working with thee, that thou mayest continue, renew, and increase in the practice of it, and perfecting thy

repentance, in the parts and degrees of it which himself begun. It is he that calleth us to repentance, and enableth us to repent. He striketh our stony hearts, and maketh them to relent by sound contrition, before these rocks will yield any waters of true repentance. It is he that poureth the Spirit of grace upon the house of Judah, before they can lament for their wickedness, and that giveth repentance to the house of Israel, and with it remission of sins. Thou canst not turn unto him (O my soul) before he first turn unto thee, nor weep bitterly with Peter, till he thaw thy frozen heart, by reflecting upon thee the beams of his gracious countenance. Yea, when he turneth, thou canst not turn, till he turning his face, turn also thine heart, as it is running away with fear, and never looking back, that thou mayest behold his gracious countenance, promising nothing but good, and his stretched out Arm, to receive thee unto grace and favor. Surely (saith the Church) after I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh. No man can sorrow for his sins, nor resolve to forsake them, but he that hateth them, nor any hate them, but they who love God, nor any love him, whose hearts he first inflameth not, by sheading abroad his love in them by the holy Ghost, which he giveth unto us. Neither doth he work alone, but together with his Son and holy Spirit. For it is the blood of this Lamb of God, which worketh our adamantine hearts to this relenting softness, and the water which issued out of his pierced side, which being beheld with the eye of faith, doth draw out of our eyes, the brinish waters of repentant tears. And therefore because he is the Author of our repentance, both as he procured it by the meritorious virtue of his death, and worketh it by his blood-shed applied by faith, he enjoineth his Apostles to preach repentance in his Name. Finally, it is the oil of the holy Spirit, which suppleth and softeneth our hard and stony hearts; It is this divine fire, which warming our cold hearts with the flame of God's love, and the hot blood that issued from our Savior, causeth them to send up into our heads these salt, yet sweet waters of unfeigned repentance, which distill by our eyes, and in trickling tears drop from our cheeks. This wind of the Spirit must blow upon us, yea must blow into us, before we can return unto God one sigh to express our sorrow for our sins.

And therefore (O my soul) seeing God is the principal cause of thy repentance, rob him of no part of his due, but ascribe unto him the whole glory of his own work. Which though he could effect by his sole immediate power, yet he is pleased to use in it many subordinate causes, means, and instruments, by which he worketh this grace in thee: As ministerial and helping causes, namely, the Ministers of the Word, who in this work are co-laborers with Christ, sent by him to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance, among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ, in which respect, they are called spiritual fathers, begetting them to God by the seed of the Word. So likewise instrumental causes, which are inward, precedent, and immediate, as saving knowledge, showing the way to repentance, a lively faith, unfeigned love, and true fear of God, both in respect of his mercies and judgments, especially the last and general Judgment at the end of the world; or else outward, which either lead and draw, or else move and persuade us to repentance. Of the former sort are many instruments and means to bring us to it. As the Ministry of the Word; and first, the preaching of the Law, which prepareth us for it, and of the Gospel which worketh it in us, by assuring us, that if we will turn to the Lord, he will have mercy upon us, and forgive us our sins. So also crosses and afflictions, either upon ourselves or others; God's blessings and benefits, either promised or bestowed. The moving and persuading causes are innumerable; as the love of God towards us, his patience and long suffering, his truth in his promises, and all-sufficiency in performance, the profit of it in this life, seeing it bringeth with it peace of conscience, and joy in the holy Ghost, and maketh way for our eternal salvation in the life to come; the necessity of it, seeing without it nothing can save us, with it no sin can condemn us, being an inseparable fruit of faith, which is the alone condition of all promised happiness, &c. And these with many other, are the causes (O my soul) which all concur together to work thy heart unto unfeigned repentance, which being in themselves so powerful and prevalent to produce this effect, will leave thee quite without excuse, if they be not effectual to this end.

Sect. 2 - Of the matter, form, and parts of repentance, and first, of humiliation.

And now (my soul) that thou seest the efficient causes of repentance, consider also the matter and form of it, as they meet together in the parts thereof, which are humiliation, and godly sorrow for thy sins, and turning unto God by reformation and amendment, the former part more directly expressing the matter, the latter, the form of thy repentance. And both these the Scriptures conjoin in this one work. For thus Solomon speaketh of it, when they shall humble themselves, and turn from their evil ways; and Joel exhorteth the people to turn unto the Lord with weeping, to rend their hearts and not their garments, and to turn unto the Lord. Howsoever in many places they name but one of them, and thereby understand the other. And therefore (O my soul) see that thou disjoin not those things which thy God hath joined together: content not thyself with such a sorrow, as bringeth forth no amendment, which was rejected in Ahab, Judas, Cain, and the people of the Jews; for these tears, like filthy waters, do but the more pollute thee, and this worldly sorrow, proceeding not from hatred of sin or love of God, but from self-love and fear of punishment, causeth death, and is a sorrow which must be sorrowed for: nor yet with such an amendment, which ariseth not from sense of sin and godly remorse and sorrow for it, which was the repentance of Herod, who is said to have done many things according to the Baptists doctrine and direction, but not to have sorrowed for sin past, as he obeyed for the present; of Judas, who was outwardly reformed as the other Apostles, but never truly and thoroughly humbled; and so of Demas, and many civil worldlings and temporaries, who in many things change their course from evil to good, but have no change of their hearts grounded upon unfeigned contrition and humiliation. But what is this, but to build without a foundation, and to dismember and destroy this perfect body, by pulling one part from another? And therefore (my soul) join these parts in thy repentance; lay first the foundation, and then build upon

it; bewail thy sins with bitter grief, and then forsake them in heart and action, and turn to thy God in amendment of life. Now unto this humiliation, thou must first be prepared by the Law, which like a School-master whippeth thee, and maketh thee to cry out in the sense of thy sins, and the curse due unto them, and utterly to deny thyself and thine own righteousness, as altogether insufficient to satisfy God's Justice; and then it must be wrought in thee by the Gospel, which revealeth unto thee the perfect righteousness and obedience of thy Savior Christ, by which his Justice being fully satisfied, his wrath also is appeased, the pardon of thy sins, if thou bathe thyself in the blood of Christ, by the hand of faith, and assureth thee that thou art reconciled unto God, and become his child by grace and adoption. The which will make thee to melt and resolve into tears of unfeigned sorrow for thy sins, whereby thou hast displeased so gracious a Father, which godly grief will cause repentance not to be repented of. And this is that sound humiliation which the Scriptures do so often call for; which thou mayest discern, if it be truly in thee, by diverse signs that always accompany it; For the object of it is not punishment chiefly, but thy sin, and not sin as it stingeth and tormenteth thy conscience, but as it is an offense which hath displeased thy God, causing thee to say unto him with David, Take away my sin, and purge me from my guilt: and not with Pharaoh, Let my sin alone, but take away this plague. It always causeth thee to draw nearer unto God, that thou mayest beg and obtain pardon, and not to flee from him to escape his punishing hand. It worketh repentance and reformation of those sins which we bewail, and not (like children) to lie still and cry; It is a willing and free-will offering of thine heart, in which, as God is delighted, so is it pleasing and sweet unto thee, causing thee to lift up thine head with hope and comfort, when thou art thus humbled, and to rejoice in such sorrow; and is not pressed out of thee by the weight of God's wrath, the curse of the Law, or smart of punishment. The effects of this thy humiliation, is, that it driveth thee to God by prayer, wherein thou humbly acknowledgest thy sins, accusing thyself for them, as liable to the curse, by reason of their guilt, aggravating them by many circumstances, condemning thyself as worthy of all punishments

temporal and eternal, justifying God's righteous judgment, if he should impose them, magnifying his mercy with the repentant Church, if he spare thee in any, and do not utterly consume thee. After which confession, there followeth an humble and earnest suite for pardon and remission; wherein thou must with David cry out unto thy God; Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Sect. 3 - Of the second part of repentance, which consisteth in conversion and amendment.

The second part of thy repentance (O my soul) is thy conversion and amendment, whereby thou turnest from thy sins unto God, desiring and endeavoring to serve and please him in newness of life; the things from which thou must turn (O my soul) are thy sins, yea from all thy sins, great and small, none being so great that they need to discourage thee, seeing they are incomparably exceeded by God's infinite mercies, and the All-sufficient merits of thy Savior; nor any so small, that thou shouldest neglect amendment, seeing the least bring everlasting death, if they be not washed away with the blood of Christ, who also died for them as well as for the greatest. Or if there be any difference in thy conversion from thy sins (O my soul) it must be in leaving those sins with greatest hatred and detestation, which thou hast formerly embraced with greatest love, seeing by them thou hast most dishonored and displeased thy God, and wounded thine own conscience. The other part of thy conversion is, that thou turn unto the Lord, that thou mayest serve and please him in newness of life; according to that of the Prophet, O Israel, if ye return, return unto me, saith the Lord: for it is not enough that thou cease to be the servant of sin, unless thou become a servant of righteousness; nor to be unblameable before men, unless thou be holy before God; nor to abstain from evil, unless thou doest good; nor to keep thyself from

mis-spending thy Lord's Talent, unless thou doest by use increase it to thy Masters advantage. And as in thy returning there is a change in the object, from (not some, but) all evil; not to some only, but all good; so if it be sound and sincere, it is also to be plainly discerned in the subject or person that returneth, and in the change of all his faculties and actions. And therefore if thou truly repentest (O my soul) there is a change in thy mind, from the darkness of ignorance, to the light of knowledge; from error, to truth; in thy conscience, from dead works, to purity; in thy will, refusing that evil which formerly it embraced, and embracing that good which in time past it rejected; in thy heart, from hardness to tenderness; from security and impenitency, to true repentance; from the love of sin, to the love of God and all goodness for God's sake; from loathing of spiritual things, to hating of carnal; and so in the rest of thy affections and passions. If thy repentance be sincere, it beginneth inwardly in thee (my soul) and proceedeth to the outward parts; it beginneth in fervent desires, proceedeth in good resolutions and earnest endeavors, and showeth both in our holy and righteous actions, throughout the whole course of our lives and conversations. And howsoever it is imperfect in respect of degrees, seeing we can never sufficiently, whilst we live here, bewail and forsake our sins, nor serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, in any such perfection as the Law requireth; yet if thou doest truly repent (O my soul) there is a perfection of integrity, whereby thou laborest to serve and please thy God in renouncing all sin, and embracing all righteousness, and in the purifying of all thy powers and faculties, outward and inward, from corruption to holiness. And these are the parts of thy repentance (O my soul) containing in them the matter and form.

Sect. 4 - The final causes, subject, and properties of repentance, the contraries unto it, and comparisons which illustrate it.

The final causes and ends of it, are first, that God may be glorified in the acknowledgement of thy sins, and may be justified in his

righteousness when he judgeth, and magnified in his mercies, when being guilty of sin, and condemned in thyself, yea by thyself, he pardoneth all thy sins, and justifieth thee in the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ. Secondly, when out of the same grace and goodness he freeth thee from, not only the guilt, but also from the punishment of all thy sins, his justice being satisfied by Christ's sufferings and obedience. Thirdly, that being freed from sin, and become the servant of righteousness, thou shouldest glorify and please God in the whole course of thy life, by mortifying thy sins, and studying to serve him in thy new obedience. Finally, that thou mayest hereby be assured of God's favor in this life, and of everlasting happiness in the life to come, and have the peace and comfort of both in thine own conscience. The effects and fruits of thy repentance are the inward purity and sanctity of thee (my soul) from the pollution of sin in all thy powers and faculties, and thy exercise of these inward graces, in the duties of piety towards God, of righteousness and charity towards thy neighbors, and of temperance and sobriety towards thyself; and a hearty desire and earnest endeavor to please thy God in all things, both in thought, word and deed, by conforming them in obedience unto all his Commandments. The subject or person to whom it only belongeth, is the elect and faithful, the repentance of all others, being like that of Cain, Esau, Ahab, Judas, and all hypocrites, false and counterfeit. The subject in which this grace is exercised, is the whole man, and all the powers and parts both of his soul and body; but principally it keepeth its court of residence, and showeth its chief virtue and power in thee (my soul) and above all other thy faculties in the change of thy mind and will, thine heart and affections. The object of thy repentance is sin, and that complete righteousness required in God's Law, that being the thing from which thou fleest; this, that unto which thou aspirest; that it which thou laborest to mortify and kill; this, that unto which thou indeuourest to be more and more quickened and revived. The properties and qualities of it, thou hast before seen in the several parts. The contraries unto it generally considered, are impenitency, carnal security, hardness of heart, worldliness and profaneness. In the parts of it, the contraries to humiliation and sorrow for sin, are

pride, out of an opinion of our own righteousness; for Christ came not to call such Pharisaical Justiciaries, but sinners to repentance, and an hard heart and seared conscience which cannot repent; and on the other hand, worldly sorrow for carnal respects, which causeth death, and hopeless sorrow, which being void of faith, endeth in despair, and so plungeth those which so repent, with Cain, and Judas, into hellish condemnation. Now to what wilt thou compare this grace of God, O my soul? It exceedeth all legal virtues in profit and necessity, especially to us who are imperfect in them, and is exceeded of none, but of faith and love, the fountain of this stream, and roots from which it springeth, which if thou joinest together, and entertainest them like loving friends to live and lodge in thee, no misery (my soul) can make thee miserable, no curse of the Law can hinder thy blessedness, no imperfection of other virtues or duties, can keep thee from the fruition of eternal happiness; whereas without these, all other blessings are accursed unto thee, all shows of other graces false, counterfeit, and utterly unprofitable. To what then mayest thou compare this excellent grace and gift of the Spirit? It is like the waters of Jordan, which will purge thee from the filthy leprosy of all thy sins, not by it own inherent virtue, but by the power of God's Word and promise, who hath assured all that truly repent, of the remission of their sins; and as it is a fruit and infallible sign of faith, which assureth thee that thou truly believest, and art therefore purged from all thy sins, in the precious blood of Christ. It is like the precious balm of Gilead which is fit to cure all the sores of sin, though the head be sick, and the whole heart faint; and though from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head, there is no soundness in thee, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, yet if thou wilt apply unto them this sovereign salve, they shall be all healed, so that even thy crimson and scarlet sins shall become white as snow and wool.

Sect. 5 - Of the kinds of repentance, ordinary and extraordinary.

And thus thou seest (O my soul) the nature of true repentance, which admitteth of no distribution into kinds, but yet thou mayest distinguish it into some degrees. For either thou mayest consider it in the first acts of thy conversion, when as thou diddest break from thy sins, by bewailing and forsaking them, and turning unto thy God in new obedience; or else it is the continuing of it, throughout the whole course of this life. For as thou art never in this world perfectly cured of the sores of sin, but that they will break out again, the inward corruption not thoroughly drawn out, still seeking vent in some outward issue; so this plaster of repentance must continually be applied and renewed, and be never quite neglected and thrown away, until by death the cure be perfected. Now this repentance which thou must continue (O my soul) even till by thy separation from thy beloved body, thou be freed from that hated body of sinful corruption, is either ordinary, or extraordinary. Thy ordinary repentance is that which thou must daily perform; for as thou daily sinnest against thy good God, so thou must daily sorrow for thy sins, be humbled in the sight and sense of them, hate and abhor them as conquered rebels, who having gotten new strength, have given thee these foils, subdue and mortify them, and endeavor to please thy God in the contrary duties of his service. Thy extraordinary repentance is either when by reason of thy sloth and security thou hast discontinued this exercise, and afterwards doest undertake it afresh, being excited and moved hereunto by outward helps, the preaching of the Word, afflictions, danger of being overtaken with some approaching evil, extraordinary blessings, and such like; or by the inward motions of God's holy Spirit: or else when thou art overtaken for want of keeping the spiritual watch of some grievous and unusual sin, whereby thou hast made deep wounds and fearful gashes into thy conscience. In both which respects thou must double thy zeal and diligence, that thou mayest rise from whence thou art fallen, redeem the lost time wherein thou hast negligently intermitted this holy exercise: bewail thine extraordinary sins, with extraordinary sorrow and bitter grief, both in greater measure suitable to these greater sins, and in a more vehement and powerful manner; hating these sins with more than mortal hatred; driving out these cursed enemies

which have given thee such shameful foils with all despite, and redoubling thy watch, that they may forever be kept out of thy coast, and never be able to surprise and overcome thee. Finally, thy repentance (my soul) must be extraordinary, when thy God moveth thee unto it by any extraordinary occasion; as when thou art to perform some duty of his service of great moment and importance; as the receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which requireth extraordinary preparation and examination; when thou humblest thyself in some solemn fast, public or private, for the averting of some imminent judgment, or deliverance from some present evil; or when thou art to undertake some business for thyself, the Church, or Common-wealth, no less weighty and necessary, then full of difficulty and danger; then (my soul) is it high time for thee to renew and redouble thy repentance, that thy sins which separate between thy God and thee, may be removed, and not stop and hinder thee from receiving the assistance of his grace and holy Spirit in these weighty employments. So also when thou addresseth thyself to thy God, to make suit for some blessings which thou much desirest, from which thy sins might hinder thee, and stop the stream of his grace, that though it overflow to all others, yet thou shalt remain dry and barren: or for the removal of some great afflictions, which if thou continuest in thy sins, thou mayest justly fear will be continued upon thee, till thy God, by redoubling thy stripes and smart, have made thee to renew thy repentance and redouble thy sorrow. Finally, it is fit time thus to repent, when thy God summoneth thee by sickness to appear before him, and threateneth thee to bring thee before his Tribunal under the arrest of death; then is there no more need (O my soul) to set thy house and state in order, then thyself, and then is it fit time that thou shouldest renew thy repentance, with Hezekiah, in an extraordinary manner, that thou mayest make thine accounts ready, before thou art to render them unto thy Judge; and seeing thou art much indebted, and hast nothing to pay, thou must, whilst thou art here, by renewing thy faith and repentance, sue out thy pardon, and get a general acquittance for all thy debt, sealed with thy Saviors blood, that so thou mayest go with joy and comfort, when thy Judge calleth thee to make thine appearance.

CHAPTER XXI.

Showing how we must work the former points upon our hearts and affections.

Sect. 1 - How our hearts are to be affected with fervent desires to practice this duty of repentance.

And now (my soul) that thou hast in thy understanding discoursed of the chief points observable in this excellent grace of repentance, labor to work what thou knowest, into thine heart and affections, and to bring it all to some holy use, that thou mayest prepare these spiritual meats, not only to look upon, for so thou mayest in this great plenty depart an hungered, and be never the better in thy health, strength and good liking; but endeavor to apply them, to taste their sweetness, to feed upon and digest them for thy nourishment. Thou hast discovered (my soul) excellent waters, which though they be bitter in their own nature, yet the wood of thy Saviors Cross being cast into them by the hand of faith, will make them to become sweet: Drink deeply of them (O my soul) that thou mayest never again thirst after the pleasures of sin, which may well glut thee, but will never satisfy thee, but the more thou drinkest, the more thou thirstest; whereas these waters (my soul) will cure this dropsy, and make thee thirst only after spiritual things, in which there is great delight, seeing thou mayest here drink thy fill without impeachment, yea with much improvement of thy health; or rather, because thou canst never be filled in this life, thou mayest ever thirst, and ever drink; thirst without distemper, without grief; and drink with all spiritual delight, seeing these waters satisfy without satiety. And as they are good for thine inward thirst, so also for thy both outward and inward defilements of sin. Wash thyself therefore, yea bathe and dive thyself

in them, whereby as thou shalt be certainly assured that thou art washed and purged from the guilt and punishment of all thy sins, in the precious Laver and Fountain of thy Saviors blood; so shalt thou find these waters of repentance, notable helps and means to cleanse thee from the corruption and filth of sin. Drench but thyself in them (O my soul) and thou shalt drown them; for though to thee they are living waters, and help to preserve thee, yet they will stifle and choke thy sinful corruptions, though (like the waters appointed for the trial of jealousy) they will make thee fruitful, yet they will cause thy sins to rot and perish, working diversely upon diverse subjects. Worldly sorrow indeed causeth death, because it doth not conjoin, but sever thee from Christ thy life. It is a fruit of the flesh, the joy whereof is mortal, and therefore much more must its grief needs be mortal. It looketh not to heaven, but to the earth, not drawing to God, but driving thee from him. It respecteth punishment, and not sins, and lamenteth more the loss of earthly trifles, then of God's love and heavenly excellencies. And therefore when this bitterness is thrust upon thee by thy corrupt flesh; thou hast just cause to cry out with the children of the Prophets, that there is death in the pot, and sin in such sorrow, for which grief thou hast just cause of further grieving. Mistake not this worldly sorrow (O my soul) for true repentance. Let not these muddy tears come into thine eyes, which will but dim and dazzle the sight of faith, so as it shall not be able to discern thy Savior. But labor after that godly sorrow which will cause repentance not to be repented of; which though it may seem unpleasant to thy carnal taste, yet thou shalt find it wholesome, though not so toothsome. If not delightful meat, yet at least profitable physic, which by purging away the corrupt humors of sin, will help to preserve thy spiritual health and life. Yea in truth (my soul) thou shalt, upon good experience, find this repentance not only good and profitable, but also sweet and comfortable, causing thee to possess and enjoy thyself with much peace and patience.

Sect. 2 - Motives to repent, taken from the Author and efficient causes of this grace.

For who is the Author of it, but God himself, who with his sweetness sweetens all things which he giveth to his children? And though they be bitter in themselves, yet tempering them with his love, he maketh them to become pleasant, turning our mourning into rejoicing, and raising out of the subject of sorrow, matter of joy. It is a cup of God's tempering, and therefore refuse not to drink it; it must needs be good, coming from him, who being the chief Goodness, is Author of all good. It is God's gift (O my soul) and no natural act in thine own power; and therefore when thou wantest it, sue unto him that giveth liberally to all that ask of him; and when thou hast it, ascribe nothing to thyself, but let him have the glory of his own gift. It is his gift, and not in thine own power; take it then thankfully at his hand, whilst in his acceptable time he offereth it, lest pulling it back for thine ungrateful neglect, thou seek it too late and never findest it. It is a gift of the Spirit, which (like the wind) bloweth when and where it listeth, and not at thine appointment; spread thy sails (my soul) whilst this gale lasteth, and open the door of thine heart whilst the Spirit knocketh. It is the gift of grace, and not of merit, towards which thou hast brought nothing as the cause, but thy sins only as the occasion; and therefore as it is given freely, so freely take it. It is the grace of God, which like the Sun with kindly heat, doth with the beams of his favor dissolve the clouds of grief, and causeth them to distill in repentant tears; and not the strong and cold winds of his rigorous justice and terrible threats, which either blow them quite away, or congeal them unto an Icy hardness (making thy tears whilst they are dropping, like hail-stones, which will destroy thy fruits of obedience, rather than cause them to grow and multiply. It is not a common, but a saving grace, seeing to whomsoever God gives it, he giveth them also salvation with it; and therefore (my soul) if thou wouldest have the one, refuse not the other, for these gifts of grace must go together. It is an Evangelical gift, and not a legal, which have such hard conditions, that they can seldom be obtained: whereas the Gospel not only offereth to give, but also enableth thee to receive

what it offereth, and to perform what it requireth. The strong wind, thunder and earthquake of legal threatening's, do only prepare a way, but it is the still voice of the Gospel which assuring thee by faith of God's love worketh it in thee. And therefore (my soul) despise not this Word of grace, but whilst thy God speaketh and allureth thee by his sweet promises to repentance, hearken unto him, and harden not thine heart. It is a gift of God, which thou returnest unto him again, and thyself with it. Fear not, lest it shall be rejected, and thou with it, because it is small and worthless, for thy God requireth not perfection, but truth, and that his gifts be not embased by the mixture of thy hypocrisy. He looketh not to receive much where he giveth but little, nor will reject any of his own graces, as small and worthless, seeing though they be but of small value as they are thine, yet from the Author and giver they have sufficient worth and excellency, for which he will accept them. It is a gift which thy God hath freely given thee, but by and for his Son thy Savior. It came to thee of free grace from God by Christ, but to him by purchase. Thou hast it for nothing save grateful acceptance, but thy Savior bought it at a dear rate, even with the inestimable price of his precious Blood; nothing else could procure thy pardon, without which there was no place to repentance; for never wouldest thou have returned to God, whom thou hadst incensed to wrath by thy sins, had not Christ by that propitiatory Sacrifice reconciled thee and wrought thy peace. Besides, so was thy rebellious heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, unto more than an adamant hardness, that nothing but the Blood of the slain Goat, or innocent Lamb, could mollify and soften it, that it might be fit to receive the impression of this saving grace, and to melt and resolve in repentant tears. And therefore seeing thy Savior hath bought it at so dear a purchase, do not now ungratefully refuse it, when he so graciously offereth it unto thee of free gift. Especially, seeing he useth such manifold and plentiful means to press it upon thee for thine own inestimable benefit. For he sendeth daily his Ambassadors unto thee, to call and invite thee to repentance, by preaching unto thee the glad tidings of reconciliation. He by them instructeth thee in the right way wherein thou must return, admonisheth thee of thy errors, reproveth thy

transgressions and willful wanderings, comforteth and encourageth thee against all difficulties and oppositions, persuadeth thee by his gracious promises, terrifieth thee in thy course of sinning with his severe threatening's, allureth thee by his manifold blessings, discourageth thee in the way of sin, by his chastisements and gentle corrections; all which outward means he presseth upon thee, that they may become effectual by the inward motions of his Spirit, drawing thee from thy sins, and driving thee to God. O thrice ungrateful soul, if thou sufferest so great grace to be spent in vain! O more than miserable, if thou, like the barren earth, drinkest so many gracious showers of heavenly blessings, and bringest forth no other fruits unto him by whom thou art dressed, but thorns and briers, seeing then thou shouldest be rejected of God, and near unto his fearful curse! But I am persuaded better things of thee (my soul) and things that accompany salvation, though I have thus spoken. For though this and all other thy graces are but weak and imperfect, yet are they in sincerity and truth. Acknowledge with thankfulness God's graces in thee, and thine own wants. Behold with sorrow thy imperfections, and labor without discouragement after more perfection. He that could begin this work of grace when it was wanting, can increase it now it is begun. He that could raise thee who was dead in thy sins, can quicken thee more and more; seeing it is a far greater work to give life to the dead, then health to the living.

Sect. 3 - Motives to persuade us to the renewing and perfecting of our repentance, and first, our humiliation and unfeigned sorrow for sin.

Rest not then thyself (O my soul) in some first beginnings of this work, but go unto him that is both able and willing to finish it. Content not thyself in some small degrees, seeing that is no true grace which standeth at a stay, and tendeth not towards perfection. Thou hast already repented, but let not that suffice thee. He seemeth to repent of his repentance, that doth not renew it again and again. Do not cease to sorrow, till thou ceasest to sin. Never leave striking at

this many-headed monster, whilst any one remaineth. If thou willingly suffer any one to live, they will multiply, and such mortal enemies they are unto thee, that their life will be thy death. God begun this work, and enjoined thee to continue it; give it not over, till he call thee from it to pay thee thy wages. Mourn for thy sins, till he come and wipe away the tears from thine eyes, and with thy sins take away thy sorrows: and think not that it is time to cease amending, till thou comest to perfection, and art made complete both in holiness and in happiness. Practice repentance (O my soul) not by patches and pieces, but in both the parts jointly together. Repent and amend. Sorrow for thy sins, and withal forsake them. For he that lamenteth his sins, and endeavoreth not to leave them, doth it not out of hatred, but of love, which maketh him to grieve, because fear of God's Judgments make him think of their parting. But first, humble thyself (my soul) in the sight and sense of thy sins, that God may exalt thee in his due time. Humble thyself thoroughly with unfeigned sorrow and bitter grief; for the deeper thou layest the foundation of thy repentance, the more substantial shalt thou find thy building. Thy sins are many and grievous; and great sins would have great sorrow. Thy God, whom thou hast offended and dishonored, is not only glorious and full of Majesty; but infinitely gracious, and of abundant mercy. Yea, thou (my soul) hast not only seen and tasted how good thy God is, but hast drunk deep draughts out of the fountain of his bounty. He hath given thee thy being, and preserved thee in it; he hath multiplied his blessings upon thee temporal and spiritual, and is the Author and giver of all the good which thou enjoyest or expectest. And which is first of all and above all, he hath loved thee, unworthy, sinful, rebellious soul, before thou couldest love him, yea, so loved thee, that he hath given his only begotten and best beloved Son, that by his death thou mightest live. Admire this infinite love (O my soul) and love thy God again as much as thou canst, and be sorry thou canst love him no better. Love him who is most worthy in himself, and best deserveth it of thee, which if thou truly doest, thou canst not but lament thy sins with bitter grief, whereby thou hast displeased him who so loveth thee, and whom thou so lovest. Look also upon thy Savior, whom by thy sins thou hast pierced, and

lament thy sins which have been the causes of his sufferings, as a man mourneth for his son, and be sorry for them, as one is sorry for his first born. It is not so much Judas that betrayed him, nor the Scribes and Pharisees that accused him, nor Pilate that condemned him, nor the Soldiers that crucified him, nor the devil himself that set them all on work, as thy sins delivering him into their hands, that have been the chief causes of his death. These, these (my soul) were the whips that scourged his innocent body, the nails that fastened him to the Cross, the spear which pierced his blessed side and heart. Mourn then and lament thy sins (O my soul) whereby thou hast caused him to be condemned that came to justify thee; to be killed, that came to save thee; to be put to a cursed death, who being the Lord of life, was content to die, that he might give unto thee life and happiness, that was dead in thy sins, and liable to God's wrath as well as others. Think not much (my soul) to shed tears for thy sins, seeing thy Savior was content to shed his blood for them; nor that it is too much trouble to be a little grieved in the sight and sense of their burden, and thy heavenly Fathers displeasure, seeing Christ's innocent soul was troubled for them, and heavy unto the death, yea, was so oppressed with their weight, and his Fathers wrath, that it forced out from his body a bloody sweat, and from his distressed and afflicted soul, that lamentable complaint, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Consider also (O my soul) how often thou hast vexed and grieved the good Spirit of God dwelling in thee, and made him weary of his lodging, by polluting it with thy sins. How often thou hast tired this peaceable Ghost by contending with him, and by not only resisting and quenching his good motions which he hath put into thee, but also by giving way and entertainment unto the contrary suggestions of Satan and thine own sinful flesh. And let this grieve thee (my soul) that thou shouldst give such a kind Ghost so unkind a welcome, that thou shouldst weary him that was sent by thy Savior to refresh thee, grieve him that came to be thy Comforter, and contend and wrangle with him who is the Author of all thy peace.

Sect. 4 - Motives persuading to repentance and amendment of life.

But content not thyself (O my soul) to have sorrowed for thy sins, unless thou also leave and forsake them, without which thy sorrow is false and hypocritical. For these bitter medicines have (if they be right) a purging property, and little good will they do thee, if they distaste thy palate with the bitter upbraiding's of thy sins, but do not purge thee from these corrupt humors. Yea in truth, if thy sins be unpleasant to thy taste, and like gall in thy mouth, thou canst not choose but spit them out. If they be grievous unto thee, as Hagar to her mistress, thou wilt never be at quiet till thou hast enforced them to depart. Or if through the strength of thy corrupt nature, thou canst not quite remove them from dwelling with thee, they will be as scourges to thy sides, and thorns in thine eyes, which will make thee desire and endeavor to be rid of such cumbrous neighbors, to make continual war against them, and to watch all good opportunities of rooting them out; if not altogether, yet at least, by degrees. For how can two dwell peaceably together, unless they be agreed? Who feeleth sin (with Paul) like a thorn in the flesh, and will not pull it out? Or if he cannot himself, who will not with him cry out for help; Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Yea, in truth (my soul) the same reasons which make thee truly to lament for thy sins, will make thee as willing to forsake them. For if thou lovest God, who so loveth thee, thou must needs hate and forsake that which he abhorreth. If thine heart be truly and thoroughly warmed with the beams of his love, brightly shining in that inestimable gift of his only begotten and dearly Beloved, thou canst not think much for his sake to offer thy sins to be killed and mortified, which thou hast just cause above all things to hate, (for if thou willingly lettest them escape, after God hath designed them to death, thy life must go for theirs) seeing for thy sake he was content to give the Son of his love to be killed and crucified, that by his death thou mightest live. If thou diddest (as thou oughtest) (my soul) esteem thy God thy dearest and greatest friend, thou wouldest esteem it but a small matter, to leave for his sake thy greatest enemy. Consider also (my soul) that thy Savior hath shed his precious Blood to wash away thy sins, not only

in respect of their guilt and punishment, but also of their filth and corruption; and wilt thou suffer this uncleanness of sin still to stick unto thee, and so cause his blood to be spilled in vain? He was content for a time to be forsaken in his own sense of his heavenly Father, whom to enjoy, was the life; and to be severed from him, the death of his soul, that he might make an utter separation between thee and thy sins; and wilt thou not for his sake part with them (my soul) especially considering, that if thou cleavest unto them, they will be a partition wall to separate thee from thy God? Finally, the holy Spirit, whom thou hast entertained for thy Ghost to lodge in thee, may move thee for his sake to forsake thy sins. For he being holy, and delighting in purity, cannot endure to have sin for an inmate, where he is a Ghost; but will depart in discontent, if he be annoyed with such a loathsome neighbor. Now as there is no society so sweet and comfortable as this Communion of the holy Ghost, seeing he cometh not alone, but accompanied with all sanctifying and saving graces, with peace that passeth all understanding, peace with God, and peace of a good conscience, with comforts which uphold us in all discontents, with joy unspeakable and glorious, which cannot be embittered with any grief: so there is no solitude so uncomfortable, as when thou art left and forsaken of the Comforter himself, because to enjoy his company, thou canst not be contented to leave thy sins. Turn therefore from thy sins (O my soul) but withal turn to thy God. Cease from evil, and learn to do well; and being freed from the base service of sin, become now the servant of righteousness. The beginning of thy misery, was thy turning from God; for how couldst thou be but miserable and accursed, when thou diddest leave him, in whose fruition consisteth thy chief happiness? How couldst thou but be in palpable darkness, when the beams of his favor did not shine upon thee, who is thine only Light? How couldst thou be but evil and wicked, when thou diddest forsake him who is the chief Goodness? And the beginning of thy happiness is, when thou returnest unto him. When thou wentest from him with the Prodigal, thou having mis-spent the rich portion of his graces, becomest so poor and beggarly, that to satisfy thine hunger, thou was fain to feed with swinish worldlings, upon the base husks of earthly vanities; but

upon thy returning to him, he will meet thee when thou art far off, receive thee into wonted favor, put on thee the best garment, kill for thee the fat Calf, and feast thee at his own Table with great joy. When thou wentest from him like a wandering sheep, in losing thy Shepherd, thou didst lose thyself, stray in the deserts of sin, and being entangled in the briers of Satan's temptations, was a ready and easy prey to this ravenous Wolf. But when thy great and good Shepherd had sought and found thee, and thou hearing his voice, diddest desire to come out of this woeful plight, he took thee upon his blessed shoulders, when thou was not able to go, brought thee back to his sheepfold, and hath caused thee to feed in pleasant pastures by the still waters. Return then unto thy God (O my soul) love him who hath been so good unto thee, with all thine heart, and serve him with all thy might. And because thou hast mis-spent many of thy good hours in the service of sin and Satan, without gain, yea to thy loss; redeem this lost time, by redoubling thy diligence for the time to come. His service is perfect liberty, and not to be in it, is to be in the worst bondage. All his servants are his sons, yea heirs of his Kingdom, and co-heirs with Christ. It is commonly said, that there is no service to the service of a King. Yes (my soul) behold a service much more excellent, much more profitable; the service of the King of kings; For he maketh truly (as it is said hyperbolically of Tyre Merchants) all his servants Kings, not of an earthly, but of a heavenly; not of a transitory, but of an everlasting Kingdom. Serve then with cheerfulness (O my soul) such a bountiful Master, who rewardeth such simple and short service, with such large and lasting wages. Yea, be sorry that thou hast returned no sooner into his service, for which alone thou was created and redeemed, and repent that thou hast no sooner repented. Glorify God in acknowledging thy errors and wanderings. Glorify his Justice which hath punished thy sins in Christ, corrected them in thee. Glorify him in his infinite mercies, who to spare thee hath punished his best Beloved. Finally, as thou hast dishonored him by thy sins, so glorify him by thy new obedience, and bring forth fruits worthy amendment of life. And do it with comfort and cheerfulness (O my soul) seeing so gracious is thy good God, that he hath coupled his glory and thy salvation

inseparably together, so as thou canst not seek the one, but thou must find the other; thou canst use no means to glorify him, but by the same thou shalt attain unto glory, and make thine own calling and election sure. Bring forth fruits of repentance in the duties of piety towards God, of righteousness and mercy towards thy neighbors, of temperance and sobriety towards thyself.

Sect. 5 - Motives to bring forth the fruits of repentance in all the parts thereof.

Cleanse thyself inwardly from all relics of sinful corruption; furnish thyself thoroughly with those chief riches of sanctifying graces, and bring forth plentiful fruits of them in thy good works, that thou mayest please thy God in all things, and cause him to be glorified, when as thy light of a godly life shall shine before men. But especially (my soul) bring forth in the practice of thy repentance, those fruits which the holy Apostle commendeth unto thee. First, take care to have this assurance, that thy sins are pardoned, and thou freed from the guilt, punishment, and corruption of them, and that being thus once cleansed in thy justification, thou mayest continue it in thy sanctification, not suffering sin again to reign in thy mortal body, that thou shouldest obey it in the lusts thereof, nor to pollute and defile thee again with the filth of it, after thou art thus pardoned and purged; but contrariwise, that thou serve God in performing of all contrary duties which he requireth, in that manner as he hath prescribed. And this thy care (my soul) must extend, not only to the things themselves, but to the means and occasions of them, for the avoiding of the one, and embracing of the other. Clear often thyself (my soul) seeing thou often failest of thy duty, by pleading thy pardon purchased by Christ, and set even all accounts between thy God and thee, by showing that the hand-writing of Ordinances is cancelled and nailed to his Cross, and that thou hast a general acquittance from thy Lord and Master sealed with Christ's Blood. Yet slight it not over as a light matter (O my soul) that thou hast so much

offended, though thy pardon hath freed thee from all peril, but have an holy indignation against thyself and thy sins, that thou shouldst by them, like an ungrateful wretch, displease and dishonor so gracious a God, who of his mere mercy hath freely forgiven thee; yea, and let this for the time to come set thee so far at odds with them, that thou wilt by no means, nor upon any terms, entertain with them any familiarity and acquaintance. And yet because thou art frail and full of infirmity, and thy enemies many and mighty, thou apt and easy to be overtaken and overcome, and they as ready to surprise thee, therefore (my soul) whilst thou standest, take heed of falling, be never secure, which will cause negligence, but nourish ever in thee a godly fear of being surprised and foiled, which will make thee watchful, and to stand always upon thy guard. And seeing thou canst not stand in thine own strength, thou must also entertain a holy desire after God's grace and assistance of his holy Spirit, whereby thou mayest be enabled to withstand temptations, and to perform all duties of God's service daily in more and more perfection. The which thy desires must not be cold and remiss, but must be backed and strengthened with fervent zeal, which must show itself in opposing courageously all the means that hinder thee in thy Christian course; for so many blocks lie in this way, so many enemies that encounter thee, and labor might and main to hinder thy proceedings, that thou canst not overcome them without much courage and resolution, nor amend thy life, unless thou be zealous. Finally (my soul) seeing notwithstanding all thy zeal and resolution, thou art often foiled with that secret Traitor and dangerous Rebel, which thou nourishest in thine own bosom; do not carelessly and cowardly put up all these wrongs and indignities, but after thou hast armed thyself strongly against this traitorous enemy, set upon him, foil him as he hath foiled thee, and take sharp revenge upon him, and wound him to the death with all his sinful lusts. Yea, if thou findest him strong in resistance, abridge thyself in the use of things in their own nature indifferent, which thine enemy hath made by their abuse, snares unto thee, and occasions of sin; rather than give him any advantage by using thy liberty, and choose rather to use moderate abstinence,

then that such an enemy should get any strength by feeding with thee.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of diverse special means whereby the point meditated is wrought upon the heart and affections.

Sect. 1 - Of Examination.

And now (my soul) that thou seest what is required in this duty of repentance, examine thyself how thou hast performed it. Hast thou had a true and thorough sight and sense of thy natural impotency and averseness to this duty; of thy security, impenitency and hardness of heart, and hast thou had fervent desires to be freed from them? Hast thou sought and sued to thy God, the Author and fountain of this grace, desiring the assistance of his holy Spirit, for the suppling and softening of thy hard and stony heart, that it might relent and resolve into the tears of unfeigned repentance? And hast thou by faith applied unto thee the blood of Christ, for the working of thine heart to sound humiliation and contrition? Hast thou been careful, as thou oughtest, in using all those good means which thy God hath given thee, for the effectual working of this grace in thy heart? Hast thou diligently heard the Word of God, and applied it unto thyself for this end, the threatening's of the Law for thy humiliation, and the sweet and gracious promises of the Gospel, assuring thee of the pardon of thy sins, and of God's love and favor, that thou mightest love God again, who hath so loved thee, and forgiven thee so great a debt, and testify this love by bewailing thy sins, whereby thou hast displeased so gracious a Father? Hath God's mercy, patience and longsuffering drawn thee to repentance, and

hast thou been offended with thyself, because thou hast offended thy God, who hath multiplied upon thee so many testimonies of his love? Hast thou made right use of God's blessings and benefits, to be made thereby more careful to please him; and of his chastisements and fatherly corrections, to be made thereby more fearful to offend him? Hath thy sorrow in any good measure been suitable to thy sins, and hast thou more bewailed thy sins than the punishment, the guilt then the smart; and in this respect chiefly, because thou hast by them dishonored thy God, rather than for the miseries which they have brought upon thyself? Hast thou bewailed all thy sins, and those most of all whereunto thy corrupt nature is most inclined; and not only thy sins of gross commission, but also thy sins of omission, and the wants and imperfections of thy best actions? Hast thou been affected with God's Judgments, and with those most of all which are spiritual, and touch thee rather than thy sinful flesh? Hath the smart of thy sores been such, that nothing would ease them but the balm of Gilead, the blood of Christ, applied by faith, and have carnal sports rather increased than abated thy grief? Hast thou so washed thyself in the waters of repentance, as that thou hast thereby been cleansed from thy sins? And hast thou, being freed from sin, become the servant of righteousness? Hast thou been earnest in thy repentance, and taken occasion from thy former negligence and unprofitableness, to redeem thy lost time, by redoubling thy diligence in God's service? Hast thou found plentiful fruits in thee, worthy repentance and amendment of life? And as thou hast increased in years, hast thou increased in fruitfulness, bringing forth most in thine older age? Hast thou found in thee those special fruits of care, clearing, indignation, fear, desire, zeal and holy revenge, before spoken of?

Sect. 2 - Of Confession.

Alas (my soul) how defective hast thou been in all these things? Alas (my God) how should I, without much shame and confusion of face look upon thee, seeing when I come to pay that debt and duty which I

owe thee, my silver is turned into dross, my medicine is become a poison, my repentance, which should be the salve for my other sins, is so full of wants and imperfections, that itself needeth to be repented of? And if this bath wherein I should wash my polluted self, were not itself bathed and cleansed in a pure fountain, the precious blood of Jesus Christ, so foul it is through the filth of my corruptions, that it would but the more defile me, and make me loathsome in thy sight. It is true (my God) and I acknowledge it to thy glory, that through thy grace I have repented, and do desire to repent still more and more. And that small measure which I have received, and which I return unto thee, is not false and counterfeit, but in sincerity and truth But (alas my Lord) it is so maimed with imperfections, and defiled with corruptions, that it is utterly unworthy thine acceptance. And seeing thou hast forbidden in thy Law that any sacrifices should be offered unto thee, which were maimed or unclean, how should I presume to offer this sacrifice of my sighs and tears which are so imperfect and defiled, were it not that thou hast told me, that the sacrifice wherein thou chiefly delightest, is a broken heart, and humble and contrite spirit? And because thy perfection can endure no imperfection, thou hast appointed another sacrifice pure and perfect, even that which thy dear Son hath offered unto thee upon the Cross, to cleanse and cover the impurity and imperfection of mine, that it may be acceptable in thy sight. These waters of thy grace (O my God) were pure and perfect, as they came from thee the Fountain of all purity and perfection; but alas, they are now defiled by running thorough the polluted channel of my filthy heart. But being again cleansed by running thorough the pure Fountain of my Saviors blood, they are restored to their purity, and fit for thine acceptance. From myself immediately I dare not offer unto thee my repentance; for it is wholly stained and defiled with my corruption, and mingled with much impenitency, carnal security and hardness of heart. And though it be most imperfect, yet have I been too slothful in using any of those good means whereby I might attain unto more perfection; or when I have used them, it hath been so formally and negligently, that they have had little efficacy to work this grace in me. Thy legal threatening's have not humbled me, thy Evangelical

promises have little affected me, the good motions of thy Spirit have been quenched in me, thy blessings and benefits have not allured me, thy chastisements and corrections have not drawn me; but notwithstanding all these helps, I have continued in my sins with much impenitency, or labored to come out of them with much weakness. My sorrow for sin hath been very small, and joined with much hardness of heart; my desires of amendment exceeding feeble and faint; my resolutions weak and unconstant, and my actions and endeavors impotent and imperfect, and when to will is present with me, I find no power to perform that which is good, so that I cannot do the good I would, nor leave undone the evil I would not.

Sect. 3 - Of Complaint.

Alas (my soul) how far hath thy carnal security prevailed with thee? How hath it rocked thee in such a deep slumber, that thou hast little or no sense of thy sloth, but when thou art asleep, dreamest that thou art waking? How is thine heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that it is scarce sensible of its own hardness? Yea when thou dost discern it, how art thou hampered and fettered with the glues of thy corruption, that thou hast neither power nor will to better thine estate? Repentance is the means of curing thine infirmities and sicknesses of sins. But thou fearest the medicine, more than the disease, and neglectest, or formally usest all good means whereby it might be obtained and applied. Thou thinkest no care or cost too much for the compassing of worldly vanities, and thou canst in pursuing them, keep thy desires within no bounds, but the more thou drinkest, the more thou thirstest. But how soon art thou tired in working thy heart to sorrow for thy sins; and how little of this doest thou think enough? In bodily smart and worldly grief for the loss of things little to be esteemed, how many arguments of comforts (as it were) bridles, needest thou to curb in, and moderate thy sensual sorrows? And yet how often do they get head, and (as it were) catching the bridle between the teeth, carry thee away in a full

carrier? But how many strong motives and forcible reasons (as it were) sharp spurs in thy sides, doest thou need, to make thee sorrow for thy sins? And how soon, like a dull hackney, art thou tired in this unusual way, so that no spurs nor stripes will make thee mend thy pace? How cold and quiet is thy hatred against thy sins? And upon what easy terms and small submission art thou content to let them live, when the Lord hath given them into thy power, and put the sword of the Spirit into thy hands wherewith thou mightest slay them? How little hast thou profited in the amendment of thy life? How small and insensible are thy proceedings in the ways of godliness? And after long time spent, and many means used, how small is thy progress, and how near art thou still to the place from whence thou diddest sit out? How faint are thy desires (O slothful soul) after good things? How far from earnest longings which break the heart, and from hungering and thirsting, which are impatient of delay, and never at quiet till they be satisfied? How often doest thou fail in thy good resolutions, and how seldom dost thou bring them to any good effect? How easily art thou discouraged in thy best endeavors, desisting, or at least often intermitting them, before thou bringest them to any perfection? And yet this is all thou canst do towards that perfect obedience which the Law requireth; and all that thy God in the Gospel doth require of thee. Ungrateful soul, if thou dost not answer his demands; when having done so much for thee, he desireth, in lieu of all, to have so little returned unto him.

Sect. 4 - A hearty wish to have all wants supplied. Jer. 9. 1.

O that thou couldst perform this duty in that manner and measure which thy God requireth! O that thy head were a fountain of tears, that thou mightest with David cause thy bed to swim, and water thy couch with them; and with Jeremiah, weep day and night for thine own sins, and the sins of thy people. O that God would smite thy hard heart, as he caused Moses sometime to smite the Rock, that there might gush out of it tears of unfeigned repentance! O that I

could thoroughly waken myself out of my slumber of security, that continually expecting my Judge, I might prepare myself for his coming, and lament my sins, as though it were the last day of my life! O that I could be more displeased with myself, because my sins no more displease me, and lament the hardness of my heart, because I can no more heartily bewail them! How should I inwardly rejoice in this sorrow! How should I have more just cause of delight in bathing myself in these floods, then Naaman had, when washing in Jordan, he perceived himself cleansed from his Leprosy! How should these tears be my meat and drink, and more refresh me then my corporal food! O that turning from my sins with implacable hatred, I could return to my God with all fervency of affection, and that I could express and approve my love unto him who hath so loved me, by bringing forth plentiful fruits of new obedience! O that my ways were so directed, that I might keep his Statutes! O that thou couldest (my soul) set thyself perfectly to seek and serve him, and that thou mightest never err from the ways of his Commandments! O that it were thy meat and drink to do the will of thy heavenly Father; and that thou couldest love it better then thy daintiest food! O that thou couldest do God's will in earth, as the blessed Angels do it in heaven, with all joy and cheerfulness, speed and diligence! But alas, so impotent thou art in thine own strength, that thou art altogether unable in thyself to perform this duty in any such manner or measure as thou desirest.

Sect. 5 - Acknowledgement of impotency.

Thou seest thy sores, and feelest their smart, but hast no skill to cure or ease them. Thou are sensible of thy defects, but art so poor and beggarly that thou canst not supply them. Yea, thou art within the sight of the waters which have virtue in them to cure thy lameness, and liest desolate bemoaning thy misery, but art so impotent that thou canst not step into them. Thou seest and acknowledgest that thy sorrow for sin is too small, and it grieveth thee that thou canst be no

more grieved, but hast no more ability to draw from thy head plenty of tears, or from thy heart unfeigned sighs and groans for thy sins, then to command the clouds to rain, or the winds to blow. Thou seest the miseries and dangers which attend upon thy carnal security, but canst not rouse thyself up out of this dead slumber. Thou feelest the mischiefs of a hard heart, but art not able by any means of thine own to supple and soften it. Many defects and imperfections there are in thy new obedience, but thou hast no ability to supply the one, or amend the other. Rest not therefore (my soul) upon thine own strength, which will fail thee in this, as well as in all things else, of any weight or worth, but flee unto him that is both able and willing to pardon thy imperfections and wants, and also to supply them. Cry unto him (O my soul) who is ready and All-sufficient to hear and help thee. Lift up thy heart unto him, and say:

Sect. 6 - Petition.

O thou, who art alone able to perfect that good work of repentance which thyself hast begun, amend in it what is amiss, and supply all that wherein it is defective. I have desired to turn unto thee by unfeigned repentance, but my corrupt flesh opposeth me in this work, so as I can bring it to little effect; put to thy helping hand, and supply by thy Spirit what is wanting in me. The relics of my corruption do still remain in me, and pull me back as I am returning unto thee; but thou who hast deposed them from their regency, and weakened them in their full strength, canst deliver me fully from their power and tyranny, and preserve me from the danger of those secret ambushments, out of which these scattered forces, upon all advantages do assault me. My carnal security opposeth my repentance, and maketh me apt to slumber in my sins; but thou canst awake me out of this sleep, who was able to rouse me out of the sleep of death. My heart is hard, and I bewail great sins with small sorrow; but if thou finite this stony rock, there will issue from it, as from a fountain, streams of repentant tears. I am now slow and dull

in returning unto thee, by bringing forth the fruits of new obedience; but I shall be able to better my speed, and to run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. O thou therefore who chiefly delightest in the sacrifice of a humble heart, and contrite spirit, create in me a soft and tender heart, and renew in me a right spirit. Frame me according to thine own will, that thou mayest delight in me, and dwell with me; yea, according to thine own covenant, for thou hast promised to give me a new heart, and a new spirit, and that thou wilt take away from me my stony heart, and give unto me a heart of flesh. Thou art glorified in me, when I bring forth much fruits of new obedience. O be not wanting unto thine own glory, by suffering me to be defective in fruitfulness; but after I have brought forth some, purge me again and again, that I still bringing forth more fruits, thou mayest be more glorified.

Sect. 7 - Enforcement.

Yea Lord, my wants are not small, and therefore my suit must not be slight. I must still wrestle with thee by my prayers and strong cries, and not let thee depart, without a blessing. I am weak to prevail, but I have thy truth to support me, who hast promised that I shall obtain, if I follow my suit without fainting. O then make good thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast made me to put my trust: Give me a melting heart, which will relent and resolve easily into tears of repentance. I am much defiled with the filthiness of my sins, and a little washing will not make me clean; Purge me thoroughly therefore (O my God) and multiply my washings, first and chiefly in the blood of Christ, which will cleanse me from the ingrained guilt of my crimson and scarlet sins; and wash me in the laver of Regeneration, and in the waters of unfeigned repentance, which will, by virtue of the former washing, help to purge me from the filth of my corruptions. Turn me, O turn me unto thee (my God) and so shall I be turned; draw me, and I will run after thee. Rectify and fructify my more than ordinary barrenness, with the extraordinary showers of

thy grace, and warm my heart with the beams of thy love, that whatsoever good seed of thy Word shall fall into it, may take deep root, and bring forth plentiful fruits of holiness and righteousness; that as I have heretofore, more than many others, dishonored thee by my sins, so also I may now glorify thee in some good degree, by bringing forth, in more than an ordinary manner and measure, plentiful fruits of new obedience.

Sect. 8 - Confidence.

And now comfort thyself (O my soul) for thy God hath granted what thou hast so fervently craved. Yea, it is the end why he would have thee to ask, because he hath a desire to give, and that by discovering thy beggary and poverty, he might take occasion to discover the riches of his bounty. He that hath enlarged thine heart with these fervent desires, hath done it purposely to this end, that he may fill it, and satisfy them. Thou couldest not so much as ask this grace of repentance, if the Spirit of God did not help thine infirmities, and enable thee to pray with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered; and how can thy God reject that prayer which his Spirit inditeth, and is made according to his own will? Yea, be confident, my soul, for thou canst receive no repulse in this suit; seeing he himself hath commanded thee to ask it, and promised to give it. He, who is true of his promise, and omnipotent in performance, hath bound himself by his gracious Covenant, that he will take away thy stony heart, and give thee a heart of flesh; that thou shalt look upon him whom thou hast pierced, and shalt mourn for him, as a man mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his firstborn. That he will write also his Law in thine heart, that loving and obeying it, thou mayest never depart from him. And his Word is yea and Amen; his promises as good as present payment. Yet (my soul) to help thy weakness, he hath given unto thee already some first beginnings of repentance, as an earnest of the rest that yet is wanting. He hath begun this work of grace in thee, and therefore (his

gifts being without repentance) he will surely perfect it. Wait upon him then (O my soul) by faith, yea, wait upon him, not only with patience, but also with joy and comfort; for he that hath promised, will come, and will not tarry, and will work in thine heart such sorrow for thy sins, as he himself shall accept as sufficient; and cause thee to bring forth such plentiful fruits of new obedience, as shall glorify him, and seal up in thine heart the assurance of thine own election and salvation.

Sect. 9 - Congratulation and thanksgiving.

Thrice happy then (my soul) art thou now in thy God, who was in thyself wretched and miserable: for he hath not only made with thee the Covenant of grace, wherein he hath assured thee of the pardon of thy sins, and of his favor, in which consisteth thy life and blessedness, but also hath enabled thee to perform the condition, of faith and repentance, whereby thou art assured, that thou hast thy part and interest in all his promises. Rejoice therefore in the Lord, and again, rejoice. Praise and magnify his great and glorious Name, who hath been so good and gracious unto thee. Thou was in woeful misery by reason of thy sins, and the punishments due unto them, but he hath delivered and made thee happy, and hath both offered unto thee joy and blessedness, and also the means whereby thou mayest attain unto it. He hath showed unto thee the way of life, and hath given unto thee both will and ability to walk in it. What wilt thou now return unto him (O my soul) for all the good that he hath done unto thee? Yea, what canst thou return that is worth acceptance, but that which thou hast received from this fountain of all goodness? Yet though he hath given all unto thee, something there is which he will be pleased to receive from thee, as though it were thy gift, even the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Nothing else canst thou give but this free-will offering; nothing else doth he require, who is so absolute in all perfection, that he needeth nothing. A fit oblation (my soul) from such a child to such a Father; from so

mean and poor a subject, to so rich and high a Sovereign. Take then into thine hand the Cup of salvation, and praise him who is so worthy to be praised. Praise him in his noble acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him in his power and truth; praise him for all his grace and goodness. Bless and magnify him for all his former benefits, and his Christ, through whom they are all conferred upon thee. And especially, as by present occasion thou art bound, for that he hath given unto thee the grace of repentance, and renewed and increased it by this present exercise, graciously assisting and enabling thee by his holy Spirit to bring it to good issue. Praise therefore the Lord (O my soul) and all that is within me, praise his holy Name. And now with these praises, offer and recommend thyself into the hands of thy gracious God and faithful Savior, who is all-sufficient to keep thee unto the end, and in the end. Thou art not worthy (worthless soul) his receiving and owning, but so much the rather offer thyself unto him who is able to make thee worthy. Devote and consecrate thyself wholly unto his service, and resolve to glorify and please him in all things for the time to come. And because thy resolutions are weak, thy power small, and thy best endeavors full of imperfections, make thy service as acceptable as thou canst, by offering thine heart with it, and doing all that thou canst do, willingly and cheerfully. Desire the assistance of his good Spirit, to direct and guide, rule and over-rule thee in all thy thoughts and desires, words, and works, that they may in some measure answer unto thy resolutions, and be pleasing and acceptable in his sight. Especially desire his help, that the practice of thy repentance may be suitable to thy Meditations, in the whole course of thy life; that more and more sorrowing for thy sins, thou mayest have daily more cause to rejoice in the assurance of his love, and thine own salvation, and that turning from them, and returning to thy God, thou mayest more and more glorify him, by bringing forth better and more fruits of new obedience. And now return unto thy rest (O my soul) for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Repose thyself securely under the shadow of his wings who is able to defend thee, and to cause thee in the midst of garboils and desperate dangers, to dwell in safety. God is thy refuge and strength, a very

present help in trouble. He hath made thee to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which he had broken might rejoice. Thou didst sow in tears, but he hath caused thee to reap in joy. Thou didst go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but thou art come again rejoicing, bringing thy sheaves with thee. Bless therefore the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the third private means of a godly life, which is consideration and examination of our estate.

Sect. 1 - How consideration and examination differ.

The third private means of a godly life, is consideration and examination, both which are in truth but branches of Meditation. Yea the former, if we take it in the largest extent, differeth little or nothing from it, seeing we may be said either to meditate or consider of anything, when we thoroughly and deliberately ponder and weigh it in our minds, with all the circumstances belonging to it. But here we will take it in a more strict sense, as it pondereth those things which nearly concern our estate; and so it is much like unto examination, although if we speak properly and distinctly, there is some difference between them. For consideration is yet, as we here handle it, more general, extending to all things that concern us, past, present, and to come; but examination properly meddleth not with things to come, but searcheth out those things which are past or present; bringing them to be tried by the rule, according to which we do examine them, whether they be true or false; good or evil. Consideration weigheth and deliberateth beforehand what we are about to do, and whether it be lawful or unlawful, expedient or

unnecessary, profitable or to our loss, and accordingly moveth us either to do it, or to leave it undone: But in examination we consider of that which is done already, whether it be well or evil done, wisely and to our good, or unadvisedly and to our hurt. If the former were thoroughly performed, the latter would not be much necessary, unless it were to review our good actions (as God did the works of creation) that we might approve them, and rejoice in the conscience of our well-doing. But because we often fail in it, and do things rashly and without due advice, therefore we are necessarily to use the latter, and to examine what before we considered not (our after-wit being better than our fore-wit) that so we may reform what is amiss, and return into the right way out of which we have erred. Yet because I would not make this already long Treatise over-tedious to the Reader, but chiefly because many points and proofs are coincident, belonging to them both, I will not divide them in my Discourse, but handle them together; and the rather, because I have already spoken of the generalities of consideration, in which it chiefly differeth from this other of examination, in the former tract of Meditation.

Sect. 2 - Of examination, what it is, and wherein it consisteth.

This examination or consideration, is nothing else but a serious weighing, and pondering of those things which nearly concern us in our spiritual estate; or the diligent searching and trial of our estates, how they stand between God and us, in matters concerning his glory and our own salvation. The which examination is held after a solemn manner in the Court of Conscience, and in God's presence; we sitting as Judges upon ourselves, to give sentence according to the Law of God, and the evidence of our own consciences, either with or against ourselves, concerning those things which we have done or left undone, good or evil. In which trial, by help of memory and conscience, our Register and Witness, we review and take a survey of all that we have done in the flesh, of all our parts and faculties of soul and body, examining how we have employed them to the glory of

him that gave them; our understandings in knowing and acknowledging him; our memories in remembering him; our hearts and affections in adhering and cleaving unto him, by loving, fearing, trusting in him, and so in the rest. Of all our thoughts also, words and actions, how we have by them glorified or dishonored God. Of all our course and carriage in our whole life and conversation, and how we have therein answered the end of our Creation and Redemption, which was to glorify him, who hath made and saved us. More especially, we may examine ourselves, how we have performed or broken our vows and promises made unto God, and principally our promise in Baptism; how we have shaken off the service of sin, Satan, and the world, and devoted ourselves wholly to the service of God. How we have profited in mortification, and what corruptions we have subdued and weakened, which formerly were potent and strong in us; how we have mastered and abated our pride, anger, ambition, covetousness, voluptuousness, impatency, evil concupiscence, and the rest of our corrupt affections and unruly passions. How we have profited in newness of life, both inwardly in our minds and hearts, and outwardly in our words and actions; how we have ruled that unruly member our tongues, and have made them instruments of God's glory, and of the edification of our neighbors and ourselves. How we have grown in God's graces, waxing daily stronger in our faith, and assurance of his love and our salvation, more fervent in our love and zeal, more firm in our affiance, and how we have renewed and increased our sorrow for sin, our hatred of our corruptions, especially of our beloved sins, and how we have in our endeavors and actions answered our resolutions of serving God in newness of life. How we have furnished ourselves with all the parts of our Christian Armor, and kept it fast buckled unto us in the whole time of our warfare. How we have kept our spiritual watch, and how we have resisted or been overcome with the temptations of our spiritual enemies. How we have performed the general duties of Christianity, and the special duties of our callings; and how we have observed or neglected the duties of our daily exercise, as they have before been described unto us. How we have profited by God's Judgments upon ourselves or others, for the mortification of our

sins, and weaning our hearts from the love of the world; and how his mercies and blessings, his patience and longsuffering, have been available with us, to lead us unto repentance, and to make us diligent and cheerful in his service. Whether we have been made more careful by our former falls, to look better to our footing, and whether the remembrance of our lost time, hath not made us double our diligence, that we may redeem it, by performing unto God more faithful service for the time to come. Whether we are daily careful to renew our Covenant with God, and to preserve ourselves from sliding back in the breach of our promises. Whether we decay not in our first love, but nourish it and all other saving graces in their first fervency, yea increase in them daily more and more. Finally, whether we are prepared to bear afflictions, and to meet death with a cheerful and willing heart; and whether our accounts be in that readiness, that we do with comfort and joy expect and wish for the coming of our Savior Christ unto Judgment.

Sect. 3 - That we are chiefly to examine ourselves in respect of our sins; and first, our original corruption.

But the chief things wherein we must most often and seriously examine ourselves, are our sins, and the miseries and punishments which attend upon them. And first, our original corruption, whereby we have defaced God's Image in us, and defiled all the powers and faculties of our souls and bodies, whereby being utterly disabled unto all good duties of God's service, they are prone unto all evil, and to perform service unto sin and Satan. So that there is naturally no sound place in us, but from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, nothing but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores. Nor any sin and wickedness, how abominable so ever, the seeds whereof do not remain in us, wanting nothing but the temptations of the devil, the world, and our own flesh, to make them sprout up and come to their full growth, as oft as we get fit opportunity. Neither is this the case of some alone, but of all without exception, one as well as

another, being ready to commit any outrageous wickedness, David as well as Cain, Lot as the Sodomites, Peter as well as Judas. Or if they do not, it is not from the benefit of nature, which is equally corrupt in all (all being alike the children of wrath and dead in their sins) but from the Spirit of God, which either sanctifieth and changeth the nature of the Elect, or restraineth the wicked, by giving them some common and Moral gifts, for the good of human society, which otherwise could not stand, if they were let loose to their natural impiety. Of which restraint, if they be once freed and left to themselves, they burst out with Nero, Hazael, Judas, and many others, into such outrageous wickedness, as in the time of the Spirits restraint, their own judgments, who are best acquainted with their own hearts, would have thought, that their natures could not possibly be inclined to such abominations. Here then is matter enough for our trial and examination to be exercised about, if we will rake in this noisome sink of all uncleanness, and rip these old sores to the bottom. Which though it be unpleasant to corrupted nature, because being full of self-love, it fleeth the sight of its own deformities, and being willing to flatter itself with a false opinion of some native beauty, doth abhor the discovery of its ugly filthiness, and with the Elephant willfully muddeth the clear waters, which would give it a view how monstrously it is misshapen; yet is it a consideration most necessary; seeing this is the root and fountain of all our other sins, whereof we should most seriously repent, bewailing, and reforming this inbred corruption; which if we neglect, and spend all our time about our actual sins, it is all one, as if we should be still chopping at the branches, and let the root live and grow, or be wholly taken up in cleansing of the streams, and never take care for the purging of the fountain, which being polluted, defiles them with its filthiness.

Sect. 4 - Secondly, we must examine ourselves, concerning our actual transgressions, according to the Law.

Secondly, in this examination, we must call ourselves to an account for our actual sins, which we ourselves have committed against God's Majesty, by breaking his Law, and all and every of his Commandments, in thought, word, and deed. The rule of which examination, by which we are to come to our trial, is the Law of God itself, which by our sins we have transgressed; for as the Apostle saith, By the Law cometh the knowledge of sin, being that straight rule which best discovereth the crookedness of our actions, and wherein, and how many ways we have swerved from it. In which course, the best manner of proceeding is, that we begin where God beginneth, and so proceed with him, from one Commandment to another, examining ourselves, how often and many ways we have offended against every one of them, both by neglecting the duties which they command, and committing the sins which they forbid. Whereof I shall not need here to set down the particulars, according to which, trial is to be made, seeing I have done it already in the former part of this Treatise, unto which I refer the Reader, who desireth to make use of it for this purpose. Only let us know, that the Law of God, being a most perfect abstract of his will, doth contain in it all virtues which he commandeth, and vices which he forbiddeth, and though it be brief in words, yet as David saith, it is in the sense and meaning, exceeding large. And therefore when we go to examine ourselves according unto it, we must not look so much to the bare words of every Commandment, as to their sense, being enlarged according to the rules of extension, which are grounded upon the Scriptures, and even upon reason and common equity. As first, where any vice or sin is forbidden, there the contrary virtue or duty is commanded, and contrariwise. Secondly, where one particular vice is forbidden, or duty commanded, there all vices or duties of the same nature and kind, are forbidden or commanded, as our Savior hath taught us in his exposition of the Law. Thirdly, the Law being perfect, doth require perfect obedience of the whole man, and every part inward and outward, soul and body; so also whole obedience unto all and every Commandment: for he that breaketh one of them, is guilty of all; and not only that our obedience be whole and total in respect of the parts, but also in respect of degrees, that it be in that

perfection which this perfect Law requireth. Fourthly, the Law being spiritual, and having a spiritual sense and power, doth bind not only the outward man to external obedience, but also the soul and secret thoughts, the heart and conscience. Yea, the first and last Commandments have a large extent above all the rest, reaching even to our thoughts and first motions, which have not the consent of will joined with them. Fifthly, where any virtue or vice is commanded or forbidden, there also all the means and occasions are commanded or forbidden. Sixthly, where any duty is commanded, or vice forbidden, there also the signs of them both are also enjoined or prohibited: for we must have a good conscience, both before God, and also before men, and avoid not only the evil itself, but also all appearance of it. And lastly, the common rule of charity, binding us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and that God may be glorified in their obedience, as well as our own, the Law of God requireth, that we should not only observe all that is contrived in it, ourselves, but also provide, as much as in us lieth, that it be likewise observed by our neighbors, yea even by our enemies.

Sect. 5 - How we must aggravate our sins, in respect of circumstances.

And if by help of these rules we enlarge the Law of God, according to the true sense and meaning of it, and examine ourselves answerably in all the duties which it commandeth, and all the vices and sins which it forbiddeth, we shall hereby come to a clear and lively sense and feeling of our sins in all the sorts and kinds of them; unto which, when we have in some measure attained, we must then further examine ourselves, how often and innumerable times we have reiterated and multiplied the same sins, against every of God's Commandments, in thought, word, and deed. And then we shall plainly see, that our sins in number exceed the hairs of our head, and the stars of heaven. Which when we have done, we must in the next place consider, how heinous they have many of them been, in respect

of their quality and degree. Where we are carefully to take heed that we do not (as corrupt nature, pride, and self-love persuade the most) excuse, mince, and extenuate our sins; but that we look upon them in their natural ugliness and outrageousness, and aggravate them by all their circumstances of persons, manner, time, place, and the means which God hath given us, to preserve us from committing them, or of raising us out of them by repentance. As that we have thus and thus sinned, not only when we were the vassals of Satan, uncalled, and unregenerate, with full consent of will, and with all delight and cheerfulness, but since we were called, regenerate and enlightened by God's Spirit; and since we have given our names to Christ, and professed ourselves to be his servants, we have oftentimes done service unto Satan his arch-enemy, by committing many sins, not only through frailty and infirmity, either through ignorance, or because we were taken upon the sudden and at unawares; but oftentimes wittingly and willingly against knowledge and conscience, yea sometime willfully, being transported with the violence of our carnal lusts and passions, and (as it were) with an high hand against God. That we have thus sinned, not only in secret, committing that wickedness in God's presence, which we would have forborne in the presence of a mortal man, but also openly and scandalously, to the dishonor of God, and slander of our profession. That we have not seldom fallen into these sins, but often and many times; yea even after that we have repented of them, and have resolved, vowed, and promised, that we would leave and forsake them. That we have committed these sins, not against an enemy, a stranger, or one of mean condition, like unto ourselves, but against God, omnipotent in power, and glorious in Majesty; and unto us so infinite in grace and mercy, that with all other blessings which we enjoy or hope for, he hath given the Son of his love unto us, and for us, that he might by his death work that great work of our Redemption, and give unto us life and happiness, who were the slaves of Satan, dead in our sins, enemies to God and our own good, and the children of wrath as well as others. That we have not by strong inducements been drawn to offend so great and gracious a God, but for mere trifles, and the contemptible wages of worldly vanities. That we have committed

these sins, being the members of Jesus Christ our Head, and so (as much as in us did lie) have defiled him with the taint of our sins, and drawn him (as much as we could) into communion with us in our wickedness, that shed his precious blood to purge and purify us, that we might be holy, and without all blemish of sinful pollution. That we have by our sins grieved the good Spirit in us, vexing him who is our Comforter, by quenching his good motions, and obeying the suggestions of Satan, and the lusts of our sinful flesh. That we have thus sinned, and having fallen, have lien in our sins without repentance, notwithstanding the plentiful means which God hath granted of grace and sanctification. As the light of the Gospel and preaching of the Word, whereby we have been instructed, counseled, admonished, reprov'd, comforted in all good courses by his gracious promises, and withdrawn from sin by the denunciation of his curse and terrible threatening's. Yea notwithstanding the Lord hath encouraged us to serve him cheerfully, with the liberal wages of present blessings, and dis-heartened us from going on in sin, by causing us to feel the smart of his chastisements and corrections.

Sect. 6 - That it is a profitable course to keep a Catalogue or Register of our special sins; and the manifold fruits which will arise of it.

And thus we are to examine ourselves, both in respect of the number and quantity, and the heinousness and quality of our sins. But because our observation is slight, our memories short, and notable to recount and recall them, when we most need to have them in our sight, and because we oftentimes are interrupted in this exercise by many distractions: It should be a profitable course, if we would, when we are best at leisure, and most fit for this exercise, and especially in the day of our affliction and humiliation, examine ourselves thoroughly and seriously, according to every one of the Commandments, in the order before prescribed; and as we go, take a Catalogue of all the sins that we can with deliberate study call to our remembrance, which we have committed in the whole course of our

lives, not in the particular acts, which being often reiterated, are innumerable, but in their several kinds. And for our more distinct and orderly proceeding herein, we may consider how we have carried ourselves in our several ages, states and callings, in our childhood, youth, mature, and old age, how towards God, our neighbors, and ourselves; how before we were called, in the days of our ignorance; and how since we were called and enlightened with the knowledge of God and his truth; how in this, and how in that passage of our lives; how when we were children under government of our parents; and how since we were parents and governors of others. Which when we have at once or sundry times drawn, and enlarged, as afterwards upon occasion our sins come to our remembrance, it will be a notable help, not only for the beginning of sound repentance, but also for the renewing of it, as oft as we go about it: and minister unto us matter plentifully, for the confession of our sins before God, and deprecation, when we have thus humbled our souls in his sight; and much strengthen our faith in the assurance of their remission, when as we have thus specially repented of them, confessed them, and craved at God's hands mercy and forgiveness. But especially we must remember in this our Catalogue, to set down our most grievous and heinous sins, whereby we have most dishonored God, and provoked his displeasure against us, whether they have been committed before, or after our calling. For though God hath forgiven them, we must not forget them, but must retain them in memory, and daily repent of them, using them as a chief motive to work our hearts to hearty sorrow, both for them, and all our other sins, and as goads and pricks in our sides, to make us with more zeal to go on in the contrary course, and in bringing forth to God's glory the fruits of new obedience. And thus the Lord required of the Israelites, that they should always remember their stiff-necked rebellion in the Wilderness, whereby they provoked him to wrath against them. And thus among their other sins, they specially remembered and acknowledged their ingratitude in rejecting God's government, and desiring of a King. Thus David repenting of all his other wickedness, doth specially call to mind his adultery and murder, even after God by his Prophet had assured him of forgiveness. And the Apostle Paul,

upon all occasions remembereth his grievous sin of persecuting the Church, both for his humiliation, and to stir up his zeal in God's service. And thus having set down our accounts with God for the time past, it will be a good course for the time to come, that our reckonings may be kept continually even, to keep a journal or day-book, wherein we are to set down what sins of note we can observe in ourselves every particular day, either in the committing of any evil which God hath condemned, or in omitting, or negligent performing any special and necessary duties which he hath commanded, respecting himself, our neighbors, or our own persons, which if it have been heinous and grievous, we may well register and write it in our Catalogue (as it were) in capital or red letters, as a sin to be repented of in the whole course of our lives. For if Merchants and Trades-men find it profitable and necessary, to have not only books of accounts, which contain the main matters of their estates, what they have, and what they have parted with; what they owe, and what is owing to them; but also their day-books, wherein they write what they buy, and what they sell; what they have laid out, and what hath come in; and yet all this pains is taken for the preserving and increasing their worldly and temporal riches, which are momentary, uncertain, mutable and sure to perish: Why should we think such care too much, and pains too great, for the good of our souls, and the preserving or increasing of our spiritual and eternal riches, the discharge and clearing of our debts unto God, which if they be found upon our account at the great Audit of God's last Judgment, shall never be forgiven, but make us liable to everlasting punishments? Besides, we shall receive for the present, diverse benefits, by keeping and registering this strict account. For hereby we shall be more watchful over ourselves, that we let no enemy enter in the day, which will trouble us at night, and will not let us rest till we have thrust it out by unfeigned repentance; we shall be freed from carnal security, and be made more careful in observing our sins, either to prevent or reform them, and more able to remember them when they are committed, that we may bewail them, and take better heed for the time to come. And finally, we shall not so easily be overcome of every temptation, and enticed unto sin, when as we know beforehand, that

it shall come into account, and under the censure of conscience, awarding us to shame or sorrow, and to lose the sweetness, which we have tasted with some carnal delight in sinning, by the smart and pain of speedy repentance. And as no wise man will run upon the score, or have his name in the shop-book, for every needless trifle which may well be spared, because one thing draweth on another until it come to a round sum; nor for a greater matter, when he purposeth present payment, as soon as the wares are brought home, because the crossed book, as it showeth his honesty in paying his debts, so at least it seemeth to argue defect of present means, in that for the time he was indebted: so much less would any come upon the score, or into the book of conscience for every small bait of worldly pleasure or profit, seeing here especially one thing pulls on another, and many littles make a great reckoning; nor yet for matters of greater moment, if they considered that payment must be made, the score cleared, and the book crossed, before they can betake themselves to quiet rest. Which when it is done, though it showeth their faith and piety in repenting, yet withal their frailty and imperfection in their spiritual estate, in that by falling into sin they needed repentance.

Sect. 6 - Of the consideration of our misery and punishment.

And thus we must examine ourselves in respect of our sins; which when we have done, we must not rest there, but enter also into the consideration of the misery and punishments, which not being repented of, they bring upon us. As that they make us subject to the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God, who being a consuming fire, and we as stubble or combustible matter, it must needs be a fearful thing to fall into his hands. To the curse also of the Law, denounced against all that continue not in all that is written therein to do it, and to all the plagues and punishments threatened therein, which respect either this life, or the life to come: that they are a wall of separation between our God and us, stopping from us the sweet influences of his

grace and love, and hindering us of many testimonies of his favor in temporal things, which otherwise he would graciously bestow upon us. And contrariwise, that till we repent, they endanger us to everlasting condemnation, which though we do hereafter avoid, by turning from our sins unto God, yet in the mean time they expose us to temporary afflictions, which God useth as a means to bring us to repentance, crossing us in our evil courses, and setting thorny hedges in our way, to stay us from running too far from him. They move him to meet with us at every turn, and to bring us to a true sight and sense of our sins, by fitting his punishments in some proportion or likeness unto them; because so brutish we are in observing our sins, and the judgments of God inflicted for them, that (like the dog before the sheep that he hath worried) we need to be taken with the manner, and to have our fault laid before us, when he taketh us in hand to beat us for it. For because sin is too sweet to our carnal appetite, therefore the Lord embittereth it with the wormwood and gall of afflictions, which oftentimes much more vexing us, then we took delight in the pleasure of sin, doth make us afterwards, when we remember this loathsome after-taste, to restrain our appetite, and not to give way to our carnal concupiscence alluring us to wickedness.

Sect. 7 - Of the end of this examination, and time when it is to be performed.

And thus we see the subject matter and manner of our examination, with the helps and means whereby we may be furthered in it. Now the main end of it is, that it may serve as an effectual means to bring us to repentance; for therefore we labor to come unto a true sight of our sins, that we may unfeignedly bewail them with bitter grief. Therefore do we take a thorough view of our sins, and the Judgments of God, miseries and punishments, which do accompany them, that seeing the ugly deformities of the one, and feeling or foreseeing the smart of the other, we may be moved, either not to sin, or being

overtaken, to leave and forsake them, and to prevent our own woe by speedy repentance. The time of this examination is always in season, because repentance is never unseasonable. For seeing the score is seldom clear, and our frailty such, that conscience is occasioned to hold the pen still in hand, and every hand while writeth up our debts; therefore we must be still examining, clearing and crossing of our books, that nothing may stand upon account, when we shall be called to Judgment; which being most certain, and the time most uncertain, it would be our wisdom to be always in readiness. In which regard it were to be wished, that we would spend some little time, every night before we go to sleep, in examining ourselves, and clearing our accounts for the day past, the which I here pass over, having spoken of it before in the daily exercise. But most solemnly and seriously are we to set ourselves about this duty of examination, when as we have some special cause of renewing our repentance. As when we desire any extraordinary benefit which we greatly want, when we undertake any weighty business; when we humble ourselves in any solemn manner before God, either publicly or privately, in the sight and sense of our sins, which we desire should be pardoned, or of some imminent and approaching judgment, which we would prevent, or some present affliction which we would have removed; or when we prepare ourselves that we may come as worthy guests to the Lord's Table. Then is this examination most seasonable, as being the best preparative for humiliation, fervent prayer, and serious repentance.

Sect. 8 - A complaint of the neglect of this duty, and the causes thereof.

But alas, how is this excellent duty generally neglected? And how seldom do the most that profess Christianity, call themselves unto this account, multiplying their sins from day today, and never making any reckoning of them? And although almost all men hold it to be most necessary, to be still reviewing their worldly estates, and to keep a strict account of their debts, and means to discharge them

of their disbursements and expenses, and of their profits and comings in; yet how few are they who seriously examine their debts to God, or of the means whereby they may discharge them? How they thrive and increase, or how they decay and go backward in their spiritual estate, till at last they prove Bankrupts in all grace and goodness, and so desperate in their estates, that they only think how they may run further in debt, and never take care how it may be discharged? Of which neglect there are many causes. First, because they are so far in love with their sins, that they loath all means which might work any dislike, or convince them of the necessity to leave and forsake them. So our Savior saith, that when light is come into the world, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every man that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to it, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. Secondly, because through long neglect of this duty, their debts are grown to such an hideous sum, that they are afraid to review their reckonings, herein like Bankrupts, who having consumed their means, and made their estates desperate, cannot endure to keep any accounts, or if they do, to cast up their reckonings, because their debts are grown so great, that they have no hope that they shall ever discharge them; and therefore they will not grieve themselves in looking upon those evils which they cannot avoid. Or like unto foolish and desperate Patients, who have let their sores run so long, without using the means whereby they might have been cured, that now they fear the remedy more than the disease, and choose rather to rot in their corruption, then to have their festered sores searched to the bottom. Thirdly, because they so overmuch love and mind worldly things, that they securely neglect their spiritual estate, and are so wholly taken up in keeping their accounts with men, that they can find no leisure to account with God. Yea so wholly are they possessed with earthly vanities, that they never so much as think of it, as a thing necessary, that they should spend any time in examining themselves, and searching out their sins. Fourthly, because they presume so much of God's mercy, that they imagine that he will forgive all their debts in the gross sum, and never trouble either himself or them, in examining particulars, though in many express places of Scripture he

hath professed the contrary; and though it will not stand with God's infinite wisdom to forgive such great debts, before his debtors take notice of them, that they may love him, who hath forgiven them so much, be thankful, and render unto him due praise for his infinite bounty. Wherein what do they else but make an Idol of God's mercy, in separating it not only from his Justice, but also from his Wisdom and Truth?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Containing diverse effectual reasons to move us unto this exercise of
Meditation.

Sect. 1 - That this duty is required in the Scriptures.

But that those who truly fear God, may not be carried away in this common stream of negligence and corruption, sporting themselves in the pleasures of sin, until they fall into the dead sea of endless destruction; let them first consider, that this duty of consideration and examination of our estates, is strictly required of God, and hath been always practiced by the faithful. The former is manifest by plain testimonies of holy Scriptures. David exhorteth us to stand in awe, and sin not; and to commune with our own hearts upon our bed, and be still. The Church in the Lamentations demandeth why a living man should complain, seeing a man is punished for his sins? And therefore his best way is, not to lie lamenting his pain, but to find out and remove the cause, that the effect may cease. Let us search and try our ways (saith she) and turn again to the Lord. So the Lord saith, that the people of Israel, upon their freedom out of captivity, should remember their ways, and all their doings, wherein they had been defiled, that they might be loathsome in their own sight, for all the

evils which they had committed. Thus the Apostle exhorteth us to examine ourselves before we come to the Lord's Table, and telleth us, that if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord. So elsewhere; Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove yourselves, &c. And thus in many places he putteth those in mind to whom he writeth, of their former sinful estate, out of which, through God's mercy they were delivered, that they might repent of their sins past, and praise the Lord for their present condition. The neglect of which duty the Lord complaineth of, and condemneth in the Jews, as the cause of their gross ingratitude and impenitency. The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. So Jeremiah; I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? As on the other side, the practice of this duty is commended unto us in the examples of the godly. Thus David performing himself, what he persuaded unto others, saith, that he considered his own ways, and turned his feet unto God's testimonies. So the Prodigal did begin his repentance by coming to himself (as it were) out of the dead swoon of sin, calling to remembrance his departing from such a gracious Father, and his own wanderings in the ways of wickedness, in which he had lost himself, as in an inextricable and endless Labyrinth. And the Apostle often recallesh his sins to his remembrance, to humble himself that had committed them, glorify God who had forgiven them, and comfort others who had alike fallen, and to encourage them with him to forsake their sins, and turn unto God by unfeigned repentance.

Sect. 2 - The great profit of this exercise of examination.

Unto these precepts drawing us, and these examples leading us to this duty of examination, we may add the great profit which may allure us, and the urgent necessity which presseth it upon us. For first, the benefits are manifold which accompany this exercise. Examine thyself more (saith one) then thy neighbors, for that is thy

gain, this theirs. Thou shouldest rather take an account of thy actions, then of thy monies; seeing these perish, but they are permanent, and shall continue with thee. More especially, this examination bringeth us unto a distinct knowledge of sin, which otherwise we should only see in general view, and (as it were) in the whole lump or mass. It discovereth unto us their innumerable numbers both great and small, and as the Sun-shine, helpeth us to discern every sluttish corner, which before was not seen, and revealeth not only the gross uncleanness of the house, but much dust and innumerable motes, which we not discerning, thought the house clean and free from them: So doth this searching of our hearts lay open unto us many annoyances, which before were hid, and innumerable numbers of our lesser sins, which we thinking to be nothing, supposed ourselves to be so pure, that there was no need to be purged of them. It showeth unto us not only our gross offenses, but also the corruptions and imperfections of our best actions; and with our errors and wanderings out of the way of truth, our lameness and slowness whilst we are walking in it. It discovereth, with the number of our sins, their greatness and heinousness, and maketh us know, whilst we search our sores to the bottom, that they are so deep and dangerous, that they need present cure, and the sovereign salve of Christ's Blood; which seemed so slight, whilst they were skinned over with colorable excuses, that we thought there was no haste of the cure, and that every Lord, have mercy upon us, or shallow broken sigh was sufficient to heal them. It worketh our hearts to a true hatred of them, when upon just trial we see their ugliness and deformity, their horrible pollution and noisome sent. For howsoever, whilst these filthy channels were unstirred, they did little trouble us with any ill savor; yet when we rake in these stinking puddles, they make us abhor them, and show by their noisomeness, how much they need cleansing. Yea, it will make us to loath ourselves for our sins sake, and thus abhorring ourselves, to repent, with Job, in dust and ashes, according to that of the Prophet, Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and abominations. And as it thus humbleth and prepareth our hearts for

repentance, so is it a most effectual means to work it in us. And this Solomon intimateth, where he saith, that if the Israelites having sinned, should bethink themselves, and repent; nothing that they must consider their evil ways, before they could repent of them. And our Savior first requireth, that the Church of Ephesus should remember from whence she was fallen, and then that she should repent and do her first works of love. Thus the lamenting Church, remembering her sins and afflictions which they had brought upon her, was humbled and repented. By reason whereof, it furthereth much the work of sanctification, and helpeth to purge out of us the relics of our sinful corruptions. For this frequent examination will not suffer sin to sleep with us, nor to have any time to fortify itself against us; but as soon as it is entered, it discovereth this enemy, and will not suffer it to lay against our souls any secret ambushments. It nourisheth in us the true fear of God, and maketh us careful to avoid his displeasure. It pulleth us back, being ready to fall into sin, when we consider the miseries which attend upon it, and from relapsing into our old diseases, when we remember with what danger and difficulty we did escape them. It keepeth our hearts and consciences pure and peaceable, whilst by the frequent use of it, they are preserved from the pollution of sin, or quickly purged when they are defiled. It nourisheth God's graces in us, and maketh us constant in the ways of godliness. It helpeth us much in aspiring towards perfection, whilst by often reviewing of our works, we see their defects, and endeavor to amend them. Finally, it preserveth us from receiving any hurt by God's temporary Judgments, for if we would judge ourselves, he would not judge us; and maketh us comfortably, and with joy expect the coming of the Lord to the last Judgment, when as we hereby keep even our accounts, and are prepared to render a reckoning when he calleth for it.

Sect. 3 - That this exercise of Meditation is very necessary.

The necessity of this exercise doth likewise appear, because the neglect of it depriveth us of all the former benefits. But more especially, as repentance is necessary unto salvation, so this examination must necessarily go before repentance. For first, we must by examination come to the knowledge of our sins, before we can either bewail or turn from them. Whereof it is, that our Savior calleth sinners only to repentance, that is, such as know and acknowledge themselves to be in this number. And Jeremiah willethe the backsliding Israelites, first to acknowledge their iniquities, and then to repent of them, and to turn unto the Lord. And David saith, that he thought on his ways, and then turned his feet unto God's Testimonies. So the Lord saith of the Jews, that they should remember their ways and be ashamed. And putteth consideration before repentance, as a cause and means of it; Because (saith he) he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions; implying that he could not have turned, unless he had first considered of his sins from which he turned. And this (as one excellently observeth) is implied even in nature, where there is the same instrument of seeing and weeping, to show unto us, that weeping depends upon seeing. He that sees well, weeps well. He that sees his sins thoroughly, will bewail them heartily. And this want of consideration, the Prophet noteth to have been the cause, why Ephraim would not turn unto the Lord, that he might heal them; They consider not (saith he) in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness. And the Prophet Jeremiah noteth this to have been the cause of the Jews impenitency; because no man so much as demanded, What have I done? Neither in truth is there any one greater cause why men in our own days go on in their sins without repentance, then want of due consideration what they are doing, namely, treasuring up against themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, and (as it were) heaping up a pile of wood for their own burning. Neither were it possible, that they should rush into all sin, like the horse into the battle, if they would but examine whither they are a going, and into what desperate dangers of death and destruction they plunge themselves, by continuing in their wicked courses. Again, without often and strict examination, it is not possible for us to find out, or avoid the

deceitful wiles of our own sinful hearts; seeing they are so deep, that without much searching, we cannot sound them to the bottom. Whereof it is that the Wiseman counselleth us, that we should above all other observations, look to our hearts. And the Apostle exhorteth us to take special heed, lest there should be in us a heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Moreover, without this diligent search, whereby we come to a sight of our wants, we would flatter ourselves in our weak and frail estate, as though nothing needed reformation; and pleasing ourselves in our own imperfections, we would never labor and strive after more perfection. For we are naturally so full of pride and self-love, that as Solomon speaketh, Every way of a man seemeth right in his own eyes. And therefore our Savior exhorteth us to take heed that the light which is in us be not darkness, that is, that our seeming wisdom be not foolishness, and that we mistake not the stained cloth of our imperfect obedience, for the pure white linen of perfect sanctity; and so grossly abuse ourselves: for if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he is deceived, and cozeneth himself of his own salvation. With which deceit it is easy to be overtaken (with proud Justiciaries) by reason of our self-love; if we do not often and seriously examine ourselves, according to the perfect rule of God's Law, and in this clear Looking-glass behold our blemishes, and the manifold wants and imperfections of our best actions. Furthermore, the necessity of this examination hereby appeareth, in that the neglect thereof is the cause of all sin. For what is the reason why men rush headlong into all manner of gross and notorious wickedness? Why they blaspheme God's holy Name for no worldly advantage, but upon mere vanity? Why they displease God, and disable themselves unto all duties of his service, by surfeiting and drunkenness, without any gain, yea, to the discredit of their persons, and ruining of their estates? Why they commit filthiness and uncleanness, thereby weakening their bodies, and shortening their lives? And why they continue in these and many such sins, with impenitency and hardness of heart? Surely not so much through the ignorance of their minds, or because their judgments are not convinced, that these are grievous sins, which for the present draw God's fearful plagues upon them; and will hereafter

be punished with everlasting death (For they hear these things daily sounding in their ears in the Ministry of the Word, and see fearful examples and presidents continually of them in others, who have lived in the like wickedness) But because though they have sight and knowledge, yet they have no use of it, the devil having so hood-winked and blind folded the eyes of their mind, that they never examine their state, nor consider with themselves what they do, whither they are a going, nor what will be the issue and end of these things: And so like hooded Hawkes, are carried quietly by the devil into all wicked courses which lead them to destruction.

Sect. 4 - The former point, proved by the Scriptures. Esa. 1. 3.

And this is manifest by the Scriptures, which in many places show, that men commit many of their sins, and live in them without repentance, because they examine not their estate, nor enter into due consideration what they do. Thus it is said, that the cause of the Israelites ingratitude and rebellion against God, was, because they did not consider, either God's goodness and bounty, nor their own wickedness, and the manifold evils which thereby they brought upon themselves. That the cause why many of them followed drunkenness, and sported themselves in this sin with all sensual delight, was, because they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands. That they forsook the Lord, and worshipped stocks and stones, the works of their own hands, because none considered in their hearts the vanity of Idols, and that themselves had made them of the same tree, whereof they had burned a part, and converted other parts of it to other uses. That the cause of Babylon's insolency and pride, whereby they tyrannized over God's people, was, because they did not consider, that God had made them only scourges and rods to correct his people, which having done, he would cast them into the fire: which things they did not lay to heart, nor remember the latter end, namely, their destruction, and the deliverance of God's people. And as neglect of this consideration

is the cause of sin, so also it exposeth us to fearful punishments; for if we will not judge ourselves, we shall be judged of the Lord; if we forget his Judgments and never think of them, he will rub our memories, and help us to recover our lost wits, by whipping us like Bedlams, and making us sensible by smart, who were insensible of reason. Thus the Lord saith, that the whole Land was made desolate, because no man laid it to heart. And thus he threateneth the Israelites, that because they did not remember and consider his former mercies, and their own sins and unworthiness, therefore he would recompense their ways upon their head, and make them to know him by his Judgments, when as his mercies would not make them acknowledge him. Lastly, this may show us how necessary this examination is, seeing it must of necessity be done either in this world, or the world to come. For all shall render a reckoning of all that they have done in the flesh; and therefore if we do not examine and judge ourselves here, God will examine and condemn us hereafter. If we do not call ourselves to account in this life, when as finding ourselves short in our reckonings, we have time to sue, through the Mediation of Christ, for the pardon of our debts, and to procure a general acquittance and discharge: we shall be accountant to God's Justice at the day of Judgment, when the Day of grace and salvation being past, there will be no place for procuring of pardon; but being much indebted, and having nothing to pay, we shall be cast into the prison of outer darkness, without hope of mercy, or deliverance from that endless misery. Which fearful Judgment and condemnation if we would avoid, let us here, whilst the Day of salvation lasteth, examine, judge, and condemn ourselves, that we may turn from our sins by unfeigned repentance; and so having Christ to be both our Advocate and Judge, we shall then escape God's severe and strict Judgment, seeing he will answer for us; and our examination and judgment being already dispatched in this life, nothing shall then remain, but that he our Judge should pronounce the sentence of absolution, and enter us into the full fruition of that heavenly happiness, and everlasting joys of his Kingdom, which by his death and merits he hath purchased for us.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of the fourth private means of a godly life, which is, walking daily with God.

Sect. 1 - That we are always in God's presence.

The fourth private means of a godly life, is, with Enoch to walk with God, that is, to set ourselves in his presence, always remembering that he is with us, hearing all our words, and beholding all our actions, yea even the very secret thoughts of our hearts: And that not as an idle spectator, but as a righteous Judge, who is both able and willing to reward us bountifully, if we do well; and to punish us severely, if we do evil. Wherein we have holy David for our example, who professeth, that he did set the Lord always before him. Which that we may imitate, let our judgments first be thoroughly informed in this truth, that howsoever God keepeth his chief residence in heaven, in respect of revealing himself most clearly to his Angels and Saints, and manifestation of his presence, by admitting them to a more full and perfect vision of his Majesty and glory, yet being infinite and incomprehensible, he filleth all places in heaven and earth with his presence, containing all things, and being himself contained of nothing. Thus Solomon saith, that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain him. And the Lord himself demandeth; Am I a God at hand, and not a God far off? Can any man hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? And David professeth, that he could in no place, either by sea or land, in heaven or in hell, go from his presence. And being thus omni-present, he seeth and beholdeth all things, himself in the meantime being invisible. For hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. The eyes of the Lord are in every place,

beholding the evil and the good. Darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to him. He beholdeth the most hidden secrets, and all things are naked and transparent to his sight. Yea, he seeth all our actions, and his eyes are upon all our ways: they are not hid from his face, neither is our iniquity hid from his eyes. Yea, he clearly discerneth, not only outward works in the most secret corners, but he searcheth and trieth our very hearts and reins. For hell and destruction are before the Lord, and how much more than the hearts of the children of men? And though they be so wicked and deceitful, that they are never known unto others, and oftentimes not to ourselves, yet the Lord, who by his infinite wisdom seeth and knoweth all things, searcheth and trieth them.

Sect. 2 - That it would be a powerful means to restrain us from all sin, if we would always set God before us.

The which if it were thoroughly considered, would be a most powerful and effectual means, to move us continually to walk with God, to perform all duties of a godly life, and to carry ourselves in all our thoughts, words, and works, at all times, and in all places, as in his sight and presence. If we did ever set God before our eyes, and always remembered that his eyes were upon us, it would be a notable bridle to pull us back, and to hold us up when we are ready to fall into any sin. It would make us to watch over ourselves, that we did not do any wickedness which is odious and displeasing in his sight, because though it be a great fault to transgress the Law of our Sovereign, yet it is much aggravated by our boldness and impudency, when we dare commit it before his face, and in his sight. It would make us careful of all our words and ways, not only in the duties of our callings, that we did not carry ourselves, either negligently or deceitfully, as in our trading's and dealings, buying and selling, but also in our sports and recreations, where naturally we are most apt to forget ourselves, and to discover most vanity and folly. For if the

presence of some grave and godly man would so over-awe us, that we should thereby be withheld from the most of our sins; and if coming at unawares and taking us with the manner, as we are talking vainly or profanely, and doing that which is evil or mis-beseeming us, we are ready to discover the shame of our hearts, in our blushing cheeks and dejected countenances; if the presence and eye of Parents and School-masters, restrain their children and scholars from acting their childish follies, and doing such things which they have prohibited; if no malefactor is so desperately impudent, as to play his pranks in the presence of his Judge; and to make him an eye-witness of his wickedness: then how much less would we mis-behave ourselves by transgressing God's Law, if we did always remember and seriously consider, that our heavenly Father, Master, and Sovereign Judge did look upon us? Seneca persuaded his friend Lucilius, for the keeping of himself within compass of his duty, to imagine that some grave man, as Cato or Lelius, did still look upon him; because spectators would keep him from offending. And being come to more perfection, would have a man to fear no man's presence more than his own, nor any man's testimony, above that of his own conscience; because he might flee from another, but not from himself, and escape others censure, but not the censure of his own conscience. How much more then would it keep us from committing of any wickedness, if we always remembered that God looked upon us, whose pure eyes cannot endure any sinful pollution? Seeing he also is greater then our consciences, and so upright in his Judgments, that though conscience may be silenced for a time, and give in no evidence, or be a false witness, yet it is as impossible to corrupt him, as to escape his sentence, either by flight, or by making our appeal. And this argument David useth to put an end to the wickedness of the wicked, because the righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins. And Solomon dissuadeth the young man from folly and filthiness by the same reason; Why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of men are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. Yea, this should no less forcibly restrain us from secret then from open sins, seeing no man can hide himself in

secret places, that the Lord cannot see him, for he beholdeth not only our most hidden actions, but also searcheth the reins and the heart, and will give unto every man according to their works, and he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. And this argument the Church useth to preserve them from forgetfulness of God, and from idolatry, seeing God would search this out, though men could not see them, because he knoweth the secrets of the heart. Neither could anything more forcibly restrain us from secret sins, then a serious consideration of God's all-seeing presence, as we see in the example of Joseph, who though he were solicited to commit uncleanness by his mistress, who in all lawful things might command him, and had power to reward him, if he condescended to her desire, and to bring him into much trouble and danger, if he gave her a repulse, and had also the opportunity of secrecy, which freed him from shame and punishment, yet resisted the temptation by this alone consideration, that he should hereby grievously sin against God, who was a beholder of all his actions. Whereas on the other side, nothing doth make men sin more boldly and securely, then when having put God out of their sight, they imagine they are out of his, and that he either seeth or regardeth not their works of wickedness. Thus the eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me. And wicked men thus encourage themselves in their wickedness, saying; How doth God know? Can he judge thorough the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven. So the Psalmist saith, that the mighty men of the world hearten themselves on in their oppressions, breaking in pieces God's people, and afflicting his heritage; slaying the widow and stranger, and murdering the fatherless; saying, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. And having complained that the proud and violent had risen against him, and sought to destroy his innocent soul, he rendereth this as the reason of it; Because they had not set God before them.

Sect. 3 - That the consideration of God's presence would effectually move us unto all good duties.

And as this consideration, that God is present and beholdeth all our actions, powerfully restraineth us from all sin; so doth it effectually move us unto all good duties of his service. For if it be a strong motive to make a subject diligent and cheerful in doing the will of his Sovereign, who is able to prefer him, and bountiful to reward him, when he taketh notice of his pains, and is an eye-witness of all his service; and if a soldier will fight valiantly, and hazard himself to all dangers, when the eye of his General is upon him: then much more would we spare for no pains in performing the duties of God's service, and in fighting his battles, against the spiritual enemies of our salvation, if we always remembered that the eye of our supreme Sovereign, and chief Commander were still upon us, who is infinitely able, and no less willing to prefer and reward us for our well-doing. And this argument David useth to stir up himself unto all good duties: I have kept (saith he) thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee. Yea, this consideration will preserve us from all hypocrisy and cold formality in God's service, and make us to perform all good duties in a good manner, with integrity and uprightness of heart. Because the Lord beholdeth not only our outward actions, but also our secret intentions; and as he chiefly requireth that we should give him our hearts, and worship him in spirit and truth, so doth he take special notice whether we do so or no. And this argument the Lord himself useth to persuade Abraham to uprightness, because he was ever before him. Walk before me (saith he) and be upright. And David walked in his integrity, because he knew that he was to be judged and examined, not by men, but by God, who would try not only his outward actions, but also his reins and his heart. And the same motive he useth to persuade his son Solomon to serve the Lord with an upright heart, and a willing mind, because he searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. And finally, this moved Cornelius to

hear the Word of God with all fear and reverence, because they were all in God's presence; and the Apostle to preach it purely, and not deceitfully, as though he would make Merchandize of it, but in all sincerity; because as it was the Word of God, and not of man, which he preached; so he did speak it in Christ, as in God's sight and presence. And surely if when we set ourselves to serve God, we did duly consider that his piercing eye did behold our hearts and thoughts, as well as our outward behavior; we could not content ourselves with the service of our lips, hands and knees, and suffer our hearts to go a wandering about worldly vanities, because we would know, that God whom we serve is not contented with it. We would be ashamed that he should behold our hypocrisy and formal service; our hearts going one way, and our tongues another; seeing we would blush for shame, if men like unto ourselves could look into our hearts, and see how we dally and trifle with God, who will not be mocked, but (if they will not honor him) will honor himself in all that draw near unto him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of the last private means of a godly life, which is, experimental knowledge.

Sect. 1 - What this experimental knowledge is, and the practice of it in many examples.

The last private means (whereof I will speak) which may help and enable us to lead a godly life, is experimental knowledge, whereby we apply whatsoever we know, either concerning God, or ourselves, unto our own particular use, and endeavor to profit by it in the practice of holiness and righteousness. Thus we are not only to know that God is

a gracious Father in Christ, as to others, so unto us; but to labor to have the experience of it in ourselves, by feeling the beams of his fatherly love warming our hearts, and inflaming them with unfeigned love towards God again, by observing his fatherly providence watching over us, and how often we have been thereby powerfully defended from our many and mighty enemies, delivered out of imminent dangers, freed from many afflictions, when as we saw no means of escaping, and graciously relieved and provided for in our wants and necessities, when we have had no possible means to supply them. Thus knowing God to be Omnipotent in power, we must labor to have a feeling experience of it in his continual supporting us, both in respect of our souls and bodies, notwithstanding our own frailty and weakness, in which we should have often perished, in respect of the one through worldly dangers, and in respect of the other through spiritual temptations, did not he sustain us with his might, and glorify his power in our infirmities and weakness. And thus knowing God to be true of his word, yea truth itself, we must labor to have the experience and feeling of it in ourselves, by observing how he hath at all times made good his promises unto us, even then, when by reason of some delay we have most doubted of them. Finally, knowing that he is good and gracious, merciful and bountiful, both unto all his elect, and particularly unto us, we must seek to confirm it unto ourselves, by our own experience, and by calling to mind how often he hath pardoned our former sins, and sealed this pardon in our hearts and consciences by the testimony of his Spirit; how often we have tasted how good he is in the fruits of his bounty, and in the sweet feeling thereof have had our hearts comforted and refreshed. The which experience of times past, will much strengthen our faith and hope for the time to come, make us wholly to depend upon him, and to consecrate and devote ourselves to his worship and service, with all cheerfulness and courageous resolution, notwithstanding all oppositions, seeing by manifold experience we have found, that the God whom we serve, is most mighty to defend us, most gracious, true of his promises, and bountiful in performance, richly rewarding all those who fear and depend upon him. Thus knowing the virtue and efficacy of Christ's

death, in taking away, by the inestimable merit thereof, the guilt and punishment of our sins, we must strive to find and feel it in our own experience, by observing how it hath been powerful and effectual in us, for the mortifying and crucifying of our carnal lusts and sinful corruptions, which heretofore have ruled and reigned in us. And this Paul meaneth, when he saith, that he desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; namely, this virtue and efficacy of it in himself, in the crucifying of his flesh, with the lusts thereof, and not only to know the truth of it, which might easily be attained unto by the relation and instructions of others. In which sense he saith in another place, that he accounted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and that he labored above all things to know him, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; that is, not barely to know these things, or to believe them by faith, but to have the experience of the virtue of his Resurrection, in raising him from the death of sin, to holiness and newness of life, giving him a full conquest over his corruptions, and spiritual life and strength to serve God in some perfection. Thus knowing the holy Ghost to be our sanctifier, we must never rest till we have some good experience of it in ourselves, in his purging us throughout, body and soul from all sinful pollutions, and in our spiritual renewing and reforming according to God's Image, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness. Thus we must know the works of God both towards ourselves and others, not only by hearing, reading and discourse, but also by our own observation and experience. How liberally from time to time he hath rewarded our poor endeavors, and imperfect service, with manifold blessings; and how he hath corrected our sloth, when as we have been cold and careless, formal and negligent in his service with his fatherly chastisements. How he hath visited our sins with crosses and afflictions; yea special sins with special punishments, which have sprung as fruits from those cursed roots, and by following them as at the heels, have plainly showed from what causes they came, or else have been so fitted and proportioned unto them, in likeness and similitude, that the correction hath (as it were) by the hand led us to the sight of our sin. And how upon our repentance and humiliation

he hath graciously spared and freed us from our afflictions, when we least thought of any deliverance. The which as it will notably preserve us from falling into those sins, for which we have been formerly corrected; so when we have fallen, it will effectually move us to rise out of them by unfeigned repentance; and confirm thereupon our affiance in God, that seeing he is immutable in his goodness, he will now again be alike gracious upon our humiliation, to deliver us from present and future evils. Thus also in God's dealing with others, we may have experience of his truth in his promises towards those that fear and serve him, and in his threatening's against those that are wicked, who make no conscience of their ways, but rebelliously sin against him; of his Justice, by observing his Judgments, executed upon the willful transgressors of his laws, and his goodness and mercy towards those who endeavor to serve and please him; whereby we shall be made fearful to offend him, and careful to carry ourselves so in an holy conversation, as that we may be accepted in his sight. And as this experimental knowledge of God and his works, will be a notable means to restrain us from all sin, and to further us in all the duties of a godly life: so also the like knowledge of ourselves, and our own courses and actions, will be a singular help to the same ends; as when we not only know that we are wholly corrupted in our souls and bodies with original sin, but also experimentally feel the venom and vigor of it working in us, disabling us unto all good duties, and making us prone unto all wickedness; whereby we are made more careful in the use of all good means, by which we may be enabled more and more to mortify and subdue it: when as we not only after a general manner know our natural weakness and frailty, whereby we are often overtaken with manifold actual sins, but also observe by particular experience, our special slips and falls, what corruptions are most potent in us, and unto what sins our nature is most prone, and wherewith we are most often foiled, to the end that we may not rest upon our own strength, which so often faileth, but upon the power and promises of God; and with more fervency crave the assistance of his holy Spirit, to strengthen us against our corruptions, and to subdue their power, that they may not prevail against us as in former times. When as we

see that we are defective in all good duties, we must also by experience observe unto what special duties we are most averse, and which we perform with most difficulty, bewraying in them our greatest wants and imperfections; that so we may go about them with greatest resolution, and use our best endeavors to perform them daily in more perfection. When as we not only know that we are continually tempted by our spiritual enemies, but also find by experience their particular temptations, wherewith they most assault us, and most often foil and overcome us, that so we may in these regards keep a more special watch, take more pains in repairing these particular breaches, and arm ourselves with more courage and resolution to withstand them in the next encounters.

Sect. 2 - The experimental knowledge of our own estates, in respect of our contrary courses.

Again, we are thus by our experience to mark and observe ourselves, in respect of our diverse and contrary courses in our lives and conversations. As when we are watchful over our ways to please God in all things, and careful to serve him in all Christian duties, what singular blessings and benefits we reap thereby. How we are comforted with God's gracious presence, and feel the beams of his love cheering our hearts, and the light of his countenance so refreshing them, that no afflictions can dismay us; how our faith is strengthened against all temptations, in the assurance of the remission of our sins, and the salvation of our souls; how our heads are lifted up with hope, joyfully expecting the performance of all God's promises, even when they are delayed; and how confident we are in the midst of desperate dangers, in the assurance of God's presence and protection. What peace we have with God, and in our own consciences, which passeth all understanding, and how therein we triumph over all worldly oppositions, and the worst that the might and malice of the devil, and all his adherents can do against us. Finally, what ravishing and unspeakable joys replenish our

hearts, which none can take from us, no not afflictions and persecutions, nor the dreadful face of approaching death! On the other side, when we neglect our watch, and are overtaken with any gross sins; when we carelessly omit the duties of God's service, or perform them slothfully and negligently, after a cold and formal manner, we may out of experience observe, either how we are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and lie snorting in carnal security, without any sense or motion of spiritual life; or if our consciences be awakened, and we come to some feeling of our wretched estate, how we are dismayed with the absence of God, when he hath withdrawn from us the sense and feeling of his grace and favor; how we are terrified with the apprehension of his wrath, and with the sight of our manifold and grievous sins; how our faith is assaulted with doubting and incredulity, our hopes vanished, our affiance weakened, yea oftentimes turned into diffidence and distrust. Our peace disturbed with the accusations of a guilty conscience, and our joy turned into sorrow and heaviness. Of both which estates when we have had feeling experience, it will be an effectual means, as any other, to make us flee all manner of sin, to strive continually against our corruptions and imperfections, and to endeavor with all care and good conscience, to please God in all things, and to perform unto him zealous service in all the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 3 - That no knowledge is to be compared with this of experience.

In a word, there is no knowledge alike useful and profitable unto this, which is seasoned by observation and experience. For as in civil affairs, that knowledge which is gotten by reading and mental discourse, is of little use or worth, until it be perfected by practice and experience; so is it much more true in the knowledge of Christianity. We see that men by much reading and speculation, attain unto great knowledge, but seldom to sound wisdom, which

hath given way to that common Proverb, that The greatest Clerks are not the wisest men. It is no less certain (though it may be less observed) that speculative knowledge, not being seasoned with experience, doth not make men spiritually wise unto salvation; whereof it is that the great Doctors of the world, who are richest in it, are commonly poorest in grace and godliness, having no sense and feeling of those things, whereof in their learned discourses they make a great show, and are well able to teach others that way which themselves never traveled. It is not much reading, nor speculative skill in the writings of State-policy, that will make a wise Counselor, and much less a prudent Prince and Governor; but when this knowledge is seasoned with experience, which teacheth where the rules hold, and where they fail, and how they are varied by circumstances, which being innumerable, cannot be comprehended in any precepts, but are only to be determined by wise prudence, which is gotten by experience. It is not only book-knowledge that will make a good General, or skillful Pilot; no not so much as a cunning Artificer; but when this knowledge is perfected by practice and experience: and so surely, though we abound never so much in literal knowledge, it will be far from making us good Christians, unless we bring precepts into practice, and by feeling experience apply what we know, to our own particular use and benefit. Yea, in truth amongst all those points of Religion which we comprehend even by the saving knowledge of faith, those above all others are most sweet and comfortable, useful and beneficial, which have been confirmed and sealed unto us by most experience. A man truly wise, may clearly discern of good and evil, and of that which is either safe or dangerous, and may not only believe without any doubting what he knoweth, but may be able, by effectual reasons to persuade others, either to embrace or shun them; and yet never come to a sound use of his knowledge, till it be seconded and better cleared by experience. As for example, he may know the danger of suretyship, and how many men have been undone by it, losing not only their wealth, but also their friends for whom they have been engaged, and yet be so blinded with deceiving hopes, that with some little importunity he is content to be engaged: but if his general notions be seasoned by

experience, and if being left in the lurch, he hath found and felt the smart of his forwardness, afterwards a threefold Cable is not strong enough to draw him into bonds, and hazard himself unto so many miseries. So a man may know that this or that meat may be dangerous and of hard digestion, and yet be drawn by his appetite to feed upon it; but if he have once surfeited, and have felt the smart of a tedious sickness which hath endangered his life, he is afterwards alienated from it, both in judgment and appetite, so that he will be sure to take heed of that dish, though he will venture to feed on another no less dangerous in his opinion, but not tried to be so by experience; and thus it is in all other dangers, which we more carefully shun, as we have with more difficulty escaped out of them. So contrariwise, that which our judgments approve as good, is not so much loved and embraced, till we have by experience found it to be so unto us; neither have we ever so much desire of the wholesomest food, though we know it to be so, as when we have by experience found, that it is pleasing to our own taste, and affording unto us good nourishment, hath been a notable means to preserve our health, and increase our strength. And thus also it is in spiritual things. Though we see the danger of our corruption, with the manifold evils which do accompany them, and thereby are made careful in some degree to avoid them, yet we may be overtaken, and with the violence of our lusts and passions be drawn to fall into them: but if by experience we have felt the smart of them, how their poison hath wrought in our hearts, enfeebled our graces (as it were the vital spirits) and weakened and disabled us unto all good duties, we will ever afterwards mortally hate them, and more carefully shun them than in former times. And contrariwise, though we know and believe, that such graces and duties are excellent, and therefore to be loved and embraced of us; yet shall we never do it with that ardency of affection, as when we have tasted the sweetness of them in themselves, and the manifold comforts and singular benefits which do accompany them; as peace with God, and peace of conscience, assurance of God's love and our own salvation, inward refreshment and joy in the holy Ghost; and such other blessings of like nature. All which considerations should powerfully persuade us, not to content

ourselves with the knowledge of Christianity, but to labor after the feeling and experience, the use and practice of what we know, which will be a singular help to further us in all the duties of a godly life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Wherein is showed, that prayer is a singular means of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That nothing more then prayer, maketh us godly and religious.

Hitherto we have spoken of those private means of a godly life, which are to be used by ourselves alone: and now it remaineth that we entreat of those which we are to use both by ourselves, and also together with others. The first whereof is prayer, the which we have before handled in the chief parts and points thereof: only here we are to show, that it is a powerful and effectual means, whereby we are furthered in all the duties of a godly life. To which purpose let us know that nothing can be more available to this end, seeing there is not anything which maketh us more godly and religious, more like unto God, and partakers of the divine nature, then this daily communion and intercourse which we have with him. For as friendship, familiarity and near society, ariseth amongst men, out of similitude of natures and manners; and contrariwise, likeness of manners and conditions groweth by degrees out of friendly acquaintance, and common conversing one with another; so that if we usually keep company, and entertain conference with wicked men, we are made wicked like them, by their society and corrupt communication, which poisoneth our manners; but if we delight to converse and talk with those which are godly and religious, we increase thereby in godliness and piety: so much more, if we often have this communion and conference with God by prayer, who is infinitely good in himself, and the Author and Fountain of all goodness which is in the creatures, we shall daily increase in all piety and holiness, and by conversing with him (like Moses) shine in his light: whereas the further we withdraw ourselves from this Fountain of light and heat, goodness and perfection, the more frozen shall we be in the dregs of our sins, the more stony-hearted, and muddy-

minded, and utterly unlike the divine nature. Prayer (saith one) causeth marvelous effectually a holy life, and worthily fit for God's service, and what it causeth, it increaseth, and like a treasure, layeth it up in our minds. For if a man endeavoreth to do anything appertaining to a godly life, prayer being his guide, and preparing the way, he is sure to find a commodious and easy passage, &c. It is a sign of madness, not to be persuaded that it is the very death of the soul, if we do not often prostrate ourselves at God's feet, who is the Author of life. For as our body severed from the soul, is but a dead carcass; so the soul is dead and miserable, if it approach not often unto God by prayer. And this the common experience of all times hath plainly proved; seeing those who (with David) have been most exercised in this religious duty, have been also most holy, and men according to God's heart; those who have neglected it, most profane; and such as have utterly contemned it, no better than wicked Atheists, God esteeming it all alike, not to have him at all, and not to call upon him. And therefore the Psalmist describeth the Atheistical fool, that saith in his heart, There is no God, by this outward mark, that he never calls upon his Name; for if he acknowledged a God that were able to help him, he would sue unto him when he needed his help.

Sect. 2 - That prayer is the means of obtaining all God's gifts and graces.

Secondly, hereby it appeareth, that prayer is a most excellent and necessary help unto a godly life, in that we are able to do nothing without it, but are enabled by it, to do in some measure whatsoever good thing we can desire. For of ourselves we are weak and impotent unto all duties, and all the imaginations of our hearts being continually evil, we are not able to think a good thought, or to entertain a holy desire; but it is the Lord only who beginneth, continueth, and perfecteth his work of grace and sanctification in us, and enableth us to return unto him those works of holiness and

righteousness, which in respect of ability to perform them, we have first received from him. So that if we tender unto him any good duty, we may say with David, Of thine own have we offered unto thee. Now the means which God hath ordained and sanctified for the obtaining of any grace or help at his hand, whereby we may be strengthened unto all duties of his service, is fervent and earnest prayer, which he hath appointed to be the hand of the soul, to receive from him all gifts of grace and goodness. And though like a bountiful Prince, he offereth liberally unto us whatsoever we can lawfully desire, yet he will not deliver his rich gifts to those who hold their hand in their bosom, and will not vouchsafe to put it forth, that it may receive them. We are dry and empty cisterns, who have naturally in us no drop of grace and goodness, but what we receive from God, who is the inexhaustible fountain of every good and perfect gift, as the Apostle telleth us. Now as he hath appointed Christ to be the Conduit head, so prayer to be (as it were) the Pipe, whereby he will convey unto us these waters of Life, which, if we intermit not, he will richly replenish us with all his graces; but if we neglect this holy duty, and yet imagine to receive any grace or spiritual strength from him, it is all one, as if we should cut off the pipe, and yet imagine to fill the empty cistern.

Sect. 3 - That all the parts of prayer are singular helps to a godly life.

Finally, all the parts of Prayer severally serve as special means to further us in the duties of a godly life. For first, the confession of our sins will withhold us from the committing of them, whilst aggravating, bewailing, and adjudging ourselves for them to those fearful punishments which they have justly deserved, our hearts are wrought unto a true hatred of them, when as we see and acknowledge the miserable fruits which spring from this cursed root. Secondly, because we cannot for shame commit those sins willingly, which we have humbly confessed, and God hath graciously pardoned. For what malefactor is so impudent, as to commit those

crimes again, which his Prince of mere love hath lately remitted, and whilst he hath (as it were) his pardon in his hand, especially when he knoweth that he must the next day again be arraigned for them, and stand at the bar at his Sovereigns mercy? Thirdly, because by often confession we search out our hidden sins, and ransack our hearts and consciences, so as they cannot lie lurking in them, but are apprehended, condemned, and drawn out to execution. Lastly, because upon our confession, receiving at God's hands assurance of pardon, according to his gracious promises; we cannot but entirely love him, who hath forgiven us so great a debt, whereby we shall be made loath to do anything which may displease him, and ready to perform all good duties which may be acceptable in his sight. By petition also we have no less help, seeing thereby we come to a more thorough sight of our wants, which worketh in us an hungering and thirsting desire, that they may be supplied, and of our imperfections in our best duties, that we may strive and labor after more perfection, carefully and conscionably using all good means whereby our desires may be satisfied, seeing if we should neglect them, after we have made these earnest suites, we should both tempt the Lord, and discover our own gross hypocrisy, in asking those things which we care not to obtain. Again, by these suites and requests made unto God, according to his will, we receive the gift of his holy Spirit, which enableth us to all good duties, by regenerating and sanctifying us, seeing God hath promised to give him unto those that ask him; and together with him we obtain all God's sanctifying gifts and graces, which by the same means are daily confirmed and increased in us, and have such a quickening power, virtue, and vigor added unto them, that they enable us to the constant performance of all Christian duties; which otherwise lying dull and dead in us, we should become like a body without spirits, lumpish and lazy in God's service. Finally, by these suites and requests our love is inflamed, upon our assurance that they are heard and granted; which stirreth us up to yield unto God cheerful obedience, our faith is confirmed, and our affiance and hope strengthened, in assured confidence and expectation of God's help and assistance, which will uphold us when we are ready to faint, enable us to overcome all difficulties, and to

perform all the duties of a godly life with much comfort and delight. Lastly, thanksgiving is a singular help to the same end, whilst we recount and call to mind God's manifold blessings and rich mercies, which of mere grace, without any desert of ours, he hath from time to time multiplied upon us. All which (if we be not too ungrateful) will be so many strong bands of love, to tie us unto obedience, and to make us cheerful in all Christian duties, seeing by them we serve so bountiful a Master, which if we neglect to do, we shall play the notable hypocrites, in professing that thankfulness with our lips, which we neither have in our hearts, nor take any care to express in our lives.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of reading the Scriptures and other religious writings.

Sect. 1 - Who are to exercise themselves in this duty of reading.

The second private means of a godly life, which may be used by ourselves alone, or with others, is reading, which is the perusing and studying of religious writings, for the information of our judgments in the knowledge of God and his truth, the sanctifying of our hearts and affections, and the reforming of our lives and conversations. The which exercise may be performed when we are alone, by the sight of the eye, and the discourse of the mind, either with or without the use of speech; but with all necessarily joined together, when we perform this duty with others. In speaking whereof, let us first generally observe, who are to read, and then the subject matter which is to be read of them. For the first, all sorts and conditions of men without exception, are tied to this duty, who are any way able to perform it, both the learned and unlearned, the Ministers and common people,

the poor and rich, men and women, young, old, and of middle age: seeing the Lord in the Scriptures hath imposed it as necessary and profitable for all men. Thus he requireth that not only the Levites, but his whole people of Israel should continually study in the Book of his Law, and take all good occasions to speak and talk of it in all places; that they should bind the words of it for a sign upon their hands, and that they should be as frontlets between their eyes, and that they should write them upon the posts of their house and on their gates, to no other end, but that they might often take occasion thereby to read and study them. Our Savior Christ also doth exhort all to search the Scriptures, and affirmeth this to be the cause of all errors both in judgment and manners, because men were not well acquainted with them. And the Apostle Peter, writing generally to all, saith, that having a more sure word of prophecy (that is more infallible then any revelations) therefore they did well that they did take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. And the Apostle writing unto the Romans, saith, that whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. The Apostle John likewise writing to children, young and old men, plainly implieth that no age is exempted; but even little children must read, that they may be seasoned with the knowledge of God's truth from their tender age, like young Timothy, and the children of the elect Lady; and so being trained up in the way which they should choose, when they are old, they will not depart from it: and having this sound foundation of knowledge laid, they may have the building of faith and piety more easily erected and set up in them. And young men also must read the Scriptures, that being armed with this sword of the Spirit, they may be the better enabled to resist the temptations of the devil, the world and their own flesh, which in that age are most strong and violent. Finally, old men, after they have gotten much knowledge, must still diligently study the Scriptures, that they may be the better confirmed and settled in the things which they know, recall those things to memory, which that age otherwise is apt to forget, and that having known God and his Christ from the beginning, not only by reading and hearing, but by much experience;

they may be refreshing and renewing this knowledge, be the better able to walk themselves in this clear light, and guide and direct others also by their fatherly instructions in the right way that they should choose. But yet in a more special manner, this duty of reading the Law and Word of God is pressed upon Princes and Governors, that being enlightened with the knowledge of God's will and truth, they may themselves yield obedience unto it, seeing hereby they shall not only save their own souls, but also be a means of the salvation of many others, their lives and actions being exemplary, and powerful to draw those which are under them, to follow and imitate them in that which is either good or evil: And also that having this light to guide them, they may administer righteous judgment, and govern the people committed to their charge, in the fear of the Lord, establishing amongst them God's true Religion, and maintaining in all their dominions justice and truth. But above all others, the Ministers of God's Word are religiously bound to exercise themselves diligently in reading the Scriptures; seeing they must not only have skill to direct themselves and their own families, but to instruct all others committed to their charge, in the Word and will of God; for the Priests lips must preserve knowledge, and the people must seek the Law at their mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. And he principally more than ordinary Christians, must give attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine, and continue in them; because in so doing, he shall both save himself and those that hear him.

Sect. 2 - That we are chiefly to be exercised in reading and studying of the Scriptures.

The second general point to be considered, is the subject matter of our reading, of which we must make good choice, seeing it were much better not to read at all, then to spend our time in perusing such books as are profane, teaching nothing but vanity and lies, wantonness, ribaldry and contempt both of Religion and common

honesty; in which number are books of scurrilous jests, plays and Machiavellian policy. For as we say in the proverb, Where God hath his Church, there the devil hath his chapel; and apishly imitating the divine Majesty, that he may blind his followers, get from them the like glory, and especially that he may disgrace God's holy ordinances; as God hath his Sacraments and Ceremonies, so he will have his to seal up to his vassals their more assured condemnation. And as God hath his books of holy Scriptures, containing his will and Laws, for the sanctifying and governing of his people; so the devil will have scribes inspired with his will, to set forth books of hellish impieties and damnable policies, for the corrupting of men's judgments, the poisoning of their hearts and manners, and the training up and governing of his subjects in all sin and wickedness. And therefore all those who desire to please God in the duties of a godly life, must with as much care flee such books, as Mariners do the rocks and sands; and as they profess themselves God's servants, so they must make choice of such books as will better their knowledge and practice in his Laws: as they profess themselves of the Christian Religion, so they must read and study such books, as being religious, will further them in Christianity, and enable them to perform unto God more diligent and faithful service. In which respect, the Book of holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament, is to be preferred above all others, seeing it is the foundation and ground of them all, which having God for its Author, is of infallible truth, and is to be believed in its own sole authority, and needeth not the confirmation of reason, or any human testimony, but shineth like the Sun in its own light. Whereas all writings of men who are subject to errors, are only so far forth to be believed and embraced, as they are consonant, and agreeable with it. For all men are liars, and through their ignorance, subject to errors; apt to deceive, and to be deceived; and therefore are no further to be credited, then as their sayings and works are approved by the Canon and rule of God's infallible truth. Besides that, the Word of God is of more majesty, power and efficacy, then any mortal man's, and his more immediate ordinance, which being more effectually assisted, and wrought into our minds and hearts by his holy Spirit, is of greater efficacy for the enlightening of

our understandings, the mollifying of our hearts, the strengthening of our Faith, and sanctifying of our affections, then all other writings without it. And this David found by experience, professing, that by studying and meditating in the Book and Law of God, he became wiser then the Ancients, and of more understanding then his teachers.

Sect. 3 - Their objection answered, who pretend the obscurity of the Scriptures.

Neither let any man pretend that the Scriptures are of such difficulty, and so hard to be understood, that private men must not presume to read them; seeing they have plainly taught us, that the Law of the Lord enlighteneth the eyes, and maketh wise the simple. And wise Solomon telleth us, that this was one chief end of his penning that portion of holy Scripture, that he might give subtlety (that is, more than common knowledge) to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion. So that though the Scriptures find men simple and ignorant, yet they do not leave them so, seeing they were purposely appointed by God to illuminate the eyes of the blind, and to make the foolish wise. And therefore to forbear the reading of the Scriptures, because we are rude and of small understanding, is all one, as if we should refuse the medicine, because we are sick; the eye-salve, because we are blind; and the light of the Sun, because we are in the dark or dim-sighted. It is true, that all places of holy Scriptures are not alike clear, but though some be easy and plain, yet other are so high and mystical, hard to be understood, and of such abstruse difficulty, that the best wits and most learned may, even their whole lives, be exercised about them, and yet never reach to their height, nor sound them to the bottom. But this must not discourage the simplest from reading of them, because it is not necessary, nor required of all, that they should understand every place, but so much as is necessary for their salvation, and according to the measure of their gifts, which they have received, which if they

exceed, they come under the censure of curiosity and presumption. And for the attaining of that main end at which everyone must aim, the Books of holy Scriptures are fit to be read of all sorts of men, being not only (as that learned Father observed) in many places a deep sea, wherein the Elephant may swim, but also in as many others, shallow Fords, wherein the Lamb may wade. Yea so gracious is the Creator and Redeemer of all men, that in penning the holy Scriptures, he hath taken care of the simple, as well as of the wise and learned. And as in course of nature he hath made those things most common, which are most excellent, profitable and necessary, as the Sun, air, fire, water, bread and clothing, and hath only reserved to the rich and noble, peculiar privileges in things of less use and necessity, as gold, silver, precious Jewels (so made and called, not by nature, but by fantasy and opinion) silken garments, delicious cates and such like trifles: So he hath laid out in common the main points of Religion necessary to salvation, by making them so easy and familiar, that the meanest capacities may comprehend them, if they will use the means and helps which he hath sanctified for this use; as fervent prayer for the assistance of God's Spirit to enlighten our blind eyes, reading, meditation, comparing one place with another, the public ministry and private conference; And hath reserved other things less necessary in abstruse obscurity, as Chronologies, Genealogies, quiddities and intricate questions, to exercise the curiosity of such as scorn to be vulgarly wise, and would gain unto themselves an opinion of their learning and knowledge. Yea even the same main points of Religion, which are in some places plainly expressed, to the capacity of the most simple, are in other places more obscurely delivered, that all sorts of men might be employed in this holy exercise of reading the Scriptures, the simple having no cause of discouragement, by their difficulty; nor the learned, and men of greater gifts, any cause of contempt or idle sloth, through their easiness; but might have matter deep enough, to sound and search out, by their greatest wit and most industrious endeavor. So one saith, that the holy Scriptures, without comparison, excel all other science and learning; for they publish and preach the Truth, call us to our heavenly Country, invite the heart of the Reader from

earthly desires, to embrace heavenly excellencies; the which are not so shut up in obscurity, that we need to fear them; nor so open, that we should contemn them; but the more they are used, the less they are loathed, and the more they are loved, the more they are studied, &c. Notwithstanding even in this Paradise, which aboundeth with all manner of flowers and medicinal herbs, fit for use, necessity and delight, there may generally at all times be choice made of such as are most profitable and comfortable, and specially upon several occasions. For howsoever all contained in them be excellent and fit for diverse uses, so that no part in our reading is always to be passed over and neglected, yet there are some places above others, wherein we may have the food of our souls in greatest plenty and variety, and better prepared for our weak stomachs. And though they admit of no comparison with other writings, yet in themselves one part may excel another, if not in respect of their Author or nature, yet in respect of our use and edification; as containing and setting forth the main points of our salvation more fully and plainly then others. In which respect the Prophets are to be preferred before the Books of Moses, as being a Commentary and exposition of them. The Proverbs of Solomon, before diverse of them, as being full fraught with heavenly Wisdom, and containing divine precepts and counsels, fit to guide us in all our courses. And above them all, the Book of the Psalms, as being the lively Anatomy of a true Christian in all estates and conditions, a treasury of heavenly meditations, divine wisdom, holy doctrines and precepts, and a clear glass, wherein we may see, how in all estates and conditions God dealeth with his children, and they with him. And finally, the New Testament is to be preferred before the Old, because God therein hath more clearly manifested himself and his will, the sending of our Savior Christ, and the great work of Redemption wrought by him, with all the means whereby we may be made partakers of him and all his benefits, God's spiritual graces in this life, and eternal salvation in the life to come. For howsoever they are both all one in substance, and contain the same things, yet with this difference in respect of us, that the Old Testament is the New hid and shadowed, the New Testament is the Old unfolded and revealed.

Sect. 4 - That we must not read the Scriptures only, but also other religious writings.

But though a Christian man is to study and read the holy Scriptures chiefly, that he may out of them, as out of the fountain, know God and all the duties of a godly life, in which respect their practice is absolutely to be condemned, who are so wholly taken up in reading the Fathers, Schoolmen, and late Writers, that they can find little time to read and meditate in the Book of God, and so are greatest strangers where they should be best acquainted, and like ill merchants who buy all their wares at the second or third hand: yet we are not so wholly to be conversant in them, as to neglect or to want time to peruse the writings of godly and learned men, who by the help of their fervent prayers, the gifts of learning and tongues, and their serious studies and diligent labors, have given the true sense and meaning of them, and have distinctly handled and cleared the main points of Religion contained in them. Not that the Scriptures do not themselves sufficiently teach all things necessary unto salvation, without any human addition; but because the Lord, intending to use the ministry of his servants the Prophets and Pastors of his Church, for the edification of his people, hath caused them to be so penned, as that there should be continual use both of their expositions and application. Which whoso contemn or neglect, and content themselves with the sole reading of the Scriptures, if they be not of eminent parts, and endued with a great measure of spiritual understanding, they will but slowly proceed in the growth of their knowledge, nor without much labor, and long study, attain unto any great perfection, though they may get some such competency as is necessary to salvation. For many eyes see more than one, and great works are effected more speedily and easily, that are set forward with the help of many hands. And therefore I cannot commend their course, though otherwise they be godly and religious, and much less those who set them in it, that neglect the reading of all others books besides the holy Scriptures, because they have all-sufficiency in

them; though in respect of the public means they much prefer (as they have good cause) the Word sincerely and soundly preached, before the Word barely read; notwithstanding that this public reading is to be preferred before private, as before I have showed. As though children should content themselves with the whole loaf of bread, or joint of meat, because they have in them sufficient nourishment, and refuse to have it cut out and carved unto them, unless it be at a public feast, because, with much ado, they can twitch and pull some little pieces and fragments from them, which may be enough to hold life and soul together. But let such know, that howsoever the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; yea, are sufficient to save the most ignorant, through the inward illumination of the Spirit, where all other helps and means are wanting, yet where these are to be had, they will be less sufficient and effectual to us, if we neglect them, seeing the Lord granteth them unto us to this end, that we should use them for the clearing of those places that are obscure, and for the enforcing and applying of those points that are more plain, for the discussing of doubtful cases, and for the laying open of many points of doctrine, necessary for our direction in the course of a godly life; which being many of them not manifestly expressed, but implied and to be gathered by necessary consequence, it is not within the reach of every ones capacity, to gather them sufficiently by their own reading and meditation, especially if they neglect willfully those helps which the Lord graciously doth offer unto them.

Sect. 5 - Some special directions for the choice of fit Authors which may help us in the practice of godliness.

Now amongst those innumerable books which are set forth by learned and godly men, we must use singular care to choose such as are most profitable for our edification. As those first and before others, which are sufficient to inform our judgments in the main points of Christian Religion, the knowledge whereof is necessary to

salvation. Of which we may have plentiful choice, both those which handle all these points more briefly and compendiously; as Doctor Nowels Catechism, Master Beza's Confession, questions and answers, Doctor Hall, Doctor Burgess, and Master Balls Catechisms, A brief method of Catechizing, The way to true blessedness, and many others; and such as handle the same points more fully and largely: as Virels Catechism, Bastingius, The sum of sacred Divinity, A treatise of Christian Religion, Ursinus Catechism, Calvin's Institutions, and the Works of our reverend Countryman Master Perkins, who hath excellently handled the most points of Christian Religion, in his learned and religious writings. And having thoroughly informed our judgments, by reading and studying some of these, or others of like nature, which by the light of our own judgments, or help of others directions, we think fittest for us, we may then also profitably peruse other writings, which may further and direct us in the duties of piety and of a godly life. As Master Rogers his seven Treatises; or if they seem too long for our little leisure, the abridgement of them, the which is so exactly done, that in my judgment it fully compriseth in it the whole sum and substance of them all, with the addition of many other particular points and proofs: Or another entitled, Directions to a godly life, gathered out of the same 7. Treatises. Besides, other books in our own language, which as excellently as in any other, handle both learnedly and religiously, many special parts of Christianity, and particular discourses, tending to piety, which are most persuasive, pithy and profitable, to further us in all the duties of a godly life. Amongst which, I cannot but commend unto thee (Christian Reader) that plain and familiar exposition of the ten Commandments, with all other works of the same Authors. The works of those reverend servants of God, Master Greenham, Master Arthur Dent, and of my late worthy assistant, Master Daniel Dike, who shall be ever unto me of happy memory; in whose Treatises nothing seemeth wanting, which piety, learning and wit could add unto them. And finally, the works of our famous and divine English Seneca, in which, wit and piety are so matched, as that they seem to strive which should exceed the other. Many other labors of worthy men might be added, some of

which still remain as excellent ornaments and lights in God's Church, and some are at rest with the Lord, and have received the Crown of their labors, but that I would not too much increase mine own book with naming other men's, and also because I thought it fit to leave some to the Readers choice, and to the advice of others, which upon notice of their estates can direct them better. Only aiming at mine own main end of persuading all to the duties of a godly life, let me give this general rule to be observed, that we rather make choice of such books, as do soundly inform the judgment, and work powerfully upon the heart and affections, then of such as containing little but idle eloquence and frothy conceits of wit, do nourish in the Reader, vain curiosity, and please his fantasy with fruitless flashes. Yea, I would persuade the devout Christian (to whom I chiefly write) who laboreth more after piety, then learning and speculative knowledge, that they would principally read such books, as will make them more holy and religious, rather than more learned; and such experimental Divinity, as will fit and further them for Christian practice, rather than for discourse. Neither can I commend to such the studies of Genealogies, Chronologies and controversies, except having begun with those before-named, they have not only leisure sufficient for the other also, and excellent wits and parts to comprehend and profit by them; but also live in such places which are infected with errors, schisms, and heresies, where, in respect of their company, they shall need to be extraordinarily confirmed and strengthened, that they may be able to defend the truth, and to confute and convince gain-sayers; yea if it be possible, to persuade and gain them, that they may embrace the same truth which they profess. In which case I would commend unto them the learned writings of B. Jewel, against Harding; of Doctor Fulke, and especially his answer to the Rhemish Testament, Doctor Reynolds conference with Hart, Master Perkins his Reformed Catholic; Doctor Abbots learned defense of it against Bishop, Doctor Whites Way to the true Church, and Doctor Willets Synopsis, which compriseth in it the sum of many others, and learnedly disputeth and discusseth the most points in controversy between us and our adversaries. Otherwise I should persuade those whose main aim is to inform themselves in the duties of godliness,

that they may practice them in their lives, to be more sparing in the study of Controversies, seeing if they clearly see the perfect rule of truth, it will enable them to discern the crooked errors which are contrary unto it, it being such a light, as not only showeth itself, but also all falsehood which is opposite and oppugneth it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of our preparation unto this exercise of reading, and what is required in it.

Sect. 1 - That we must come in reverence to this holy exercise, and bring faith unto it.

And thus having generally showed both who are to exercise themselves in reading, and the subject matter which they are to read; we are now to entreat of the duty itself; and then to show that it is an excellent help and means of a godly life. In the duty we will consider the preparation unto it, and then the action or exercise of reading, with some directions by which we may be enabled to perform it with fruit and benefit. In our preparation our care must be, to fit ourselves that we may perform this religious duty in a right manner, and not to go about it rashly and unadvisedly, never so much as once thinking to what end we undertake it, but only reading to spend the time, because we want some other employment. And first, we must come unto this duty with all reverence, and perform it as in God's presence, and as being one of his gracious ordinances, whereby he revealeth himself and his will more clearly unto us, for the edifying and building of us up in all grace and godliness. Secondly, we must bring faith with us; for as it is said of the Word heard, so may it also of this, namely, that the Word which we read will not profit us,

unless it be mixed with faith in those that read it. The which is to be understood first generally of justifying faith in Christ, which is required in all our actions, that they may be pleasing to God, and more specially in this, seeing if Christ be not in us by his Spirit and a lively faith, both to open the blind eyes of our minds, that we may see and understand, as he did the eyes of Saul, and our hard hearts shut up in sin, as he did the heart of Lydia, and of the two Disciples going to Emmaus, yea, if this Lion of the Tribe of Judah do not open the sealed Book, we shall see, and not perceive; read, and not understand. Besides which, we must bring a more special faith, whereby we are made ready to believe and embrace every truth of God, and to apply it for our own use, as doctrines of truth for our instruction, threatening's for our humiliation, promises for our confirmation in faith, consolations for our comfort, and so in the rest. But in respect of this faith, there must be some difference in the act of it, as it believeth the Scriptures, and as it believeth the writings of men, although most godly and learned. For as these are not to be read with equal reverence and esteem unto the other, so neither in all respects with the like faith. For we must believe the Scriptures with an absolute faith, without any doubting or dispute of reason, and without other confirmation or appeal to further trial, because they are the Word of God, who being Truth itself, can neither deceive, nor be deceived. But all other writings of men must be read with a reserved faith, believing them only so far forth, as upon due trial and examination we find their sayings consonant and agreeable to God's Word, and grounded upon his infallible truth, as upon a sure foundation. For we all being but imperfectly enlightened, do know only in part; and therefore being subject to errors, others also that should build their faith upon our authority, should err with us.

Sect. 2 - That we must bring honest hearts, and earnest desires to profit by this exercise.

Thirdly, we must bring with us good and honest hearts, that so the seed of the Word being sown in them as in good grounds, it may take deep root, and bring forth in us plentiful fruits. Whereby I understand, not only an heart purified by faith, and purged from sinful corruptions by true repentance, without which we should not presume to take God's word and Covenant into our mouths; but such an one as is replenished with sincere affections and holy desires, as after all God's graces, so especially that we may profit by this present exercise, without which we may long read, and yet be never the better or holier; like those who eating their meat without an appetite, are, after much feeding, never the fatter. Unto such the saying of Solomon may be fitly applied: Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? For though they abound in leisure, and have the sight and perusing of many excellent books, yet they purchase by them no spiritual grace, because they have no such desire or end, when they set themselves to reading, but because they are weary of idleness, or for curiosity, that they may see what everyone is able to say, or to get speculative knowledge, that they may be fitted to entertain discourse. But if we would have any good by our reading, we must come to it with a mind and desire to profit by it; to have the graces of God's Spirit increased in us, to have our minds more enlightened with the saving knowledge of God and his will, to have our faith, affiance, hope, love, zeal, and all other God's gifts and graces confirmed, nourished and enlarged in our hearts, that we may express them in our lives, by increasing daily in bringing forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness. For if these desires be wanting, though we should do nothing else but read the Scriptures, and other religious books; yea, though we were (like many of the Jews) so conversant in the Book of God, that we could say the most of it by heart, and were able to tell precisely how many words and letters were contained in it; all this would yield unto us no spiritual nourishment, nor make us to thrive any whit in grace and godliness.

Sect. 3 - That we must come with a purpose to make good use of all we read.

Finally, in our preparation, we must come to reading, with a purpose and resolution to draw all we read unto our own particular use, either for the informing of our judgments, or sanctifying of our affections, or reforming of our lives, by putting those good duties in practice which we know and learn. The which purpose David expresseth in these words, Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Commandments, and I will keep them unto the end. Otherwise we can have no assurance that God will by our reading enlighten our minds, and increase our knowledge: for why should he give us more, if we make no good use of that we have? Yea, why should he not rather take away his Talent, if we hide it unprofitably in a napkin? Or at least, leave it with us to increase our account, and with it our punishment? For the servant that knoweth his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Let therefore (as one exhorteth) the holy Scriptures be always in thy hands, and meditate on them in thy mind; yet do not think it sufficient for thee to have God's Laws in thy memory, if thou forgettest them in thy works, but therefore know them, that thou mayest do what thou knowest; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of it are justified. And as the same Author persuadeth in another place; So read the holy Scriptures, as that thou always remember them to be the Word of God, who requireth not only that we should know his Law, but also fulfill and obey it. For it profiteth not to know such things as ought to be done, and not to do them. Thou usest well thy reading of Divinity, if thou settest it as a glass before thee, that thy soul may behold itself by looking in it, and may either amend deformities and blemishes, or more adorn itself, where it is already beautiful.

Sect. 4 - That we must pray before we read.

Lastly, that we may perform both the preparation and action the better, we must lift up our hearts (and when in respect of place and company we conveniently can) our voice also, desiring in some short and pithy prayer, that the Lord will assist us in this exercise by his grace and holy Spirit, that thereby it may become effectual for the enlightening of our minds with saving knowledge, the informing of our judgments, the sanctifying of our affections, the nourishing and increasing of our faith, repentance, and all sanctifying graces, and the strengthening of us in the inner man, unto all the duties of a godly and Christian life, to the glory of his holy Name, and comfort and salvation of our souls, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The which invocation of God's holy Name is necessary before the reading of the Word; for we are naturally blind, and therefore had need to pray with David; Open mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see the wonderful things of the Law. Naturally we understand not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can we know them, because they are spiritually discerned, and it is only the Spirit of God that knoweth the things of God, and revealeth them unto us, which we can no otherwise hope to obtain, then by fervent and effectual prayer.

CHAPTER XXX.

Of the duties required in the action of reading, that we may profit by it.

Sect. 1 - Of the ends at which we must aim in our reading.

And thus much concerning those things which are required in our preparation. In the action of reading, diverse points are to be considered. The first is, the ends which we must propound unto ourselves in it. Which are either principal or subordinate. The principal end which we must aim at in this exercise, is the glory of God, namely, that hereby knowing his will, we may glorify his holy

Name, by yielding obedience unto it, and by putting in practice the things which he requireth in the whole course of our lives and conversations. The subordinate end, is generally the edification of ourselves and our brethren, and the salvation of their and our own souls; according to that of the Apostle; Attend unto reading, and continue therein; for in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee. More especially, we must read the Scriptures to those ends for which the holy Ghost hath commended them unto us, as useful and profitable. And first, for doctrine and instruction; in which regard, we are to read them for the further enlightening of our minds, and informing of our judgments, in the knowledge and acknowledgement of God's will, that we may be directed thereby in all our ways, for the leading of our lives in such a course as may in all things be acceptable unto God. For we are naturally blind and ignorant, and walking in darkness, and in the shadow of death, we know not what to choose and what to refuse, but the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths, which shining unto us in this darkness, guideth our feet into the way of peace. Of which light if we deprive ourselves, we shall pass our lives in a more then Egyptian darkness, and groping at noon day, shall easily be misled into all sin and error, according to that of Solomon; for the soul to be without knowledge, it is not good, and he who (wanting this light to guide him) hasteth with his feet, sinneth, being ready to deceive, and be deceived. The second end at which we must aim in our reading, is, that we may be established in the truth, being enabled to defend it, and also to refute and convince the errors and false doctrine which are contrary unto it, especially those wherewith it is most oppugned in the times and places wherein we live. For if we be conversant in the Scriptures, we shall be able to try the Spirits, whether they be of God or no, and not receive all we hear hand over head, and so be carried away with every wind of doctrine, but to bring them to be tried with the Touchstone of God's truth, and with the Bereans to search the Scriptures, and by them, to examine whether the things we hear be so or no. The third end at which we must aim, is admonition, that we may be able to check ourselves when we are going out of the way, and both take and give warning to ourselves

and others, when either they or we are entering into errors in doctrine and practice, that we may be reclaimed, and not proceed in them to our further detriment. The fourth end, is reproof and rebuke, that we may be able out of the Scriptures to apply God's threatening's and checks unto ourselves and others, when as either we or they do live in any known sins without repentance, that so we may by strong hand be pulled (like fire-brands) out of the fire, and not suffered to perish by God's approaching Judgments. The fifth and last special end, which the Apostle expresseth in another place, is comfort and consolation, that we may be able to cheer up our fainting and drooping hearts, and to strengthen our weak hands and knees, against the manifold discouragements which affront us in our Christian course, whether they be inward or outward, as our own sins, and the anger of God due unto them; our corruptions, wants, and imperfections in our best actions; the temptations of our spiritual enemies, afflictions, and persecutions; against which, and all others, the Scriptures as a rich Treasury, afford unto us plentiful consolation, which being rightly applied, will sufficiently hearten us to go on with comfort and joy in the ways of godliness. And as in our reading we must aim at these particulars, so generally, that we may be sanctified with this Word of Truth throughout, both in souls and bodies, and that we may be made perfect, being thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Sect. 2 - That we must observe the Theme and Argument.

The second point to be considered, is the manner how we may so carry ourselves in this exercise, as that we may perform it with most fruit and benefit; to which purpose the directions following may not unprofitably be observed. As first, we are diligently to mark the Theme, question, or main point which is handled in that Book or Chapter which we read, and how the discourse of the Author tendeth to prove or illustrate it, with the several arguments which are produced to this end. Or if we want skill to do this, yet we may

observe, if not by our own collection, yet by help of the Authors pains, the sum and substance of all which, he delivereth in the contents of the Chapters or Sections, which will give great light to the understanding of all the rest, when as we know the main scope at which he aimeth, and how he frameth his discourse, and what arguments and testimonies he useth to prove or enforce that point which he propoundeth. To which purpose, it is also profitable to observe (as near as we can) what was the occasion of the Authors writing, and to consider the circumstances of the persons to whose use the writings were intended, and of the times wherein he wrote, with the state of the people that lived in them, unto what sins they were most addicted, and in what virtues and duties they were most defective; and how the Author crieth down the one, and persuadeth them to the other. The order also and method which he useth, the coherence of the parts of his discourse, and how he passeth from one point to another, will give much light to the understanding of what we read; which if we neglect, and confusedly go on, jumbling all together, we shall make even those things which are plain and easy, hard and intricate; observe little in much reading, and remember less, and reap little profit by much pains.

Sect. 3 - That we must observe a due order in our reading, and make choice of fittest Authors.

With like care we must observe a due order in our own reading, making choice of such Authors as are fittest for our own capacity and use, and so proceeding by degrees from those which are most easy, to such as are more difficult, as we increase in knowledge and understanding. First, our care must be to lay a sure foundation, by reading diligently some profitable Catechism, containing the main points of Christian Religion, not thinking it to be read sufficiently, although we have gone over it diverse times, till we so thoroughly understand and remember it, that we are able to give an account, though not in the same words, yet in respect of the matter and

substance, of all the points contained in it, and as the Apostle speaketh, to give a reason of our faith and hope, whereby we shall not only be armed against all errors and lies, when as we are able to examine all we read, according to the rule and analogy of faith, but also shall with much more ease understand all other discourses, which without this help will be dark and obscure. For want of which order observed in reading, it is pitiful to see how many that think themselves great proficiencie, and even able to teach others, not being thus grounded, are easily carried away with every wind of doctrine, and being themselves deceived, for want of skill to examine what they read and hear, are ready also to deceive others. So impossible a thing it is to amend such errors as are committed in the foundation, though we be never so curious in the rest of the building. But though our first care must be in laying the foundation, yet we must not rest there, but proceed and go forward, till we be built up in knowledge unto some perfection; we must not, whilst we are babes in Christ, out of pride and curiosity, affect strong meats, which are of too hard digestion for our weak stomachs, but hunger after the sincere milk of the Word, and main principles of Christian Religion. With which, when we are well nourished and grown to some strength, we must, as the Apostle saith, leave the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, namely, the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, &c. and go on unto perfection; and study both the holy Scriptures, and such Authors as those beforenamed, which will thoroughly instruct us in the whole body of divinity. In which, when we have made some good proceedings, we shall be fit to read Treatises of any argument, which more thoroughly handle special parts of Religion, wherein we desire to be specially informed, or to have them effectually pressed upon our hearts and consciences.

Sect. 4 - That the devout Reader is not to read many books of the same argument, but to make choice of some few which are best.

The fourth rule of direction, which I would commend to the devout Christian in his reading, for the better enabling of him in the duties of a godly life (for I do not take upon me to prescribe directions unto the learned in their studies, but rather desire to be directed by them) is, that they make choice, not of many books of the same argument, but of such as either in their own judgments and experience, or by the direction of others, they know to be best and fittest, for the informing of their judgments, in all things necessary for their salvation, and sanctifying of their hearts and affections, and that they do not so much affect the reading of many Authors, as to study thoroughly those which they do read, and by distinguishing them through serious meditation, to turn them in wholesome nourishment for the preserving of their spiritual health, and the strengthening of them in all the graces of God's Spirit. For there is no end of making, so neither of reading many books; and much reading in this kind, is a weariness to the flesh. And therefore as those which are invited to a great feast, do not, if they have care of their health, eat a little of every dish, or more than their stomachs can well digest, seeing the superfluities would turn to crudities, and breed ill humors and obstructions in the body: so in that great variety of spiritual food, which in these days is set before us, cooked and dressed after diverse manners, it is not the best course for a Christian, who hath a care of his souls health, to feed of many or more than he is able by meditation to digest, seeing this would but the more weaken and confound the memory, and unsettle his judgment, so as he cannot tell what to take and what to leave, and fill his mind with raw conceits and indigested opinions; but to make choice of some of the most approved Authors in every kind, and to study thoroughly, till he hath turned them to good nourishment, and doth feel his soul refreshed and strengthened by them. And as it is not the best way for any that intendeth to make himself a good States-man, to ramble and run over in his travails, many countries, seeing much, and making use of little for the improving of his knowledge and experience in State-policy; but rather to stay so long in every place, till he have noted those things which are best worthy his observation; so also is it in the travails and studies of the mind, by which if we would be

bettered in our judgments and affections, it is not our best course to run slightly over many things, taking only such a general view of them, as somewhat increaseth our speculative knowledge; but to rest upon the points we read, that we may imprint them in our memories, and work them into our hearts and affections, for the increasing of saving knowledge, which chiefly consisteth in feeling and experience. Which course if we take, we shall profit more by one good book often read, and thoroughly pondered, then by running over a multitude after a superficial manner. For if men of ordinary capacities and memories can hardly in once or twice reading of a book, attain unto the true sense and meaning of the Author, nor comprehend many of his notions and main intentions, in all the particulars of his discourse, in their understandings only; especially considering that the mind of the most diligent reader is often carried away with distractions of many kinds; how much less is it possible to convert these spiritual treasures, at the first view, to all their special and several uses, to lay them up orderly in our memories, that when we have most need, we may know where to find them, to work them into our hearts and affections, that we may have sense and feeling of their fruit and benefit, for inward sanctification and outward practice in the duties of godliness?

Sect. 5 - That we must labor to understand thoroughly what we read.

The fifth point to be observed in this exercise is, that we read with understanding, and that having made choice of such books as are within the compass of our capacity, we do not content ourselves with a slight perusal, but that we thoroughly understand what we read, and not pass to a new point, till we see in some sort the meaning of that we last had in hand. The which rule hath place chiefly in reading of the Scriptures privately by ourselves, wherein it is better to read five words with the understanding, then ten thousand when we understand the meaning of them no more, then if they were written in a strange language. In which regard their practice bringeth little

profit, who set themselves (as it were) to their task, in reading over the Bible every year, and so many Chapters every day, if they rest in the deed done, and have little care how they do it, and take more pains in reading over the words, then in attaining to their meaning; unto whom, if Philip's question to the Eunuch were propounded; Understandest thou what thou readest? They were not able to shape unto it so good an answer; seeing they want not so much an interpreter to expound dark prophecies, as an intente and industrious mind, setting itself to understand what it is able by study to comprehend. The which I speak not to discourage any in this exercise (far be it from me to quench the smoking flax) but rather to persuade them to continue it still with more fruit and benefit, the taste and feeling whereof can only make them constant in it; for who delighteth long to feed on that meat, wherein he findeth no relish or sweetness? Neither is it my meaning, that in reading the Scriptures, men of ordinary callings and gifts should tie themselves to understand all they have read, before they proceed further; for many points are so deep and mystical, that for the understanding of them, they will thoroughly exercise the greatest learning and best wits, yea oftentimes, even such with much study shall not be able to comprehend them: but only I would not have any negligently to slight over what they read, but seriously to apply their minds to understand as much as they can; and as for places of difficulty, they are not by them to be stopped in their course of reading, (as it were with blocks lying in their way) but to pass by them unto more easy and plain passages, unless their leisure, learning and liberty will afford them the help of some good Commentary to clear their doubt. Only they may take notice of such difficult places, as they think would, if they were well understood, be most profitable for their use, and seek to be resolved of them, by some of more knowledge and learning, and chiefly of their own Minister, whose lips should preserve knowledge, that the people committed to his charge, may seek the Law at his mouth. Wherein notwithstanding two cautions are to be observed: first, that the points wherein they desire resolution, be not slight and trivial, but of special moment and use, seeing it is not fit that their Pastor, who is to apply himself in his

studies for the public service of the Congregation, should spend too much of his time in giving satisfaction to every particular man, that cometh unto him in every useless doubt, wherein he should be wholly taken up, and made unserviceable unto the rest of his charge. In which respect it is also fit, that men should make choice of such times, when as he is usually most free from his own serious employments, and not (as it is the custom of many) when as themselves are at best leisure. And secondly, that they do not presently run unto him at the first appearing of any difficulty, but after they have used their best endeavors, to satisfy their doubts by their own serious studies. For if it were unreasonable amongst the Ancients (as Plutarch recordeth) to borrow water of their neighbors, until they had first digged to the clay, using their labor and endeavor to find a spring in their own grounds for their own use; by the same reason it may be thought as unfit to trouble others (at least unseasonably) about resolving our doubts, till ourselves have endeavored (though in vain) to resolve them by our own studies.

Sect. 6 - That we must join with our reading, serious Meditation.

The sixth rule of direction in our reading, is, that we join with it serious meditation, pondering and weighing well the point in hand, before we pass to another, when we find it of special use; either that we may more fully conceive it in our understanding; if it be a material thing which we knew not before; or better imprint it in our memories, if knowing we had forgotten it; or work it into our hearts and affections, if we had not a lively sense and feeling of it; or fruitfully practice it in our lives, if we have formerly neglected it, especially when as we find it powerfully pressed by the Author upon the heart and conscience. And thus it is profitable, after that we have privately read a Chapter of the Bible, to meditate a while upon it, and to recall unto our remembrance what remarkable things we have observed for the better informing of our judgments and sanctifying of our hearts. As what doctrine we have learned for our better

instruction; what error in our judgment hath been refuted; how we have been admonished or reprov'd for any sin, which we are prone unto or have committed; what promises made to any virtue and grace or holy duty, for our better encouragement to embrace and practice it; what threatenings against vice and sin to withdraw us from them, or to move us to rise out of them by repentance, if we have fallen into them; what examples we have observed of God's Judgments upon the wicked for their sins, or of his blessings and benefits upon the faithful, whereby he hath richly rewarded their service, and thereby encouraged us to follow them in their holy practice; what gracious deliverances we have noted of those who have trusted in God, for the confirmation of our Faith and affiance in him; finally, what comforts and consolations, we have observed to encourage us in God's service in the midst of all afflictions and persecutions. Which course if we should take in our reading, it would not be much less profitable than meditation, of which we have before entreated, seeing it would not only increase our knowledge, and enlighten our minds, but also work the things known into our hearts and affections, and move and enable us to put them in practice in our lives. Whereas though we read much, and do not use this help, it is but like the eating of much meat, that is never digested in the stomach; which may puff men up with the wind of speculative knowledge, but seldom turneth unto any wholesome nourishment. But yet this duty of meditation after reading, cannot be performed to any purpose, unless another go before it, which is to use, whilst we are reading, all attention of mind unto the things read, that we may not only conceive and understand them, but orderly dispose and lay them up as we go, in our memories, that afterwards we may recall them into remembrance, and so more thoroughly weigh and ponder them. To which end we must in this exercise (as much as in us lieth) banish out of our minds all worldly distractions and wandering thoughts, that we may wholly intend the action in hand. And this the Apostle seemeth to imply, where he exhorteth Timothy not simply to read, but to attend unto reading, setting himself so seriously about it, as that no other thing in the meanwhile should withdraw him from

it, either in respect of the main duty, or right manner of performing it.

Sect. 7 - That we must read with affection and devotion, applying all to use.

The seventh rule is, that we read with affection and devotion, applying all unto ourselves, according to the nature of the subject matter for spiritual use; framing and fashioning our hearts unto it, and changing and varying our affections, as the matter is varied and changed. For that counsel which one giveth for the reading of the Psalms, may in the perusing of other parts of Scripture and holy writings, be profitably observed. If (saith he) the Psalm prayeth, do ye also pray; if it mourneth, mourn ye; if it congratulateth and rejoiceth, rejoice ye likewise; if it hopeth, hope ye; if it feareth, do ye also fear; for all things that are here written, are our looking glass, that we may compose ourselves as it directeth. Thus the Apostle telleth us, that whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; whereby he understandeth, not only the information of our judgments, but also the working of them into our hearts and affections for spiritual use, as the words following do plainly show, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. And so Eliphaz having showed the miserable end of wicked men, and the happy end of God's chastisements unto his children, he thus concludeth his discourse: Loe this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thyself, that is, for thine own special use and benefit, by applying it to thy present condition and estate. More especially, when the Scriptures teach, we are to receive instruction for the enlightening of our own minds; when they admonish, we are to take warning; when they reprove, we are to be checked; when they comfort, we are to be cheered and encouraged; when they commend any grace, we are to desire and embrace it; when they command any duty, we are to hold ourselves enjoined to do it; when they promise, we are to hope; when they

threaten, we are to be terrified, as if the judgment were denounced against us; and when they forbid any sin, we are to think that they forbid it unto us. By which application, we shall make all the rich treasures contained in the Scriptures, wholly our own, and in such a powerful and peculiar manner enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as if they had been wholly written for us, and for none other else besides us.

Sect. 8 - That we must read orderly with diligence and constancy.

The last rule to be observed in our reading, is, that we proceed in it after an orderly manner, with diligence and constancy, and not by fits and snatches, here a Chapter and there another, or only the beginnings of books, and then laying them aside, and taking others in hand, of which we are as soon weary as of the former, only out of novelty and to feed our vain curiosity, without any true desire of edification and spiritual profit. But when upon sound advice, we have made choice of a book, we are not to give it over till we come to the end. Yea if we find it sound and savory, useful and profitable, we are to read it again and again, as before I have showed, never thinking that we have perused it sufficiently, till we have thoroughly understood it, laid it up in our memories, applied it to our hearts, and drawn it into use and practice. The which constant course, as we must observe in our study of other godly books, so especially in reading the holy Scriptures, the which must not be read by pieces without order, as the Book happeneth to open, when we take it into our hand, but the best way is, in our ordinary course to begin at the beginning, and so to proceed till we come to the end. The which will be a notable help both for the understanding of the matter, and the History of the Bible, when as we observe the coherence, and how one thing dependeth upon another: which if it be interrupted, causeth much obscurity, and maketh us unacquainted with the whole Counsel of God, seeing by reason of this confusion, we shall read many things often, and as many others never at all. The which rule

hath place in our ordinary course of reading only: for upon extraordinary occasions, it is fit and necessary to read in any place as the occasion requireth; As also some special parts of holy Scriptures, more often than others, which are most full and fertile of spiritual instructions, and most profitable for edification, which out of our ordinary course we may read, when we get any fit leisure and opportunity. Again, though in our ordinary reading no portion of Scriptures is always to be passed over, seeing all is profitable for some uses and purposes; yet (saving other men's better judgment) I think that some parts may be read much more seldom then others, especially by common Christians of mean knowledge and capacity, who are able to make little use of them; as the Chapters which contain nothing but Genealogies, those in the New Testament excepted, the Levitical law abrogated by Christ, containing the ceremonies of God's service, whereof we can make use only as they were types and shadows of Christ, which cannot easily be done by ordinary wits; the building of the Tabernacle and Temple, with many Chapters in diverse of the Prophets, which are either so obscure, or so fitted to diverse Nations, against whom they denounced God's judgments, that few can understand them, who are not acquainted with the state of those Countries, and Histories of those times, which are out of the reach of ordinary Christians, to whom chiefly I write, and not so useful as other parts of holy Scriptures to those who are most learned, for the helping them forward in the duties of a godly life, but only profitably serve for special purposes and uses, for which the Holy Ghost did principally intend them. In which regard I have found it profitable, to read over the whole Scriptures seriously twice or thrice, and to observe as we go, both these Chapters of less ordinary use, and others of greatest excellency, and most profitable for our edification, and as we go, to prefix before them, with our pen, a several mark: as for example; before the former sort, this [sort of mark;] before the other, [a different sort of mark,] or some such like: that we may readily choose the one upon extraordinary occasions, and more seldom read the other in our ordinary course. The which I prescribe to none, but only propound, and so leave it unto every ones choice, either to use or not to use it, as they shall think most fit for

their own profit. Only this I would persuade every good Christian, as a matter most profitable and necessary, that they would read the holy Scriptures with all diligence, not only at their idle hours, when they have nothing else to do, but making it one of their most important businesses, to borrow some time for it from their ordinary employments; yea even from their sleep, rather than to want time any day studiously to read some part of holy Scriptures: and finally, that they be not only thus diligent by fits and flashes, reading much one day, and nothing in another, but that they keep themselves constantly (as near as they can) to a settled course, seeing he cometh sooner, and more surely to his journeys end, who observeth a discreet constancy in his travels, though he goeth but a slow pace, then another who by spurts and fits rideth upon his gallop, and not minding his journey, spendeth the most part of his time in needless stays upon the way.

Sect. 9 - Of the fittest time for this exercise of reading.

And so much concerning the things which are to be observed in the manner of our reading. The next point to be considered, is the time, which we may most fitly allot to this exercise, when we are to perform it, and how long it must be continued. For either of which no certain rule can be given, but they must be left to be determined by every Christians discretion and devotion, according to their several occasions and opportunities. We are generally fittest for this, and other spiritual exercises of like nature, in the morning, when our spirits and wits are freshest; or if we be not drowsy when we go to bed: because things which are last thought upon, are better imprinted in the memory, when as they have had, without disturbance of other business, some time of settling, especially if we recall them to mind the next morning. But some men's businesses will allow rather some other time, in some other part of the day; having then little enough for more necessary duties, as prayer and meditation. In which regard, the Christian is to be left unto his own

discreet choice, when his occasions will give him fittest opportunity, so that they do not neglect it altogether. Some who abound in leisure and means, may choose that time which they find most fit; others which earn their livings by their labors, or are otherwise taken up with many and important businesses, either private or public, must take such times as will best stand with their weighty affairs. Yet let everyone allow a little to this profitable exercise, and even those who are most pinched with poverty, and so pressed with the weight of important employments, that they can find no leisure in the week days; yet in any case let them not omit it upon the Lord's Day, which is wholly to be set apart from all worldly businesses, and to be all spent in such spiritual exercises. So likewise the time of continuing in reading, cannot be stinted and limited to any certain and constant space, but must be measured by our devotion, and other affairs. Only this may be generally said, that seeing much reading is a weariness to the flesh, and weariness dulleth the appetite, and causeth distaste; therefore it is best not to read overmuch at one time, but to leave with an appetite, that we may return unto it again with more delight, and not to let weariness and satiety, but wisdom and discretion put an end unto it.

Sect. 10 Of the woeful neglect of this holy exercise.

But though this counsel be good, yet few in these days do greatly need it, seeing it is so woefully neglected amongst the most who profess Christianity, that there is much more need of a spur to hasten our speed, then of a bridle to restrain us from running ourselves out of breath. For many there are, who otherwise in their judgments hold this exercise of reading as commendable and profitable, that are yet so wholly addicted to the world, that they can scarce find any leisure in any one day of the week, to spend some time in this religious exercise, but are wholly taken up with such employments, as will bring unto them some earthly profit, or with the cares of this life, and forecasting of their business for their best advantage. Others

abounding in leisure, rather than they will spend any time in this profitable exercise (the which notwithstanding is irksome and tedious, when they are idle and have nothing to do,) do wholly give themselves over to sports and pastimes, hunting and hawking, carding and dicing, dancing and reveling, or else idle and vain communication, and complemental visitations, hereby preparing against themselves a fearful reckoning, when being called to give up their accounts, before the supreme Judge of heaven and earth, how they have spent that precious time which he hath allowed unto them to glorify him, and make their Calling and Election sure, they shall be constrained to give evidence against themselves, out of the books of their own consciences, that they have spent almost all their time in things vain and wicked, serving thereby the devil, the world, and their own carnal lusts, and little or none at all in spiritual exercises, and in the duties of God's service. Neither will it (at this day) anything avail us to say, that we had so much worldly business, that we could not intend this, and such religious exercises, seeing God in his Law hath absolutely required them, not dispensing with us upon any pretense of business. For even Kings and great Commanders, who have greatest, and most important employments, both in war and peace, are notwithstanding expressly enjoined to read and meditate in God's Law. The which was accordingly performed by holy David, though he had as many distractions, and weighty employments as any other. Yea, then it will be told us, if we will not know it before, that we were chiefly sent into the world, that we might do service unto our Lord and Master, who hath created and redeemed us, which therefore ought to have been preferred before all other employments; and that the duties of God's service, and means fitting us unto it, was that one thing necessary, and our main and chief business, unto which all other businesses and worldly affairs, which tend only to maintain our momentary and uncertain lives, and to uphold our brittle and mutable estates, for a moment of time, in respect of eternity, ought to have given place, if both of them could not stand together; as they ordinarily might, if we were not too greedy in pursuing these worldly trifles with an insatiable appetite,

or wanted not wisdom and discretion to perform duties of both kinds in due order and time.

CHAPTER XXXI.

That reading is a notable means to further us in the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That reading is a most profitable exercise.

The second main point which I propounded, is, that reading of the Scriptures, and other holy and religious books, is a notable help and furtherance unto a godly life. The which may easily be understood by that which is already spoken, and needeth not any large discourse to prove it. And yet it will not be amiss to say something of it, not so much to inform or convince the judgment of the truth, as to persuade the heart to put it in practice. And first, generally it may be said, that to what uses soever the Scriptures are profitable and necessary, to the same purposes reading of them, which is the means whereby we derive from them these benefits, is necessary and profitable; seeing though they be a most rich treasury of all goodness, yet they will do us little good, if they be locked up, and not by reading and preaching opened unto us. So that we may truly say, that reading of the Scriptures doth nourish our souls, seeing it conveyeth unto them the food whereby they are nourished; that it cureth us of all our spiritual sores and sicknesses, seeing it conveyeth and applieth unto us the sovereign salves and medicines whereby we are recovered; that it guideth us in the way of truth, because it openeth unto us the light, which serveth to direct us. Yea, it serveth to all uses and purposes, whereby we may be furthered in all duties of godliness, seeing it discovereth unto us that divine brightness of the supreme and

uncreated wisdom, the reading whereof (as one saith) sharpeneth the sense, enlargeth the understanding, heateth our lukewarmness, rouseth up our sloth, extinguisheth the darts of lust, moveth mourning, draweth from us tears, maketh us to approach near unto God, who when we read, conferreth with us by his holy Spirit. In which respects he persuadeth in another place, that it should be our chief care to study and know the divine Law, wherein we may see the examples of God's Saints as present before our eyes, and by the counsel thereof, learn what is to be done, and what avoided. For it is a great help unto holiness and righteousness of life, to replenish the mind with the divine Oracles, and to be always meditating in our hearts upon those things, which we desire to practice in our lives.

Sect. 2 - That by reading, the mind is much enlightened in the knowledge of God's will.

More especially this exercise of reading doth singularly further us in a godly life, as it doth enlighten our understandings in the knowledge of God's will, unto which we are to yield obedience, and showeth unto us the way in which we must walk. To which purpose, no exercise whatsoever is so useful and effectual. For howsoever the preaching and hearing of the Word, have a superior privilege in the work of our Regeneration and conversion, and for the working of saving graces in us; as faith, repentance, and the rest; yet for the enlightening of the mind with the full knowledge of the truth, after we are converted and illuminated in some measure, this exercise of reading hath many special privileges. For first, we may use it as oft as we will, and have any desire to gain knowledge; but the other can be had but at certain times, nor then neither in every place. Secondly, by reading, we may in short time, if we be studious and diligent, be thoroughly instructed in the whole body of Divinity, and in all the several parts thereof, which by preaching we cannot come to know, but in long time, though our Pastor take the best, and most direct course of joining Catechizing with Preaching, nor in our whole lives

in any great perfection, if this be neglected; seeing in a Sermon some few of innumerable points are usually delivered, and they rather pressed upon the affection for use and practice, then sufficiently cleared to the understanding. Thirdly, because by reading we may help our understanding, by reviewing over and over again, that which at first we conceived not, and by the same means also may recall to our remembrance the things which after once or twice reading we have forgotten: the which helps hearing affordeth not, especially when we most stand in need of them. Finally, because we may at our own pleasure fit our reading for our own occasions, and furnishing us in the knowledge of those points, wherein we are most defective, for the resolving of our particular questions and doubts, and for the informing our judgments in all points whereof for the present, and upon every occasion, we have special use: whereas the Preacher speaking generally for the good of the whole Congregation, and not being acquainted with our defects in knowledge, seldom or never speaketh of all those points wherein we need instruction, and often of such as we know already. In all which respects it is hard to find a Christian thoroughly grounded in all points contained in the body of Divinity, though he be never so diligent in hearing the Word preached, and may have some competency of knowledge necessary to salvation, and some good measure of faith, and other saving graces, if he utterly neglect this duty of reading.

Sect. 3 - That reading bringeth with it many other benefits.

Again, as reading singularly enlighteneth the mind, so also it affordeth many other helps of a godly life; for it is a special means to relieve the memory, and to move the will, inclining it powerfully unto good, and withdrawing it from evil, though not in that degree of efficacy as the Word preached. It worketh upon the heart, for the mollifying and softening it, and upon all the affections, for the purging and sanctifying of them, inflaming our love towards God and all good things, and our hatred against all that is evil; it kindleth our

zeal when it groweth lukewarm, and stirreth up our devotion when it is cold and sluggish. It much increaseth all God's graces in us; as faith, affiance, repentance, patience, peace of conscience, and the rest, by imparting unto them that spiritual food whereby they are nourished. It amendeth our lives, and maketh us (as the Apostle speaketh) perfect unto every good work. It specially enableth us to the fruitful hearing of the Word of God, when as we can, with the Bereans, search the Scriptures, whether the things we hear be so or no; and try the spirits of those we hear, whether they be of God or no, by examining their doctrines according to the touch-stone of this Truth: besides that, it maketh us well acquainted with the Scriptures, both for matter and history, so that when they are cited, they are familiar unto us. Whereas without this benefit of reading, we cannot tell whether the testimonies quoted be in the Canonical Scriptures or no, or if we take this upon our Teachers word, yet we cannot tell where they are, nor easily turn to them upon the sudden. It teacheth us to manage the Sword of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to defend ourselves, and repel the temptations of our spiritual enemies, as we see in the example of our Savior Christ. Finally, if we use this exercise carefully and conscionably to profit by it, we shall be assured of everlasting blessedness; For blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of God's Book, and keep the things which are written therein. Blessed is the man who delighteth in the Law of the Lord, and meditateth therein day and night. All which being duly considered, should be effectual motives to make those diligent in reading, who are able to perform it, and greatly to humble those who are not, in the sight and sense of this great defect, and either to labor that yet they may attain unto this skill, if they be capable and have means, or else to supply their wants, by resorting often unto others, that they may read unto them the evidences of their salvation and heavenly inheritance, which themselves for want of skill are not able to peruse.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The last ordinary means of a godly life, is the choice of our company, shunning the society of the wicked, and consorting ourselves with the godly and Religious.

Sect. 1 - That we must carefully avoid the society of wicked and profane persons.

The last ordinary means of a godly life is, that we make good choice of our company, unto which two things are required: first, that we shun and avoid the society of the profane and wicked; the other is, that we consort ourselves with the godly and religious. By the former we are not to understand that we must forbear the society of all, who are not as forward and zealous in their profession and practice as ourselves, or who bewray in their course and conversation many infirmities and imperfections, as though those were to be esteemed wicked and profane, who have made but small progress in their sanctification, if any sparks of grace and goodness appear in them, though (as it were) raked up under the ashes of many and great corruptions; for then we should break the bruised reed, and quench the smoking flax; and by our censorious neglect utterly discourage them in their first entrance into Christianity, and from making any further proceedings in the ways of godliness. Yea rather, if we can in the judgment of charity think, that the little good in them is in sincerity and truth, we must, as the Apostle exhorteth, take such unto us, and use all good means, in love and meekness, whereby we may draw them on by degrees to more perfection. For babes in Christ being unable to help themselves, had most need of tender cherishing, and those that are sick, having some life of grace in them, had most need of good Nurses and skillful Physicians, as our Savior hath taught us by his own example. And the Apostle exhorteth us not to neglect the weak, but to lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees; and to hold such an even course, that those which are lame in the profession and practice of Religion, be

not through our harshness quite turned out of the way; but rather that they may be healed, and so may (like the Cripple in the Temple) together with us glorify God, and love us above others, who have been the means of their spiritual cure. But such only are here understood, who have let the reins loose to all impiety, and are of professed profaneness, not caring to make show of it upon every occasion, and either scorn and scoff at the exercises of godliness, or neglect and contemn them in the whole course of their lives. Neither may we reject such as show some willingness to conform themselves to our good courses, and to join with us in the exercises of Religion, though for the present we see in them little power of godliness; but only such Ishmael's and Esau's, as hold them in contempt, are worthy to be expelled out of all societies. Neither are we so to understand it, as though it were utterly unlawful to come at all into the company of such wicked men; for then (as the Apostle saith) we must go out of the world; and every place almost abounding with such, we cannot choose but oftentimes at unawares come amongst them, but that we do not purposely make choice of such company, and if unwittingly we happen to come into it, that we quit ourselves of it as soon as we can. Nor are we debarred from having any intercourse and commerce with such in worldly affairs, as trading and merchandize, buying and selling, and all other such contracts, as are ordained for the benefit of human society, whereby we may do or receive good in our outward estate; nor from performing any civil or Christian duty to our friends and allies, kindred and neighbors, or any work of mercy towards those that are in misery, and need our help: so that we entertain their company no longer, then is necessary for these uses, and then be careful that we go not without our preservatives about us, that we may not, in seeking to do them good, hurt ourselves with the contagion of their wickedness, nor receive more detriment in our spiritual estate, then they or we profit in respect of outward things. Though in truth it is most safe conversing with wicked men, when we minister unto them in their extremities, seeing when they are benumbed with the cold of their afflictions, they cannot spit out their venom and poison, but like frozen serpents may be taken into our hands without receiving any great hurt.

Besides that, their necessity importuning our help, will be a curb to restrain their malice, at least till their turn be served, that they may make us more cheerful in relieving their miseries. But this only we understand to be unlawful, to stretch our action further then our excuse will reach, that is, under any, or all these pretenses, to converse with wicked men more then we need. And much more to make them our bosom friends, and to entertain familiar acquaintance and society with them, being either bewitched with their natural and moral parts, or allured with some baits of worldly benefit, or carnal delight. For though we may not out of hatred towards the persons of evil men be envious against them, yet in detestation of their sins, we must not desire to be with them, as Solomon teacheth us.

Sect. 2 - That the Scriptures often warn us to shun wicked company.

And for this we have many caveats, and express inhibitions in the Book of God, both in the Old and New Testament, for in them both these beasts are unclean. So Solomon chargeth us, not to enter into the path of the wicked, nor to go in the way of evil men; Avoid it (saith he) pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For though he be about other matters so short and sententious, yet wisely foreseeing the greatness of this danger, he thought he could scarce use words now in warning us to shun it. And the same reason maketh him to beat so often upon it in other places: Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding. My son, walk not thou in the way with the wicked, refrain thy foot from their path; for their feet run to evil, &c. And amongst other sinners, he specially inhibiteth us to keep company with drunkards and gluttons, which in the world are esteemed the only good fellows and boon companions, because they above other sinners are most dangerous; seeing they both allure us with their ill example, and draw us by their invitations that way, to which our carnal appetite is naturally too prone. Be not (saith he) amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh.

Thus the Apostle also in the New Testament inhibiteth us to keep company with wicked men. Have no fellowship (saith he) with the works of darkness, but rather reprove them. And again, We command ye, brethren, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us. And, If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one I have written, you should not keep company, no not to eat. But above all other societies with the wicked, we must take special care, that we do not match with them in that near bond of marriage, according to that of the Apostle, Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth, with an Infidel? For if holy David match with scoffing Michal, she will be a snare unto him, and a proud scorner of his humble zeal in God's service. If Jehoram the son of good Jehoshaphat, marry with Ahab's daughter, it will be a strong inducement to make him an Idolater, and to do evil in the sight of the Lord.

Sect. 3 - Examples of the faithful who have shunned wicked company.

Unto these testimonies of holy Scriptures, dehorting us from entertaining near society and alliance with the wicked, we may add the examples of God's servants, who have carefully shunned all fellowship with them. Thus Elisha so much detested the wicked life and reign of idolatrous Jehoram, that had he not respected the presence of Jehoshaphat, who was in his company, he would not, as he professeth, so much as have looked towards him, nor seen him. So the Apostle John, as it is recorded of him, finding Cerinthus, a blasphemous heretic, in a bath with some of his consorts, belching out blasphemies against our Savior Christ, in haste departed with his

company, for fear of being attached by God's Judgments together with them; Who was no sooner gone out of the company, but presently the house fell down and overwhelmed all that cursed crew. But most plainly may we see this practiced in the example of holy David; who in many places showeth how much he hated and shunned the society of wicked men; I have not (saith he) sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and I will not sit with the wicked. A froward heart shall depart from me, I will not know a wicked person. He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight. So elsewhere, he banisheth them out of his company, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, and, Away from me, ye wicked, &c. I will keep the Commandments of my God.

Sect. 4 - Reasons persuading us to shun the society of wicked men, first, because it is a strong temptation unto evil.

Besides which testimonies and examples, we may add diverse effectual reasons, which may dissuade us from keeping company with wicked men. As first, because we shall be in great danger to grow in short time like unto them. For it is a strong temptation to draw us unto all evil, and it is just with God, to leave us when we willfully rush into it. The love which we bear to their persons, will lessen daily our mislike of their sins, making us to think them at first less heinous than they are, afterwards small and venial, then tolerable and excusable, till at last we come to justify and defend them, to approve and practice them. Besides, sin is of a contagious nature, and we most apt to receive infection; in which regard, it spreadeth as fast as the plague in a City, or the rot in a flock of Sheep. For not only are the examples of the wicked of such great force, that if we keep them company, they think it a strange thing, if we do not run with them into the same excess of riot; but they are also ready to set upon us with persuasions, and to use arguments of worldly

advantage, to allure us to accompany them in their wickedness, as Solomon teacheth us. Being herein like to them who are sick of the plague, that care not how many are infected by them, that so the fewer may shun their company. And this David knew to be so strong a temptation, that resolving to keep God's Commandments, he first caused the workers of wickedness to depart from him, because so long as they consorted with him, he had little hope of making good his resolution. And finding not power in himself to resist it, because of the many allurements and baits of wickedness, he desireth by prayer God's assistance: Incline not mine heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties. Thus Elymas the Sorcerer being, it seemeth, in times past gracious with Sergius Paulus the Deputy, so maliciously withstood the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas, and so powerfully wrought with the Governor to turn him away from the faith; that the Apostle was fain vehemently to oppose him, and to disgrace him with the Deputy, by bringing upon that caitiff by miracle, a fearful Judgment of God. And this danger of being tainted and corrupted with the sins of wicked men, by keeping them company, Solomon plainly implieth, where he persuadeth us to make no friendship with an angry man, and not to go with one that is furious, lest we learn his ways, and get a snare to our souls; for as he saith before; Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul, shall be far from them. And so likewise the Apostle, where persuading the Corinthians to excommunicate the incestuous person, lest they should be infected with his example, useth this as a reason, because sin is like unto leaven, a little whereof leaveneth the whole lump. The which we see verified in the example of Joseph, who notwithstanding that he was so virtuous and Religious, yet living in the Kings Court, learned to swear ordinarily by the life of Pharaoh. Yea, if their example be not strong enough to allure us to sin, yet other motives draw us into it, and especially fear of their scorns and reproaches, violence and persecution, if we go not with them hand in hand in their evil courses: As we see in the example of David, who being in the Court of Achish, one time basely counterfeiteth madness, and at another time dissembleth, and feigneth himself to be a friend to the

Philistines, and an enemy to God's people; and in the Apostle Peter, who being amongst the High-priests servants, for fear of them denieth his Master. So that as one saith wittily, If we keep company with wicked men, though we be not burnt with their fire, yet we shall be smutch with the smoke. Yea, not only do wicked men hurt us in these respects by this society and familiarity, if seeing their sins, we do not show our dislike, by our rebuke, and (if they will do no good) by leaving their company; but we also shall hurt them, and harden them in their sins, because it is no small heartening and encouraging of wicked men to go on in their evil courses, when as they are countenanced with the society of the godly, and are moved to think that they are, if not commendable, yet at least tolerable, or else men of such Piety would not be so inward and familiar with them. Whereas contrariwise by shunning their society, we shall give them occasion to enter into a consideration of their estate, and of their sinful courses, which make them loathsome both to God and all good men; and move them at least to an outward reformation, out of natural shame, to be thus shunned, according to that of the Apostle; If any man obey not our Word, have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Sect. 5 - Other reasons to dissuade us from evil company.

And these reasons, though there were no more, are sufficient to withdraw all that intend to lead a godly life, from inward friendship with wicked persons. Unto which, if it were needful, many others might be added. As that such society may be unto us a strong presumption, that we are not truly righteous, and upright in heart, but that we still halt between God and the world. For if as Solomon saith, An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked, how can we delight in one another's company? And if, as our Savior hath taught us, we were not of the world, but in their number whom he hath chosen out of it, then would the world hate us, and we it; and little

comfort should we take in conversing familiarly one with another. Again, as society with the wicked is dangerous, for fear of being tainted with their sins, so also because it maketh us liable to their punishments: For as the Lord often spareth the wicked for the righteous sake, so also he punisheth with temporal judgments the godly for the wicked's sake, and pulleth them from them with violence (as Lot from the Sodomites) when as for earthly respects they are loath to leave their company. And therefore if we would not perish with Corah and his companions, we must leave the Tents of those wicked men, and come out of Babylon, if we be God's people, that we may not be partakers of her sins, and that we receive not of her plagues. Finally, the utter leaving of familiar society with the wicked, will be unto us a comfortable evidence of our eternal happiness; seeing the Spirit of God hath pronounced them blessed, that walk not in the Counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful; that is, who do not converse, nor communicate with them in any of their sinful courses.

Sect. 6 - That we must consort ourselves with the godly and virtuous.

The second point is, that as we are carefully to shun the company of the profane and wicked, as being notable pullbacks in the ways of godliness, so must we with no less care consort ourselves with the godly and virtuous, as being a singular furtherance unto all Christian duties. For being naturally backward and averse unto all that is good, and after that we are regenerate, frail and feeble in all duties of a godly life, here, if anywhere, is God's Word verified, that it is not good for man to be alone, but that a helper is needful unto him, and that two are better than one, because they have a good reward of their labor; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, &c. And therefore we must not, to shun the company of the wicked, run into the contrary extreme, and keep company with none, seeing God hath made us political creatures, who are preserved by mutual society; and fellow members of the same body whereof Christ is the head:

and therefore we must not by withdrawing ourselves, make a Schism and rent, but continue together in loving society, that we may be ready to perform mutually all good offices whereby we may edify and benefit one another: According to that of the Apostle; Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, &c. For the more we converse with the godly and religious, the greater increase shall we find in our Piety, Faith, Love, Zeal and all others graces, as coals laid together, do, if any of them be kindled, kindle one another, and so all together make a great fire, which if they be severed one from another, give but little heat, and in a short time will go quite out. And this we see in the example of David, who greatly rejoicing in the communion of Saints, and in the fellowship of the Faithful, excelled also in Piety and Holiness. So he professeth that all his delight was in God's Saints; that his eyes were to the Faithful of the Land, that they might dwell with him. That though he were a King, yet he made himself a companion of all them that feared God, and kept his precepts, and that he invited such to come unto him; and rejoiced greatly when they said, Let us go together into the House of the Lord. And it may be observed that then Christians flourished in greatest purity, and best thrived in all grace and godliness, when this community and fellowship was most frequent amongst them. For so it is said, that they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

Sect. 7 - That good company taketh away all tediousness in good exercises.

More especially, this society with the godly and religious, doth much further us in all duties of a godly life, because it taketh away the tediousness of our journey, when we have good company to travail with us: Seeing they draw us on by their good discourses, and put out

of our minds the tediousness of the way; they comfort and encourage us, when we begin to be weary; they are ready to help us, if any evil betide us; to secure us by their assistance from fear of our spiritual enemies, who are ready to rob us of the treasures of God's graces; and when we are slothful, they much better our speed, because we would not be cast behind. Again, the fellowship of the godly doth much further us by their good example, seeing their zeal and diligence convinceth our luke-warmness and negligence, and their good works of piety and righteousness are good patterns and presidents for us to imitate. For though the Law of God be the most perfect rule, and the example of our Savior Christ the most exact squire, according to which all our actions and whole conversation are to be framed; yet these being of such incomparable excellency, and so far above our low growth in grace and short reach, would altogether discourage us in the sense of our imperfections, if we did not also observe men subject to the like infirmities, walking before us in the ways of godliness, and inviting us to follow them, who though they go not so swiftly as they should, yet have much outstripped us in the Christian race. Furthermore, this society and communion with the faithful, is a notable means to make us familiar with God, and to enjoy the fellowship of his holy Spirit, which is the chief bond that uniteth us together in this holy communion. For where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name and God's fear, to perform Christian exercises, and to further one another in the ways of salvation, there he also is in the midst of them, taking notice of their actions, and making himself better known unto them, his face and favor, his bounty and goodness, whereby they are encouraged with more cheerfulness to do him service.

Sect. 8 - That good company preserveth us from falling into many sins, and inciteth us to many duties.

Finally, it is a notable help unto a godly life, because it is a powerful means to restrain and pull us back, when as we are ready to fall into

any sin. In which regard that wise heathen man persuadeth his friend, to suppose some grave man to be present when he was alone, because men would not easily offend, if there were always some by to be witnesses of their faults. And one of the Ancients useth it as a reason to dissuade from a solitary life; because thereby we become more prone to sin; seeing that evil, which none seeth, none rebuketh; and where there is none to reprehend, both the tempter assaulteth more securely, and the offense is committed more licentiously. If thou doest any good things in good company, no man prohibiteth. But if thou wilt do evil, thou art not suffered; for presently thou art by many observed, reprov'd, and amended; whereas contrariwise, if they behold any good, they all admire it, honor and imitate it. In which respect also, good company doth no more forcibly restrain us from evil, then incite and provoke us unto that which is good. For as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; that is, one friend by the presence of another, is whetted on and provoked to do such good duties as deserve his approbation. In which respect the Apostle exhorteth Christians to observe one another, that they may whet and sharpen each other to love and good works. For if even hypocrites, and men of ingenuous natures, though they care not for good exercises, are ready to join with their friends in them, to get their allowance and love: Then how much more will it quicken those that are truly religious, unto every good work and Christian duty, which they like and love, when with the approbation of their friends, they have the allowance of God and their own consciences? And if Saul himself prophesied by keeping company with the Prophets, being as it were wrapped and ravished for the time with a divine fury: how much more shall those that are truly religious, be much inflamed with zeal and devotion in all holy exercises, when being in good company, they are wrapped up and ravished with the divine breath of the holy Spirit, which bloweth amongst them?

Sect. 9 - That by good company we are fitted to perform Christian duties one towards another.

Lastly, good company is a singular help unto a godly life, as it fitteth and enableth us to use all Christian duties one towards another, whereby we do mutually further one another in all holy and religious actions, tending to edification, to the enriching of us with all saving graces, and the strengthening of us unto all good works. The first whereof is mutual observation, and watching over one another, that we may take all occasions of doing good, both by restraining those from sin that are ready to fall into it, and by inciting and provoking one another unto all virtuous actions. Unto which the Apostle exhorteth; Let us (saith he) consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. For the Law of charity requiring, that we should love our neighbors as ourselves, bindeth us to seek their good as well as our own, and to this end to watch over them, that we may take all good opportunities, whereby we may further them in the ways of godliness. And therefore let us not think that we have discharged our duty, when as we have used the means of our conversion and salvation, and that we have nothing to do with other men; seeing our Savior requireth, that when we are converted, we strengthen our brethren. And the Apostle giveth us in charge, that we should not only look on our own things, but that every man should also look on the things of others. And not to take care of our brethren as well as ourselves, is plainly to discover that we are of Cain's spirit, who refused to be his brothers keeper, and no true members of Christ's body, whose property is, not to respect their own good alone, but as it is conjoined with the good of the whole body, and of all the rest of their fellow members. The second Christian duty, is instruction, whereby with all readiness, we inform the ignorant in all the ways of godliness, enlighten them in the knowledge of God and his truth, and open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith in Christ. Whereby also we reclaim the erroneous which wander out of the way of truth, which is a special duty

required by the Apostle: Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him: 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. Which duties if we perform, we shall be richly rewarded in God's Kingdom, where they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine in the light of glory, like the Stars in the firmament, as they shined here in the light of truth. The third duty is admonition, whereby we put our brethren in mind of their duty, when they seem to forget and neglect it by falling into sin, and lying in it without repentance, or omitting the duties of God's service, either those which are general and belong to all Christians, or those which specially belong to them in their several places and callings, of which I have spoken before at large. The fourth duty is reprehension, whereby we rebuke those that wittingly fall into sin, and willfully continue in it without amendment. The which the Apostle requireth, where he chargeth us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to reprove them rather, implying, that if we see sin in our brother, and do not rebuke him for it, having a calling thereunto, we have communion and fellowship with him, and are accessory to his sins. The right course of performing which duty, our Savior plainly setteth down: If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell his fault between thee and him alone: and if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, &c. Which duty if we neglect, we hate our brother in truth, whatsoever show we make to the contrary, and do nothing hereby but discover our self-love, which maketh us loath to trouble ourselves in so unpleasant a business, and suffer others rather to perish in their sins, then we will venter the alienation of their hearts from us by giving them any distaste. And this reason the Lord useth to press this duty; Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. The fifth duty is exhortation, whereby we incite and provoke others unto all duties of godliness, pricking forward those which are dull and sluggish, dehorting and dissuading from vice and sin, those that are in danger to fall into it; and encouraging those who run well in the Christian race, that they may continue faithful, and hold out unto the end. And unto this the

Apostle persuadeth us; Exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. The sixth duty is consolation, whereby we strengthen the weak hands and feeble knees, and refresh with seasonable comforts, those which are ready to faint under the weight of their afflictions. And this the Apostle requireth of all Christians: Comfort (saith he) yourselves together, and edify one another, even as you do; and again, Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; be of the same mind one towards another; for it is an ease to those that are in misery, to have companions of their grief, and the heaviest weight is made more tolerable, when as it is born by many shoulders. The seventh duty is counsel, whereby we advise those, who do not know of themselves what to do in the best course, which is an excellent office to be performed by those whom God hath endued with wisdom and sound judgment, towards them who are weak and defective in these gifts. Yea in truth, it is very profitable, when it is given by those which are of equal parts; yea oftentimes by those who are much inferior unto us, as we see in Abigail's counsel to David; because lookers on being free from all prejudice and passion, can see more clearly than those who are interested in the business, though at other times more quick-sighted; pride, self-love, and unruly affections, corrupting and blinding their judgment, and misleading them out of the right way. The last duty tending to further one another in godliness, is good example, by which, shining before them in the light of a holy conversation, we do not only show them the ways of righteousness, but also (as it were) by the hand lead them in it. And unto this our Savior exhorteth; Let your light so shine before men, that seeing your good works, they may glorify your Father which is in heaven. And the Apostle Peter, Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. And so much concerning the ordinary helps and means whereby we may be enabled and furthered in all the duties of a godly life.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of extraordinary means of a godly life, and first, of feasting, and solemn thanksgiving.

Sect. 1 - Of solemn thanksgiving what it is, and when to be performed.

Having entreated of the ordinary means of a godly life; it now followeth that we say something of the extraordinary, which are such as are to be used upon extraordinary occasions, when God offereth them unto us. And these are specially two; the first is, holy feasting, wherein we return unto God thanks and praise, for his special blessings and benefits; the other, a holy fast, wherein we do, after an extraordinary manner, humble ourselves before him, in the sight and sense of our sins, or some afflictions which they have deservedly brought upon us. Concerning the former, I shall not need to say much, seeing I have already spoken of it, and am here only to show, what extraordinary thanks and praise we are to return unto God, when as we are stirred up thereunto by some extraordinary and special benefit. The which is the same thanksgiving spoken of before, performed in a solemn and special manner, for some great and extraordinary favor of God, shining clearly in some more than usual benefit received (as it were) from his own hand, when in respect of secondary causes, we could not so much as hope for it, and in regard of our sins and unworthiness, we had good cause to expect the contrary. As when God hath magnified his wisdom, power and goodness unto us in some wonderful deliverance from some dreadful and desperate danger, threatening imminent destruction; or out of some grievous calamity, into which we are already plunged, when as we could not reasonably expect help and safety from our own means,

or the assistance of any creature, but from God alone, to whom nothing is impossible; or in bestowing upon us some positive benefit of great use and worth, when upon the former considerations we could conceive small hope, that ever we should have enjoyed it. Of the former we have diverse examples in the Scriptures. As in that solemn thanksgiving rendered unto God by the people of Israel, for their freedom out of the Egyptian bondage, and for drowning their enemies in the red Sea, for which Moses, Miriam, with the rest of the people, men and women, rejoice before God, and sing unto him songs of deliverance. The which they yearly renewed in a most solemn manner, in the celebration of the Feast of the Passover, wherein they literally magnified God's mercy for that temporary deliverance, and typically for their spiritual Redemption from sin, Satan, and all other enemies of their salvation, by the true Paschal Lamb, the Messias, who was to be slain and offered to God his Father, as a propitiatory sacrifice, and all-sufficient price of Redemption for their sins, and all others who should believe in him. And such a solemn thanksgiving was made by Deborah and the people, for their victory over Sisera, and their freedom from the tyranny of Jabin King of Canaan, who had long oppressed them. By David, when as God had delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and especially out of the hand of Saul; and by Hester, Mordecai, and the Jews of the Captivity, from that fearful conspiracy of Haman, who had plotted the destruction of the whole Nation. And such a feast of thanksgiving we worthily celebrate upon the fifth of November, for that marvelous and almost miraculous deliverance of our King and State, from that horrible and unmatched Powder-treason, by giving wisdom to our gracious Sovereign, to interpret their dark riddle, as he did sometime to Daniel, for the expounding of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, when the wisdom of the wisest in the Land could not unfold it. Of the other we have an example in Abraham, who made a solemn feast, that he might render unto God, praise and thanksgiving, for giving unto him, contrary to all hope, a son in his old age, of whom should come that promised seed, in which, both himself, and all the Nations of the earth should be blessed.

Sect. 2 - When this solemn thanksgiving is most seasonable; how it differeth from that which is ordinary, and the kinds of it.

Which examples we ought to imitate, consecrating unto God some day for solemn thanksgiving, whensoever we receive from him any great and extraordinary benefits, either privative, consisting in deliverance from some imminent or present evil; or positive, when as he vouchsafeth unto us some great and unexpected blessing. But above all other times we must perform this duty, when we celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in remembrance of that inestimable benefit, the great work of our Redemption, wrought by the death and Passion of Jesus Christ, whereby we are delivered out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies. The which is called the Eucharist, or a Sacrament of thanksgiving, because therein we do, in a solemn manner, render unto God thanks and praise, for Christ and all his benefits, the pardon of our sins, and that great Charter of our peace, sealed first by his blood, and now by this Sacrament instituted to put us in remembrance of it, and as it were afresh to renew his Covenant, and to put our Pardon into our own hands. Now this extraordinary thanksgiving to be used upon such special occasions, differeth from that which is ordinary, not in the matter, which is one and the same, but in the manner and measure, which according to the occasion, ought to be extraordinary in quantity and degree. For our hearts must be more then usually inflamed with the apprehension of God's love and goodness, and inward joy in the special fruition of his singular blessings, which must affect them with extraordinary zeal to glorify and praise him, and to express our thankfulness by renewing our covenant with God, binding ourselves by firm resolution, that in sense of his present favors, we will be more devout and zealous in all duties of his service for the time to come, then ever we have been in time past. And by continuing our thanksgiving in a solemn manner, for a longer time then ordinary, setting it apart as a Sabbath of rest from all our worldly labors, that it may be wholly spent in God's praises, and in testifying our love and

inward joy and rejoicing in him, by outward feasting, and more liberal use of meats and drinks, and all other comforts of this life; and in showing our love and bounty in obedience to God, by entertaining at our table, and by sending gifts and rewards unto our poor neighbors, that they also may rejoice with us. And this solemn feasting and thanksgiving is, according to the occasion of it, public or private. Public, for some public benefit which concerneth the welfare of the Church or Common-wealth, which is to be appointed only by the public authority of Christian Magistrates; and is to be celebrated in a most solemn and public manner, all sorts and conditions of men assembling together in the Church, to magnify and praise God's holy name, and to crave the continuance of his love and favor. The which prayers and praises are profitably conjoined with the preaching of the Word, for the stirring up of the whole Assembly to extraordinary thankfulness, when as thereby the greatness of the blessings received, and the inestimable mercy of God is set forth unto them. Private, for some special benefits bestowed, either on a particular person, or a whole family, which is to be solemnized by singing of Psalms, prayer and thanksgiving, reading of some portions of holy Scriptures, fit for the present occasion; holy conferences, whereby we are to magnify God's mercies, and to recount and tell what great things he hath done for us; and also expressing our inward joy, by a more free and liberal use of God's creatures, whereof we must also cause our poor neighbors to have some taste. The which kind of feasting and solemn thanksgiving is a notable help unto true godliness, as it worketh our hearts to a more lively sense and feeling of God's love, stirreth us up to more zealous performance of all religious duties unto him, who hath been so gracious and good unto us; and as it giveth us occasion to renew our covenant with God, and to confirm our resolution, that we will be more diligent and zealous in doing all things which may please and glorify him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of the second extraordinary means, which is, solemn fasting.

Sect. 1 - What a true fast is, and how it differeth from all other fasts.

The other extraordinary means of a godly life, is, an holy fast, of which it is my purpose to speak briefly, though the use and benefit of this duty is so great, that it well deserveth a more full discourse; because it is already so excellently and exactly handled in diverse Treatises purposely written of this argument, and especially in one, which is called, The holy exercise of a true fast: and in another, entitled, The Christian exercise of fasting, written many years since, by the right Reverend Father and my most dear brother, that nothing material can be added unto it. And therefore I will content myself to set down, after mine own manner, some of those points briefly, which are most essential and necessary unto this exercise, (for how should I in a Chapter, express all fully, which would require a whole Treatise?) referring the Christian Reader unto those learned Treatises, if he desire more thorough satisfaction, and particular direction in any of them. And first, that we may begin with the description of this duty: A fast, as we here understand it, is a voluntary, religious and solemn action, undertaken upon some extraordinary occasion, wherein we seriously humble ourselves before God, in the sight and sense of our sins, and the Judgments of God due unto them; testifying our repentance for them, and our unworthiness of his least mercies, by resting from all bodily labor in the day of our fast, and wholly abstaining from our food, and all other comforts and delights of this life, so far forth as it will stand with necessity of nature, charity, and comeliness; and much more by forsaking all our sins, and doing the works of piety and charity; that by this renewing of our humiliation and repentance, we may increase the fervency of our prayers, and strengthen our faith in this assurance, that they shall be graciously heard and granted unto us. In which description this religious fast, being principally intended as

an exercise of repentance, by which it is increased, and as a help to our prayers that they may be more fervent, is sufficiently distinguished from all other kinds of fasts. As first, from the fast of necessity, for want of sustenance, or appetite to it; seeing this is voluntary and at our free choice. Secondly, from that ordinary abstinence whereby we temperately, soberly and sparingly feed upon God's creatures, for the satisfying of nature, and not the pleasing of our carnal lusts and appetite (which is most commendable, as being of common and daily use, and the other only to be used upon extraordinary occasions) seeing in this fast we restrain ourselves but in respect of some part of our food: whereas that whereof we entreat, is a total abstinence for the time, both from all food, and the most of our worldly comforts. Thirdly, from a physical fast, which is prescribed and used for the cleansing of the stomach and body from ill humors, and the preserving or recovering of our health; and from a politic fast appointed by the Magistrate for civil ends, and the good of the Common-wealth; seeing this is a religious fast, which aimeth only at such ends as are spiritual, and tend to the health and welfare of our souls. Lastly, from a moral fast, which is undertaken by those which are single and unmarried, for the preserving of their chastity, and keeping their bodies from being defiled with filthy lusts; seeing this is no solemn or extraordinary action, but to be commonly put in practice, so oft as we find it necessary; and seeing also it aimeth at a far other end then this, of which I here speak, namely, the preserving of chastity: Whereas the end of the religious fast is, by humiliation and prayer to obtain some special suites at God's hands.

Sect. 2 - That the duty of fasting is not ceremonial, but revealed in the Gospel, as well as the Law.

Again, whereas I call it a religious act, I imply hereby that God is the Author of it, and requireth it at our hands, seeing he hath restrained us in all duties appertaining unto his service, that we worship him according to his revealed will, and not according to our own

inventions. Neither are we to esteem it as a part of the ceremonial Law, which is abrogated by Christ; for howsoever there were many rites about it of this nature, which now are some of them abolished, and some out of use; as renting of their garments, wearing of sackcloth, sitting in ashes, and covering their heads therewith, and such like; yet in respect of the main substance, which is the humbling of the soul before God by all good means, that we may testify our repentance, and be made more fervent in our prayers, as it was required of them more especially then the outward rites and ceremonies in the time of the Law, so is it no less commended unto us under the Gospel, to be religiously observed upon all extraordinary occasions. For our Savior Christ purposely teacheth us the right manner how it ought to be done; commendeth the efficacy of it being joined with prayer; and showeth that howsoever his Disciples used it not whilst he was with them, because it was unseasonable for the children of the Bride chamber to fast, the Bridegroom being with them, yet they should perform it when he was taken from them. And thus it was accordingly practiced by the servants of God, not on certain days and set times, but upon great and extraordinary occasions, not only in the time of the Law, as by Jehoshaphat and his people, by Daniel, Ezra, and the children of the captivity; by Queen Hester, her maids, Mordecai, and all the whole people of the Jews; but in the New Testament also, by the Disciples of John the Baptist, and by the Church, when they set apart Paul and Barnabas. By Hannah the Prophetess, and Cornelius, who it seemeth frequently used this exercise (and not only upon extraordinary occasions) that by the help thereof their prayers might be more servant and effectual to prevail with God, though it may be not in that solemn manner, and with that deep humiliation, as is joined with this whereof we speak. For this is to be performed, not ordinarily and so oft as we pray, but upon extraordinary occasions, as the Apostle implieth, where he enjoineth married persons not to defraud one another, unless by consent for a time, that they might give themselves to fasting and prayer, seeing he must needs be understood of extraordinary fasting and prayer upon unusual and weighty occasions, because ordinary prayer is to be used by them

every day together, without any necessity of such separation. So our Savior telling us that the time of fasting is a time of mourning, implieth that it is unseasonable, but when we are occasioned to mourn upon some special and weighty cause: for otherwise ordinarily Christians are to rejoice in the Lord, as the Psalmist and the Apostle exhort; and not to mourn after this extraordinary manner, till God calleth them unto it. Finally, it is evident that this fasting ought not to be ordinary, seeing it is a Sabbath of humiliation, wherein we are bound to rest from all our ordinary labors and duties of our callings, in which we are ordinarily to spend our time.

Sect. 3 - The causes of a true fast, and when it is most seasonable.

The cause which should move us to perform this duty of fasting, is, that we may by more fervent and effectual prayer obtain at God's hands some great and extraordinary benefit; either privative or positive. Privative, as freedom, and deliverance from some dangerous evil, either of sin or punishment. In respect of the former; when we, or our Country in which we live, are guilty of some grievous sin, and other means ordinarily used have not been effectual to pull us out of it; or when some strong corruption doth yet lie unmortified in us, and prevaieth against us, notwithstanding our many purposes and promises to subdue and root it out, then is this exercise seasonable, that humbling ourselves in an extraordinary manner, we may with all fervency desire the assistance of God's holy Spirit, for the healing of ourselves and the Land, by turning us unto God, and for pulling us out of these prevailing and reigning sins, through serious and sound repentance; for the subduing of our corruptions, that they may no more lead us captive unto sin, and bringing of them in subjection to the spiritual part. And thus Paul, in the sight and sense of his sins, especially that heinous wickedness, in persecuting the Saints of God, in his first conversion, is said to have fasted three days. And Ezra with the people, humbled themselves by fasting before the Lord, because they had grievously sinned by taking

strange wines; the which reigned and swayed so powerfully amongst them, that the authority of the Magistrates and preaching of the Prophets, was not for a good while sufficient to pull them out of it. The evil of punishment is also a sufficient motive to make us humble ourselves before God by fasting and prayer, and that either when some heavy judgment is threatened and imminent, that we may avert it, or already imposed, that we may be delivered out of it; whether it be private, and concern our own person and family; or public, respecting either the Church or Common-wealth. Concerning the first, when the heavy Judgments of God are but threatened, and ready to light upon us, then the Lord especially calleth us to fasting and mourning, that unfeignedly repenting of our sins which are the causes, the judgment which is the effect, may cease and be averted. And then this exercise is most seasonable and profitable, because the sentence is more easily stayed then revoked, and the malefactor with less suite acquitted or pardoned, then the execution put off after he once hath his doom; besides, that it is a greater benefit, and much more safe and sweet, to be kept from the fire, then to be pulled out, like fire-brands that are half burned; and much more pleasing unto God, seeing he attaineth unto the end of his threatening's, which is not to punish: for he delighteth not in the smart of his children whom he correcteth, but that by mature and seasonable repentance we may escape, and so his mercy may be magnified in the forgiveness of our sins. An example whereof we have in Jehoshaphat, who by humbling himself by fasting and prayer, escaped the invasion of his many and mighty enemies; and in the Ninevites, who at Jonah preaching, repenting of their sins, were spared and preserved from that imminent destruction which was threatened against them. Neither are God's threatening's absolute, but to be understood with the condition of repentance, namely, that the punishment denounced shall be inflicted, if we go on in our sins; but averted, if we humble ourselves before God, and so leave and forsake our sins. But if we have neglected this duty, till the Judgment have already seized upon us, then our best course is to do it rather late than never, and to labor by our sound humiliation to have our sins first pardoned, and then to have the punishment removed which we have had no care to prevent.

Whether it be a private judgment inflicted on ourselves, as sickness, poverty, losses, disgraces, and such like; or public, lying upon the Church and Common-wealth, wherein we have our part and share, either in our own persons, or by sympathy and compassion, as being fellow-members of the same body, as the sword, captivity, pestilence, famine, and the rest. So likewise this exercise is profitable, when we address ourselves unto God as humble suitors, for the obtaining of some special and important benefit, which is no less necessary for the good estate of ourselves or others, then hard and unlikely to be obtained or achieved by any means of our own devising. And thus it is fit that we should humble ourselves before God by fasting and prayer, when we undertake any weighty business, either for ourselves, or the good of the Church and Common-wealth; upon which occasion, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Hester fasted, and the Church, when they sent forth Barnabas and Paul about that great work, the conversion of the Gentiles. But especially we have just cause of thus humbling ourselves, when we find some great defect in any of God's saving graces, and would labor earnestly with God by Prayer, that it may be supplied, when we find ourselves exceeding weak in faith, and desire to have it increased and strengthened; when we feel our hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, so as we cannot repent, and would have them suppld and softened, that they may resolve and melt in unfeigned sorrow for our sins; when we find our affiance in God so feeble, that it is ready to faint and fail in every small trial: or when we perceive want of gifts and abilities in ourselves, for the well performing of the duties of Christianity, or of our callings, and would be suitors to him who is the Fountain and Author of every good and perfect gift, that he will enable us, at least, with competency and sufficiency of such gifts, as are necessary for the discharge of our duty, with comfort to ourselves, and profit to others; but especially so as God's glory may receive no damage or detriment.

Sect. 4 - The ends of a true fast.

And these are the causes which may move us to fasting. The ends at which we must chiefly aim in this action, are of two sorts. The first and principal is the glory of God, which we then most magnify, when we vilify and abase ourselves, acknowledging our great unworthiness of his least mercies, and extolling his grace and goodness, in that he doth not inflict upon us those fearful Judgments which our sins have deserved. In which respect it is quite contrary to the nature of a true Fast, if we propound this as the main end of it, that we may satisfy God's Justice, and merit by it at God's hand the pardon of any of our sins, or the joys in heaven in any part or degree. For such a Fast is fit for none but Pharisees and proud Justiciaries, who would rob God of the glory of his free grace and mercy, and our Savior Christ of the all-sufficiency of his merits and satisfaction, that they may in some part arrogate it unto themselves, by having some share in the praise of their justification and salvation. And they who thus fast, the Lord may justly charge them, as he did the hypocritical Jews, that they fast to themselves, and not unto him, for their own glory, and not for his. But so far should we be from thinking that by our fasting, we merit justification and salvation, that we should not by the deed done, suppose that anything is added to our Justice or Sanctity, seeing Fasting itself is no essential part of God's service or religious duty, but only a help and means to enable and fit us for them; neither is abstinence in its own nature more acceptable unto God then eating and drinking. To which purpose an ancient Writer speaketh excellently: Take heed (saith he) when thou beginnest to fast and abstain, thou do not now think thyself holy: For this virtue is but a help, and not the perfection of Holiness. And thou art the rather to take heed, lest this (when thou contemnest things lawful) do make thee secure in doing things unlawful. Whatsoever is offered unto God over and above justice, ought not to hinder justice, but to help it. And what doth it profit to make the body thin and lean with fasting, if thy mind swelleth with pride? The subordinate ends which respect ourselves, are diverse. First, that hereby we may subdue and mortify our flesh and carnal corruption, that they may not be any hindrance unto us in spiritual duties, as they are most prone to be when as they are pampered with worldly delights, growing thereby more sensual,

forgetful of God, averse unto all good duties, and secure in all sinful courses. Secondly, that hereby we may testify our humiliation and repentance, our sorrow for our sins, and how much we are displeased with ourselves, because by them we have displeased God; and our unworthiness of God's least mercies, and of the use of his creatures, which we have so often abused to his dishonor and our own hurt. Thirdly, that we may hereby stir up our devotion, and increase our fervency in our prayers, that they may be more effectual and powerful to prevail with God, for the obtaining of those blessings, for which we are humble suitors unto him. Lastly, that thus humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand, and adjudging ourselves to deserved punishments, we may escape his fearful Judgments; for if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of the parts of a true Fast, or the things wherein it consisteth.

Sect. 1 - That the outward fast consisteth in total abstinence.

The next point to be considered, is the parts of this Fast, or the things wherein it chiefly consisteth. For either this Fast is outward and bodily, or inward and Spiritual. The former being a help to the latter, and the latter, the end of the former. The bodily Fast, is our abstinence for the time that it continueth from the most of the commodities and comforts of this life, so far forth as will stand with charity and comeliness, and a cessation from all our ordinary affairs and labors, because it is to be kept as a Sabbath of humiliation unto the Lord. The commodities of this life are many, the chief whereof are meats and drinks, from which we must totally abstain in all kinds whilst the Fast continueth, so far forth as will stand with the health

of our bodies, and the advancing of those ends which we principally intend in this exercise. If our health will bear it, we must not content ourselves with the sober use of the creatures as at other times, but wholly abstain from them, according to the example of the faithful in all ages; seeing in this exercise one main thing, at which we aim, is to humble ourselves before God, acknowledging, that we are utterly unworthy of the least of his benefits for the preserving of our lives. But if in respect of our weakness, such total abstinence will hazard our health, we may eat or drink so much as the necessity of our state requireth, seeing the Lord desireth mercy rather than sacrifice, and enjoineth this bodily abstinence, that it may help and further us, and not disable us for the spiritual duties of his service, as it must needs, if our spirits be exhausted, and our bodies weakened, so that there remaineth no virtue nor vigor in them, to perform them in any cheerful and devout manner. And this liberty the Ancients have given, who otherwise were the strictest exactors of this exercise. Over-much weakness of the body (saith one) doth weaken the powers of the soul, and maketh the Fast of the mind barren, so that it is able to do no good thing by reason of this imbecility. The body (saith another) is to be handled somewhat austerely, that it may not rebel and wax insolent, but so, as it may be fit for employment, because it is given that it may serve the soul. It must be restrained, not wasted; burdened, not tired; humbled, that it may not insult; and serve, that it may not rule. But more plainly and directly another speaketh to this purpose. If thou canst not (beloved) through bodily infirmity hold out the whole days Fast, no man that is wise will blame thee for this. For we have a gentle and merciful Lord, who exacteth nothing of us above our strength. Neither doth he simply require Fasting and abstinence, nor that we should remain so long fasting, but that withdrawing ourselves from worldly and carnal works, we should spend our time in spiritual exercises. And yet we must take heed that we do not abuse this liberty unto licentiousness, seeing it is never good, but when it is necessary; and much better it is, if our strength will bear it, that we wholly abstain from all food for the day of our Fast, for diverse reasons. For first, God requireth in our Fast, that we afflict ourselves, the body by abstinence, the mind by sorrow and

humiliation. Secondly, hereby we come to a more thorough sense and feeling of our unworthiness of God's benefits. Thirdly, we become more devout and fervent in prayer, and the body being less dull and heavy, is made a more fit instrument unto the soul for spiritual exercises. Fourthly, our bodily hunger, through emptiness of food, may make us more sensibly to conceive of the souls emptiness of saving graces, that we may hunger and thirst after them, and use all good means whereby we may be filled and satisfied.

Sect. 2 - That we must in our Fast abstain for the most part from all worldly comforts.

And as we must thus totally abstain from meats and drinks, so must we in the greatest part, from all other bodily and worldly comforts and delights, and much more moderate ourselves in the use of them, so far forth as will stand with necessity and comeliness, then at other times. Thus we must abridge ourselves from some part of our ordinary sleep, that by this bodily waking, we may be more ready to keep the spiritual watch, and have more time to spend in religious and spiritual duties; as also that we may hereby testify our humiliation, acknowledging ourselves unworthy, as of other blessings, so of our ordinary rest and sleep. To which purpose the Faithful under the Law did lie upon the ground, and in sack-cloth and hard beds, that lying thus uneasily, they might take the less rest. Wherein our care must be, that we so perform this bodily exercise, as that it do not the next day disable us for God's spiritual service, as hearing the Word and prayer, which are the ends of it, by making us drowsy and sleepy through over-much watching. Secondly, we must moderate ourselves in the use of our apparel, putting on our worst attire, which may be most fit to signify and also further our humiliation. And in any case for that time to forbear such show of bravery in our garments, either in respect of the costliness of the stuff or fashion, as may in the eyes of others be an ensign of our pride, and in our own hearts the fuel of it. And much less are we at

such times to use light and vain fashions, frizzling of the hair, and painting of the face, which if they be at all times unlawful and utterly mis-beseeming Christians, whose best ornaments are humility and modesty, then surely are they in the day of our humiliation odious and abominable. Thirdly, we must abstain this day from all carnal and worldly delights, and pleasing the senses, which would lessen our sorrow for our sins, hinder our humiliation, and abstract our minds from spiritual duties. And as we must not delight the taste with meats and drinks, so neither the eyes with delightful sights, nor the cares with pleasant music, and witty and merry discourses, nor the smell with sweet odors; especially the use of the marriage bed is to be forborne, even of the bride and bridegroom, and much more of others; and recreations in all kinds, which are at other times lawful and necessary for the refreshing and cheering of the heart and mind. Lastly, we must in the day of our fast abstain from all worldly businesses and works of our callings, seeing it is to be observed as a Sabbath and day of rest in the strictest kind; for the Lord enjoineth us, that in this Sabbath of humiliation, we do not our own pleasures, walk in our own ways, nor speak our own words. The which rest is necessary on this Day, that we may consecrate it wholly unto the Lord, by spending it in the duties of his service without distraction; and also that we may hereby be put in mind of our rest from sin; for if the works of our callings which are lawful in themselves, may not on this Day be lawfully done; then how odious must we needs think will it be unto God, if doing the works of darkness, we serve the world, the devil and our own flesh? Now the time of this bodily exercise which it is to continue, may be diverse, in respect of the diverse occasions which require greater or lesser humiliation, and the diverse states of men's bodies, as they are able to hold out in this exercise without impairing of their health. The ordinary time of a fast is the space of four and twenty hours, or of a natural day, from supper time on one day, to supper time on another, or from dinner to dinner; though this be less fit and more rarely used, because it should be a whole day, that is consecrated unto God as a Sabbath of humiliation, and not part of two days. So the Lord enjoining it, saith; It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls in

the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even shall you celebrate your Sabbath. The which was accordingly observed by the faithful from time to time. But when the occasion hath been extraordinarily great, and the causes of humiliation of greatest weight and importance, the faithful have prolonged the time of their fast, to testify their sorrow for their sin so much the more, and that with greater fervency they might implore God's mercy for the deliverance of them from some imminent danger of fearful destruction. In which case, Hester and the Jews continued their fast three days together, Daniel one and twenty days, Paul three days, to the end that having a longer time for this exercise, their humiliation might be the greater, and their hearts more thoroughly touched with a thorough sense of their sins, and with a lively feeling of their distressed estates, then they could have been in a shorter time.

Sect. 3 - Of the inward and spiritual exercises in our fast.

The second part of the Christian fast, is the inward and spiritual exercise, which is the end of the outward, and without which it is of no value: for as the Apostle telleth us, Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things; and The Kingdom of God consisteth not in meats and drinks, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. In which regard the Lord hath always rejected the outward fast as hypocritical and superstitious, if the inward fast were not joined with it. Thus he chargeth the Jews, that they fasted to themselves and not to him, when they rested in the external abstinence and bodily humiliation; and telleth them, that if they would keep a fast which should be acceptable unto him, they must execute judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, and not oppress the fatherless, stranger and poor, nor so much as imagine evil against their brother in their heart. So elsewhere he rejecteth the fast of the Jews, because therein they only afflicted their souls with bodily abstinence, and did hang down their heads like a bulrush for a day, and did spread sackcloth and ashes

under them, but did not join with it the Spiritual fast, in abstaining from carnal pleasures and covetous exactions, losing the bonds of wickedness, and undoing the heavy burdens, ceasing from oppression, and doing the works of mercy. To which purpose one demandeth; What doth it profit thee that thou afflictest thy body, when as thine heart is never the better? To fast and watch, and not to amend thy manners, is all one, as if a man should take pains to weed and husband the ground about the vineyard, but let the vineyard itself grow like a desert, full of thorns and thistles.

Sect. 4 - Of humiliation and penitency in the time of our fast.

Now this spiritual and inward exercise is nothing else, but a serious humiliation of our souls before God, joined with fervent prayer and unfeigned repentance, that we may find grace with God, and have our special suites heard and granted. The first thing is humiliation or penitency, unto which is required; First, a thorough sense and feeling of our sins, whereby we have provoked God's anger against us. Secondly, unfeigned sorrow and bitter grief, chiefly in this respect, because by our sins we have displeased and dishonored our glorious God and gracious Father, unto which we must attain, by considering and aggravating our sins, in respect of the quantity and quality, their number and heinousness, by meditating on God's Judgments and Mercies, the curse and threatening's of the Law, and the gracious promises of the Gospel; on God's gloriousness in himself, and graciousness towards us; that by our sins we have pierced and crucified our Savior Christ, and caused the Lord of life to be put to a shameful death, vexed and grieved God's good Spirit dwelling in us, slandered our profession, given offense to our neighbors, and drawn upon ourselves God's heavy punishments in this life and the life to come, and especially the present Judgment which we fear as imminent, or feel as being already inflicted upon us. Thirdly, A vile and base conceit of ourselves in respect of our sins, whereby we adjudge ourselves as utterly unworthy of God's least mercies, and

contrariwise, that we have deserved the greatest of his plagues, and not only that which we presently fear or feel, but all other punishments temporal and eternal. Lastly, in this humiliation we are to express our sorrow and grief of heart, by our lamentations and woeful complaints, bewailing our wretched condition both in respect of sin and punishment, and bemoaning our misery before the Lord, as a fit subject, whereon he may exercise his abundant and rich mercies, in pardoning our sins, and removing our punishments.

Sect. 5 - That prayer must be joined with our fasting.

The second thing required in the spiritual exercise, is effectual prayer; for this is that which giveth virtue and vigor to our fasting, even as fasting helpeth and strengtheneth prayer. And here first we must begin with humble confession of our sins, principally insisting upon those whereby we have most displeased and dishonored God, and drawn upon ourselves his present Judgments. The which we may profitably aggravate by all their particular circumstances (as before I have showed) but chiefly because we have committed them against such a gracious God, who hath multiplied upon us so many favors and testimonies of his love, respecting our souls, bodies and estates, this life and the life to come. Unto which confession we must adjoin the adjudging and condemning of ourselves to deserved punishments both temporal and everlasting, this which we fear or feel, and all others with it, if God should deal with us according to our deserts. By which confession and condemning of ourselves, we shall glorify God, both by justifying his righteous Judgments, and magnifying his Mercies, either because he delivereth us out of our afflictions, or doth not inflict them in a measure proportionable to our sins. Secondly, hereby we shall increase our humiliation and sorrow for our sins, when as we thus rip them up and recount them, and (as it were) set them in order before us. And finally, we shall hereby much strengthen our faith in the assurance of the pardon of them, seeing if we confess our sins, the Lord will vouchsafe mercy; if

we acknowledge them, he is faithful and righteous to forgive them. And consequently we may be assured, that our present judgments shall be averted or removed, when as sin, which is the cause of them, is done away; or if they be continued, that their nature shall be changed, seeing they shall cease to be punishments, which are inflicted to satisfy God's Justice, and shall be unto us the chastisements of a gracious Father, signs of our adoption, testimonies of his love, and much further our spiritual enriching with all saving graces, and the eternal salvation of our souls. In which assurance of faith, grounded upon God's infinite mercies and free promises, we are to proceed in making our suits known unto God, either for our freedom and deliverance from evil, by deprecation, or the obtaining of some good by petition. For after that we have made our peace with God, and obtained by unfeigned humiliation and confession, the assurance of the remission of our sins, we must in the next place become suitors at the Throne of grace, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, that the Lord will be pleased for his own mercies, and his merits, to remove the Judgments which our sins have drawn upon us. And thus the Lord having proclaimed a Fast to his people, doth prescribe unto them a form of deprecation, after that they were humbled, and had bewailed their sins: Let the Ministers (saith he) weep and say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. The which was also practiced by Daniel and Nehemiah in their fasts, where after the confession of their own and the people's sins, they crave pardon and deliverance out of their afflictions. In which suites for freedom out of our miseries, we are to strengthen our faith in this assurance, that we shall be heard, by God's special promises which he hath made, that he will hear our prayers, and above all other times, when we call upon him in the day of trouble. Or if the sentence being pronounced, cannot be revoked, let us humbly sue unto God, that he will at least accomplish his promises, in sanctifying our afflictions unto us, that they may not be punishments for our sins, but chastisements for our amendment, means to mortify our corruptions, to wean us from the world, to strengthen and increase his graces in us, faith, hope, affiance, love, patience, humility, the fear of God, and the rest; and

that they may be as strong cords to draw us nearer unto God, and as sharp spurs and goads in our sides, to prick us forward in the ways of godliness. Unto which deprecation, we are to join petition, whereby we must crave at God's hands whatsoever good thing we stand in need of; as peace of conscience, following justification, sanctification, and the gracious assistance of God's Spirit, for the mortifying of our corruptions, and our spiritual quickening unto newness of life, for the replenishing of our hearts with all saving graces, and the strengthening of us to all good duties, with perseverance unto the end, and that we may be enabled to withstand all the assaults of our spiritual enemies, who labor to hinder our course in godliness, and to turn us into the broad way that leadeth to destruction. More specially, we must pray according to the present occasion of our fast; as if it be some grievous sins which we have committed, that the Lord will not only graciously forgive them, but strengthen us with his grace and holy Spirit, that we may not again fall into them; and enrich us with the contrary graces, that we may honor him thereby for the time to come, as we have dishonored him by our sins in times past. If it be for deliverance from some great danger, or out of some great affliction, that then the Lord will be pleased to give us the contrary safety and security, by taking us into his protection, and under the shadow of his wings; or that he will vouchsafe to bestow upon us the contrary blessings and benefits, if in his wisdom he seeth that they are fit for us: As health instead of sickness, honor for disgrace, plenty for penury, peace for war, and such like. The which our petitions, as at all other times, so especially in the time of our fast, must be joined with extraordinary fervency, and such importunity as will receive no repulse, according to the weightiness of the occasion, which maketh us in this extraordinary manner to humble ourselves before God. And also with a special faith, that the Lord will hear, not only all our prayers agreeable to his will, which we make in his Sons name, but also our special suits which we have now made in the time of our fast, so far forth as it will stand with his glory, and our own salvation. The which our faith must be grounded upon God's gracious promises; and strengthened, by calling to mind the examples of God's Saints from time to time, who having thus

humbled themselves, and prayed in the time of their troubles, have found help and deliverance at God's hands.

Sect. 6 - That with our fasting we must join unfeigned repentance.

The last thing thing required in our fast is, that we join with it unfeigned repentance; for this is the principal end of the outward exercise, that we may thereby both testify and also increase our repentance. And unto this, two things are required; the first is, that we forsake our sins which we have bewailed; and secondly, that we embrace the contrary virtues, and express them in the duties of a godly life. Concerning the former, it little availeth us to abstain outwardly from our food, and other comforts of this life, which are the gifts of God, and in their own nature lawful, if we live still in our sins, and will not turn from them unto God by unfeigned repentance; to rest from the honest labors of our callings, and not to rest from the works of darkness, wherein we perform service unto sin and Satan; to pine the body with outward abstinence, and to pamper the flesh by satisfying of our carnal lusts, to have empty bellies and clean teeth, and to have our souls replenished with wickedness, and defiled with sinful corruptions. In which regard the Lord condemneth and rejecteth the fast of the Jews, because they rested in the bodily exercise, and did not forsake their carnal lusts, exactions and oppressions. What doth it profit (saith one) to make thy body thin and lean with fasting, if thy mind do swell with pride? What praise wilt thou deserve, by the paleness of fasting, if thou be pale also with envy? What virtue is in this, not to drink wine, and in the mean while to be drunk with anger and hatred? But our abstinence is praiseworthy, and the chastening of the body, of some excellency, when as the mind fasteth from vices, &c. Let us (saith another) bridle our fleshly lusts, and we shall keep a true fast. For that I call a fast, when we abstain from vices. And therefore abstinence from meats is required, that we may subdue the unruly power of the flesh, and by curbing in this pampered horse, teach it to obey. And again; The

honor of a fast is not abstinence from meats, but the forsaking of our sins, &c. For it is most absurd to refrain by fasting from lawful meats, and to taste the unlawful lusts of the eyes? Doest thou not eat flesh? Neither let thine eyes draw in wanton lusts. Let thine ear also fast, by not receiving slanders and detractions. And let thy mouth fast from filthy and reproachful words. For what will it avail us to fast only like birds and fishes (or like the beasts of Nineue) if we bite and devour our brethren? But with most diligent care must we forsake our beloved sins, and those wherewith we have most offended our gracious God, as being the chief causes which have drawn upon us God's present Judgments. Against which we must bend our chief forces, that we may not only lay them aside, like our garments overnight, which we purpose to put on again the next day, but utterly forsake them, mortify and subdue them, that they may never again prevail against us. To which purpose we must renew our covenant with God, and strengthen our resolutions, if we have formerly found them weak and unconstant, by making a solemn vow, that we will, upon no occasion, wittingly and willingly fall into those sins again, for which we have now humbled ourselves before the Lord in this present exercise.

Sect. 7 - That we must in our fast, exercise ourselves in all Christian duties.

The second part of repentance, which we must both profess and practice, is, that ceasing from evil, we do that which is good, exercising ourselves in all Christian duties, both towards God, and our neighbors, both in the day of our fast, and afterwards. In respect of that present time, we must, with extraordinary care and diligence, exercise ourselves in all good works, and principally in the duties of piety, and of God's service; as prayer, hearing and reading of God's Word, holy conferences, and meditation, the subject matter whereof may fitly be repentance, of which I have before spoken; all which, according to the occasion, are to be performed with more than

ordinary zeal and devotion. And these duties of piety towards God, we must approve to be sincere and without hypocrisy, by our works of justice and righteousness, mercy and compassion towards our neighbors. For in the day of our fast, the Lord specially requireth, that we should execute judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, that we should loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burden, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. For therefore (as one saith) we restrain our minds from desiring meat, that we may exercise their whole force in coveting after virtues. And so our flesh will less feel the pain of abstinence, when it hungereth after righteousness. But especially we must, in this day, exercise our charity in the works of mercy, and in relieving the poor. To which uses we must at least spend so much as we spare from ourselves and our families by our fast, or else we give just cause of suspicion, that we fast more out of miserableness then devotion, being content to fast, that all our servants may bear us company, and so by emptying their and our own bellies, to add something towards the filling of our bags. And this the Lord specially requireth in the day of our fast; namely, that we should deal our bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out, into our house, that when we see the naked, we should clothe him, and that we hide not ourselves from our own flesh; that we should draw out our souls to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul. Which duties if we neglect, we may be justly charged that we fast rather with the Jews, to ourselves, then unto the Lord; having more regard to our profit, then to piety or charity. As therefore our Savior hath joined these three together in his doctrine, so must we (after the example of good Cornelius) conjoin them in our practice; for our fasting will be maimed and of no worth, if it be severed from either of them. Mercy (saith one) and piety are the wings of fasting, by which it mounteth aloft into heaven, and without which, it lieth and walloweth upon the earth. Fasting without mercy, is but a picture of hunger, and image of holiness. Without piety, fasting is but an occasion of covetousness; for what is spared from the body, is put into the bag. He that fasteth not to the poor's advantage, lieth unto God; and he who when he fasteth doth not bestow his dinner upon the poor, but layeth it up in

store, doth plainly show, that he fasteth for covetousness, and not for Christ's sake, &c. And these are the works wherein we must exercise ourselves in the day of our fast: which must not end when it endeth, but be continued in some good measure forever after. For as we must then resolve, that we will, in the whole course of our lives afterwards, be more careful and conscionable in all our ways, and more earnest and diligent in performing all good duties unto God, our neighbors, and ourselves, so if we would approve our purpose to be sincere, we must endeavor accordingly to put it in practice, and use all good means which may enable us hereunto. Where, for a conclusion of this discourse of fasting, we may observe, that if it be used aright, and as God requireth, it must needs be a singular good help to the leading of a godly life, seeing nothing more humbleth us in the sight and sense of our sins and spiritual wants, nor doth make us more hunger after grace with a vehement appetite, nor doth make us more fervent and earnest in our prayers, for the obtaining spiritual strength to serve God, and to withstand the temptations of all our spiritual enemies; nor finally, that more exerciseth and increaseth our repentance, our sorrow for our sins past, and purpose of amendment for the time to come, by serving God with more zeal and diligence in all Christian duties of piety and holiness in his own worship, in the works of righteousness, and mercy towards our brethren, of temperance and sobriety in respect of our own persons.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the arguments and reasons which may move us to lead a godly life; and first, such as respect God's nature, works, and love towards us.

Sect. 1 - The first sort of reasons taken from God's nature and attributes.

Hitherto we have entreated of the real and practical means, whereby we may be enabled to lead a godly life. And now it followeth that we propound some reasons and arguments which may effectually persuade us, both to use these means, and also to perform all the duties of holiness and righteousness, unto which by these means we are enabled; seeing it would little avail us to have all the helps of godliness, unless we have also hearts to use them. And because the reasons which might be produced to this purpose, are innumerable, seeing there is scarce any part of God's Word or works, either of Creation or Government, which doth not yield some motive unto godliness; therefore passing by the most which might be alleged, it shall suffice, as briefly as I can, to touch some of the chief and principal; all which I will reduce unto three heads, either as they respect God, our neighbors, or ourselves. The arguments of the first sort, either respect God himself, his nature and attributes, both generally considered, and as he exerciseth them towards us; or that duty which we are bound to perform unto him. Concerning the former, there cannot be anymore forcible reasons alleged, for the persuading of us to serve God in duties of a godly life, then a thorough consideration of God's nature and attributes. For first, he is the only true God, Jehovah, the most absolute Being, who having his Essence in and from himself, giveth being to all things; and therefore to be served by all creatures, and especially by us, seeing in him we live, move, and have our being. He is God, infinite in all perfection, and therefore ought in all things, according to his nature, to be served with absolute and perfect obedience. He is infinite, and therefore the actions of all things finite must tend unto him, and be determined in him, as their supreme end. And being infinite, he is but one only God, and therefore requireth our whole service, there being none other to be worshipped and served but he alone. He is a holy Spirit, and therefore must be served, not only outwardly with our bodies, but also with our souls, in spirit and truth. He is in his nature most pure and simple, without mixture or composition, and

therefore we must yield unto him simple and pure obedience, without any by-respect, or the mixture of human inventions with his most pure and perfect will. He is eternal, and is therefore to be served and glorified in all ages, and from the beginning to the end of times, seeing he is today, yesterday and the same forever, and always liveth to reward those that serve him, and to take vengeance of them who rebel against him. He is immutable and unchangeable in himself, and in his love, goodness, bounty, mercy, and justice toward us, and therefore ought to be served of us daily and constantly, without any levity or wavering, seeing there is no change in him towards us. He is immense and omniscient, so that wheresoever we are, we are in his presence; whatsoever we do, we are in his sight; and therefore we are always and in all places to carry ourselves in all dutiful obedience, as being ever in the view of our Lord and Master, who standeth by and taketh notice of all our actions. He is all-sufficient to reward our service, and to preserve all those who depend upon him against all enemies; and therefore we must not be discouraged in his service by any worldly or spiritual wants, seeing he is abundantly able to supply them, nor by the adverse attempts of any that oppose us, seeing he alone, though, we had no other helps, is sufficient to protect us, and to bring to naught, whatsoever might or malice seeketh to hinder us in the ways of godliness. He is God blessed forever, yea, blessedness itself, in whose fruition consisteth all happiness, and therefore ought to be served with all the powers of our bodies and minds, seeing he only is able to make us blessed. He is Almighty, and able to do whatsoever pleaseth him; the which also should effectually withdraw us from all sin, seeing thereby we provoke him to wrath, who is powerful to punish us; and move us to serve him in all Christian duties, seeing having all power in heaven, and earth, he is able to reward us in our well-doing. He is true, yea, truth itself, and in this regard ought to be served, seeing he will most assuredly make good all his gracious promises, which he hath made to all that serve and please him; and contrariwise will bring to pass all his fearful threatening's against those, who neglect and disobey his commandments. His will is absolutely good, and the most perfect rule of righteousness; and therefore our wills and actions must be

conformable unto it, seeing so far as they digress and differ, they are wicked, crooked and erroneous. So also the Lord is good, yea, the chief and supreme Goodness, unto which all things are to be destined as their principal and supreme end; the which should make us devote ourselves wholly unto his service, seeing thereby both we and our actions do attain unto their supreme end and chief perfection; and contrariwise become vain and to no purpose, if we and they be not thus employed. He is holy, yea, holiness itself, and therefore ought to be served in holiness and righteousness of all that approach near unto him, and would be esteemed of his family; for being himself holy, he delights in those who are like him in holiness, neither can his pure eyes endure sinful pollution, as being most contrary to his divine nature. He is gracious, bountiful and munificent; and therefore is to be served with all diligence and cheerfulness, seeing he who is so beneficent and liberal to all his creatures, will be unspeakably bountiful towards those who glorify him by their willing obedience. He is loving and gracious, yea, Grace and Love itself, and therefore being also infinitely lovely, deserveth worthily all love, and that we should bring forth the fruits of it, by doing all things that are pleasing in his sight. He is most merciful, gentle, patient and long-suffering, and therefore is to be served with all cheerfulness and comfort, seeing he is so merciful, that he pardoneth all our sins; so mild and gentle, that he passeth by all our infirmities; so patient and long-suffering, that when we are slack and slothful in our duty, he doth not presently inflict deserved punishment, but beareth with us, and expecteth our amendment. He is just, yea, Justice itself, the which also should make us spend all our time in his service; seeing without any respect of persons he is the same to all that obey him, and will not fail to recompense to the full our labor of love, nor to give unto us that rich and inestimable wages, wherewith he hath graciously bound himself by covenant, to reward our service; nor contrariwise to inflict deserved punishments upon those, who being bound to serve him, neglect their duty. And thus also those attributes which are improperly ascribed unto God, as showing rather his actions then affections, and his works towards us, rather than his nature in himself, may also yield unto us powerful

reasons which may move us to serve him. As his anger and hatred against sin and sinners (which is nothing but his rewarding Justice, recompensing them as they have deserved) may move us effectually to flee all sin and wickedness; seeing his wrath is a consuming fire, and we like stubble before it, in which regard it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the ever living God. His joy, whereby he delighteth himself in those that fear and love him, and so also replenisheth them with all joy and happiness in the fruition of him and his love. His sorrow and displeasure, when we unkindly grieve him by our sins, who hath been so kind unto us; and if we make him sorry who is our joy, who shall glad our hearts in the day of our sorrow, and comfort us in our mourning? His repenting in doing unto us the good he hath promised, when we do evil, and in bringing upon us his Judgments threatened, when we turn from our sins, and reconcile ourselves unto him by our well-doing. Finally, his jealousy which is mixed of love and anger, should make us wholly devote ourselves to his service, seeing he can abide no corrivals in our love and duty, but will be loved and served with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and therefore we must not divide ourselves between God, and the devil, the world and our own sinful lusts, but we must consecrate our bodies and souls unto the service of God alone in the duties of a godly life, seeing he is a jealous God, who is impatient of any copartners, and will have all or none.

Sect. 2 - The second reason, taken from God's love towards us.

The works also of God do yield unto us most effectual reasons, to persuade us unto all duties of a godly life, but especially his manifold and inestimable benefits, which he hath vouchsafed to bestow upon us, whether we consider the Fountain from which they all spring, or the blessings and benefits themselves, which as streams do issue and flow from them. The fountain of them all, is his divine and incomprehensible love, whereby, of his free grace and mere goodness, he hath loved us from all eternity, without any respect of

our deserts and worthiness. The which he hath manifested, when as we were dead in our sins, and the children of wrath as well as others, when we were weak and of no strength, having not so much as any power to desire his favor and mercy, to free and deliver us out of our woeful misery. When as we were like poor impotent infants, new born, whose Navel was not cut, and who wallowed in the filthy and bloody gore of our natural corruptions, no eye pitying us, nor having any friend, that was able to help us, or to wash us clean from our corruption. For even then when we were helpless and hopeless, this love moved him to take compassion on us, and to say unto us whilst we were in our blood, You shall live. And when we were so deep stained, yea, even in-grained in the filthy die of our sins, that all the waters in the world could not make us clean, he in this incomprehensible love, gave his Son to the death, that we might be washed in the Lauer of his precious blood, and so purged from our crimson and scarlet sins, both in respect of the guilt, punishment and corruption of them, that thereby we are restored unto a snowy whiteness, and being washed with the blood of his innocent Son, are recovered and cleansed from our incurable Leprosy. O how ought this unspeakable love to affect and warm our frozen hearts with unfeigned love towards him again! How should our souls cleave unto him, and be inflamed with most fervent affection towards him, who being infinite in all goodness and perfection, and needed neither us, nor anything from us, yet vouchsafed to set his Love upon us, who were so unlovely and unworthy, yea, so sinful and wicked, that we justly deserved his wrath and fearful vengeance? How can we choose, if we thoroughly consider this, but have our hearts thoroughly inflamed with most fervent affection towards him, who is the chief Goodness, most amiable in himself, and most gracious unto us? How can we sufficiently express our love, by doing or suffering anything for his sake? How fearful should this make us to offend him, and how careful in all things to please him? How zealous should we be of his glory, and how diligent and cheerful in doing him faithful service, by performing all duties of a godly life? How should this wean our hearts and affections from the love of the world and earthly vanities, and make them to become as bitter as gall and wormwood to our

spiritual taste, seem they never so sweet and pleasant to our carnal appetite, when as they are offered as the devils baits to withdraw our hearts from God, and to make us more slothful in his service?

Sect. 3 - The third reason, taken from God's decree of our election.

The fruits also and effects of God's Love towards us, do serve as strong arguments to move us unto a godly life. As first, his decree of election, whereby from all eternity he hath chosen us in Christ, out of the corrupt mass of mankind, unto eternal life and happiness, and unto all the means which may bring us unto it. What greater mercy can be imagined, then that God of his free grace should choose us in Christ, who were utterly lost in Adam, dead in our sins, and the children of wrath as well as others, not unto some mean estate or low degree of happiness, but to the highest and greatest privileges, as to be his own peculiar people, and servants of his own family, yea, to be his adopted children and coheirs with Christ, not of some earthly patrimony, or worldly kingdom, which though it were never so great and glorious, yet is it mutable and momentary, but of an heavenly inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, as the Apostle speaketh? The which benefit will be much amplified, if we consider his infinite Majesty and Glory, who hath thus chosen us; and our own vileness and unworthiness, whom he hath advanced to these rich and wonderful privileges, seeing we were dust and ashes, corrupt and sinful, strangers, yea enemies unto God: which if it be well weighed, may justly make us cry out with the Psalmist; O Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that thou visitest him? Especially, if we consider unto what dignity we who were so low are exalted; For if it had been a matchless mercy, for us that were so base, to have been made the meanest of God's family, even doorekeepers in the House of our God, what incomparable kindness and love is this, to be made his own Sons, and Heirs of his Kingdom? The which mercy is not indefinitely communicated unto all, though all have deserved it as well as we, but to the least part of

mankind; and yet such is his goodness towards us, that passing by many great Kings and Monarchs, many rich, noble and wise in the world, he hath vouchsafed to make us of this small number. Not because we deserved such extraordinary favor more than others that want it, but of his mere grace and free good will. O how should our hearts be inflamed with the Love of God, in the sight and sense of such an inestimable benefit? How should it fill our hearts with thankfulness, and our mouths with his praises? How zealous and diligent should it make us in his service? And to think all time lost, which is not spent in doing something which may tend to his glory, who of his mere Love hath done so much for us? Out of the same lump, of which have been made so many vessels to dishonor, he hath chosen us, that he might make us vessels of grace and honor; O how should we delight to be serviceable to so gracious a Lord, and to shine in the light of godliness to his glory, who hath thus advanced us? He hath chosen us, which were children of wrath, as well as others, out of that huge multitude and cursed crew, to be his own children by adoption and grace; how then should this inflame our desires, to glorify so gracious a Father, and to carry ourselves in all things as beseemeth his children? But if the mere Love of God will not work this in us, let us consider further, that the Lord hath propounded this end to the decree of our election, that we should glorify him by our Holiness and unblameableness, according to that of the Apostle; He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; and therefore unless we think that God, infinite in wisdom and power, can fail of his end, we can have no hope that we are elected to happiness, unless we attain unto some measure of Holiness. He hath predestinated us, that we should be conformed to the image of his Son, as in glory and blessedness in the world to come, so in this life, both in his sanctity and sufferings: and therefore as we must not think that we can by the broad way of carnal pleasures, attain to Christ's heavenly happiness, and to be crowned with him before we have suffered with him; so much less let us imagine that we shall ever come into his joys, if we do not follow him in that path of righteousness, which he hath beaten before us, seeing the Apostle

hath plainly told us, that without Holiness we shall never see God. So that the consideration of our election ought to be a strong motive to persuade us unto a godly life, both that we may glorify God by our holy conversation, who hath been so gracious and good unto us, and that we may be assured, that he will glorify us, by attaining unto that end of Holiness, for which we were elected. Whereof it is that the Apostle having largely entreated of the doctrine of God's predestination, doth out of this doctrine enforce this use, that we should offer up ourselves a lively and holy Sacrifice, acceptable unto him, by our reasonable serving of him. And the Apostle Peter persuading us to make our election sure, could prescribe no other course for the obtaining of this assurance, then by joining one virtue and grace with another, and bringing forth the fruits of them all, by doing these things, that is, serving and glorifying God who hath chosen us, in the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 4 - The fourth reason taken from the benefit of our creation.

The second fruit and effect of God's Love, and cause or means of our salvation and happiness, is our creation by his Almighty Word; and preservation, being thus made by his powerful providence. Concerning the former, whereas God might have left us without a being, which is to be esteemed amongst the greatest evils, he created us of nothing, or which is all one, of the dust of the earth, which came of nothing, by sole virtue of his powerful Word; and whereas he might have made us the vilest and basest of the creatures which creep upon the earth, yea worse than they, even wicked devils, ordained to condemnation, he created us according to his own image, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness, endued us with an immortal and reasonable soul, and made us Lord's over all the rest of the creatures upon the earth, and only inferior to himself, that we might be ruled and governed by him; and by our service glorify him who hath created us, and given us our being. The which, if it be rightly considered, is an unspeakable benefit, as being the ground of

all that follow it. Neither could we ever attain unto well-being, unless we had first a being; nor unto our final end, eternal salvation, unless we had found an entrance and passage unto it by our creation. In lieu of which great benefit, God requireth nothing at our hands, but that by our service we glorify him, for which end he gave us our being. Not that his glory needs our service, seeing it is in itself absolute and infinite, but out of the same love which moved him first to make us, that he might honor us in this life, by using us as instruments to manifest his glory, and might hereby take occasion to glorify us in the world to come, by crowning our service, of his mere grace, with heavenly joy and happiness. The which also is a most effectual reason to persuade us, that we devote and consecrate ourselves unto God's service in all duties of a godly life, seeing he is our Lord and Maker, who hath created us unto good works, that we should walk in them, to the glory of him that hath given us our being, and that to this end, that we should forever be partakers with him in glory. For what can be more just, then to give everyone his own? That he who soweth his own seed in his own ground, should reap the fruit of his labors? That he who buildeth a house, should have the benefit of dwelling in it? That he who planteth a Vineyard, should eat of the grapes, and drink of the wine? And that he who lendeth anything unto another, should have his own repaid unto him? And how much more just then, and equal is it, that the Lord, who hath not fashioned and framed us of pre-existent matter, but of nothing hath created our souls and bodies, should have them wholly devoted and consecrated to his service, which was the end for which he made us and gave us our being? Unto which end if we attain not, it is a sign that we never think of the end for which we came into the world; or imagine that we were sent by God hither, that we should serve our own lusts, and in fulfilling them, the devil himself, and not that we should serve him, who hath right unto us by this great benefit of our creation. Yea if we do not spend our time in God's service, we fail of the main end for which we came into the world, and so spend all our life and strength in vain. But though we fail of our end, which is, by serving and glorifying God, to attain unto happiness, (which also is God's end revealed in his Word yet we shall never frustrate the end of his

secret counsels, which is, either to glorify his mercy in us, if we fear and serve him, or his Justice, if we neglect his service, and yield obedience to sin and Satan. For the Lord being the summum bonum, and supreme end of all things, hath (as the Wise man speaketh) made all things for himself, even the wicked forth day of evil.

Sect. 5 - The fifth reason taken from the benefit of our preservation.

The benefit of our preservation and government, doth also justly challenge this service at our hands; because being created, we have no power to subsist of ourselves, but wholly depend upon God for the continuance of us in our life and good estate; for (as the Apostle saith) In him we live, and move, and have our being; so that if he withdraw his assisting power, we perish and return unto our dust. By his all-ruling providence we are every day in the year, every hour in the day, and every minute and moment in the hour, preserved from innumerable dangers, which otherwise would seize upon us, from the assaults of our many and mighty enemies, and especially of that roaring and devouring Lyon, who is always ready to destroy us, if we were not preserved under the wings of the Almighty from his rage and malice. By it we are governed and directed in all our ways, so as we cannot stir a foot, nor move a hand, nor open our eyes or ears, nor speak a word, if we had not strength from him. By it all the creatures become serviceable unto us, and work together for our good, which otherwise would be our bane. From God we have all the benefits which we enjoy, the Sun which giveth us light and vital heat, the air which we breathe, the earth which sustaineth us, the meat which feedeth us, the apparel which covereth our nakedness, and keepeth us warm; our health and wealth, our peace, plenty and prosperity, and all other blessings, fit both for necessity, and for our comfort and delight. And not only the things themselves, but all their virtue and vigor, whereby they become profitable to those ends for which we use them, do come from him, and do as means and instruments serve his Providence for the deriving of all good unto us;

himself still remaining the chief and principal cause which worketh by them, or can derive unto us all things needful without them, if they be wanting. For it is he who feedeth us by our meat, by our clothes keepeth us warm, by our friends doth comfort and relieve us, for which uses they would be ineffectual, yea produce the clean contrary effects, if they had not from his blessing their power and efficacy. Now to what end, O man, dost thou receive daily at the hands of God such innumerable blessings, but that thou shouldest acknowledge him the Author of them, and praise him for all the good which he doth unto thee? Why doth he preserve thy life, but that thou shouldest live to his glory? Why doth he make all his creatures in heaven and earth serviceable unto thee; but that thou shouldest hereby be moved with more cheerfulness to serve him, who hath created both them and thee? Why doth he preserve thee from dangers, and protect thee from enemies, and deliver thee out of troubles and afflictions, but that thou shouldest glorify and serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life? Why doth he give the light of the Sun, but that thou shouldest shun the works of darkness, and serve him in the duties of thy calling? Why doth he let thee breathe the air, but that thou shouldst spend this breath in speaking and singing to his praise? Finally, why doth he feed and clothe thee, and give unto thee those manifold blessings which thou enjoyest, but that by this rich wages, he may encourage thee to do him faithful and cheerful service? Which if thou neglectest, and mispendest all the rich gifts which thou hast received, to the dishonor of him that giveth them, in the service of sin and Satan, and in satisfying of thine own carnal and sensual lusts, what dost thou hereby, but bewray thine horrible ingratitude towards such a gracious and bountiful Lord and Master? What dost thou but alienate his love from thee, and provoking his wrath against thee, move him in his just displeasure to withdraw his gifts from thee which thou abusest, or let thee enjoy them in his anger to thy greater hurt, leaving them with thee as testimonies to convince thee of thy shameful ingratitude, and as talents lent unto thee, which when thou hast mis-spent to the dishonor of thy Lord, or not employed them in

his service, will but prepare for thee a fearful account at the terrible Day of God's last Judgment.

CHAP. XXXVII. Two other reasons moving us unto a godly life. The first, taken from Christ, given unto us by his Father; the other, from the Covenant of grace made in him.

Sect. 1 - Of the inestimable gift of Jesus Christ, which should move us to love and serve God.

The fourth main benefit which God hath given unto us, is his only begotten and dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, to be our Head and Savior, in whom we were elected, and by whom we were to be saved and redeemed. For being fallen in Adam, who was the head and root of all mankind, and not only partakers of the guilt and punishment of his sin, but also of the corruption of nature derived from him, whereby we were disabled to all good, and made prone unto all evil, it would not stand with God's Justice to elect or save us, till it were fully satisfied, and we freed from this sinful condition. Which being a work impossible to men and Angels, in respect of that infinite price which was to be paid, God, of his free grace and love ordained and appointed in his eternal Counsel, his Son to be our Savior and Redeemer; and to this end, to take our nature upon him, that he might be unto his elect the second Adam, and the Head of his Church, in whom he chose them to life and salvation, which the first Adam lost both for himself and all his posterity. For howsoever the free love, and mere grace and good will of God, be the supreme and highest cause of our election and salvation, and Christ, in respect of it, but a means or subordinate cause of working that for us, which

God's love had first decreed (neither was Christ the cause that moved God to love us with this first love and free grace, but this love, the cause which moved God to give his Son unto us to be our Savior and Redeemer) yet may it be truly said, that we could no otherwise be elected then in Christ, as our Head and the root of all our righteousness, that justice and mercy meeting together, God might be glorified in them both; although we be not elected for him, but of God's absolute will and free grace, which moved him to give us his Son and all other good which we receive by him. And this the Apostle plainly affirmeth, that God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, and that he hath predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in his Beloved, who were worthily rejected in Adam, both for the guilt of his sin, and the corruption of our nature which we have derived from him. Now this benefit of Christ given us of God, to be the foundation of our election and salvation, may be unto us a most forcible argument to make us love God above all things, who hath so loved us, that he hath not spared to give his only begotten and dearly beloved Son unto us, and for us, even unto the death, that we by him might attain unto eternal life and happiness, and also to express this love, by laboring and endeavoring to serve and please him in all the duties of a godly life. For what should withdraw our hearts from God, which he hath tied unto him by such a bond of love, that was much stronger then death itself? Why should any hire entice us to neglect his service, and to serve Satan, the world, and our own lusts, by committing any known sin, unless it be of equal value to that gift that God hath given to us and for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and appropriate us unto himself for his own service? But ten thousand worlds cannot match this gift, and why then should we lose the benefit of it, by neglecting the service of God, and hiring ourselves to work wickedness, for the base hire of worldly vanities?

Sect. 2 - That the work of redemption should move us to serve our Redeemer in all duties of a godly life.

Again, as Christ our Savior given unto us by God his Father; so also the great work of Redemption wrought by him, may serve as a most powerful argument to move us unto the diligent performance of all the duties which belong to a godly life: For though the work of our Creation and preservation are inestimable benefits, yet, this much exceedeth them, being far above all human conceit, and so unspeakable, that it can never be sufficiently expressed and magnified by the tongue of men and Angels. Yet let us take, as we are able, some slender view of it; and with ravishing wonder, admire and adore the rest which we are not able to comprehend. And consider first, what we were who were thus redeemed, to wit, mortal men, dust and ashes, weak, and of no strength, strangers, sinners, yea, enemies unto God and our own salvation. Secondly, from what we were redeemed, namely, out of the greatest and most desperate misery which could possibly be incident unto any creature. For Christ hath delivered us from the wrath of God, the curse of the Law, and all the fearful plagues therein threatened, temporal and eternal, from the miserable bondage and captivity of sin and Satan, from death, hell, and everlasting condemnation both of body and soul; and that when we were so desperately and unrecoverably plunged into these fearful miseries, that we were utterly unable to help ourselves, yea, when all the power of men and Angels was altogether insufficient to do us any good. Thirdly, consider who redeemed such poor sinful wretches out of this woeful plight, even the glorious Son of God, equal to his Father in power and Majesty; he vouchsafed to pity us in our misery, and to take upon him our deliverance. Fourthly, consider the means which he used to effect this great work of our Redemption, namely, by humbling himself, in taking upon him our nature, and uniting it in a substantial and inseparable union unto his Divine nature, that so he might in our stead, do and suffer whatsoever was necessary for our salvation. Fifthly, consider the manner of effecting this great work, or the means which he used, that he might redeem us; namely, by offering himself unto God his

Father, as a sacrifice for our sins, and an all-sufficient price for our Redemption, and to suffer in his body and soul, all those punishments which were due unto us for our sins. As all the miseries of his life, poverty and mean birth, flight from his enemies, the temptations of the devil, hunger, weariness, the persecutions, scorns, reproaches, and slanders of the world and wicked men. And those especially, which he endured a little before his death; for he was betrayed by his own Apostle, and forsaken by the rest, apprehended by his enemies, and by them most injuriously and barbarously abused, and hailed from one Judgment seat to another, falsely accused, wrongfully condemned, blindfolded, buffeted, railed at, spit upon, scorned and mocked, whipped, crowned with thorns, and crucified; and so suffered for us that cruel, ignominious, and accursed death of the Cross, and his Fathers wrath due to our sins, which made him to sweat drops of Blood, and under the weight of this intolerable burden, to complain, as a man forlorn and forsaken of God. All which, he willingly, meekly, and patiently suffered for us, that he might redeem us out of the hands of all our enemies, and purchase us unto himself as his own peculiar people. So that we are now his by a treble right: for he hath made us, and therefore we are his, even his home-born servants, who owe unto him our birth and being; he preserveth us, and giveth unto us all the good things which we enjoy, and so we are his hired servants, who owe unto him all love and duty, for the rich wages of his bounteous benefits; and finally, he hath redeemed us out of the hands of our mortal enemies, by giving for us, not silver or gold, or any corruptible thing, but himself and his own precious Blood, as a price to satisfy his Fathers justice for our sins; and therefore we are no more our own, but his by the Law of Redemption. What then remaineth, but that we yield unto our Savior his own right which he hath so dearly bought? And seeing he hath given a price for us, which is of ten thousand, yea, infinite times more value than his purchase; O let us not defraud him of his bargain, but devote our bodies and souls wholly to him, that we may glorify him by our service, and be sorry that we have no more to give unto him. We owed ourselves unto him before, by right of creation, but by our sins robbed him of his due, by selling ourselves over to

Satan, as his slaves, for the base hire of worldly vanities; and now he hath again made us his own, by giving himself as the price of our Redemption: and therefore let us not again deprive him of his right, and defraud him of his service, which if we ungratefully do, there remaineth no further sacrifice for sin. He hath given himself for us; and shall we think it too much to give ourselves to him? He came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many; and shall the servant detract his service, when his Lord and Master, his King and Sovereign hath abased himself to do service for him? He hath made no spare of his Blood for our sakes, and shall we think ourselves prodigal in our duty, if we take a little pains, and spend some sweat in his service? Yea, rather let us think no time well spent, which is not thus employed; and all our labor lost, which by holy duty expresseth not some love towards him, to whom we owe so much, and are able to pay so little. Excellent is the meditation of a devout Father to this purpose; If (saith he) I owe myself wholly unto him, for my Creation; what shall I now add for my restauration and Redemption? Especially being restored after this manner? Neither was I so easily restored as created. For to create me and all things else, God did but say the word, and it was done; but he that by once speaking made me, said many things, wrought wonders, suffered things not only grievous, but disgraceful and unworthy of him, that he might redeem me. What therefore shall I return unto the Lord, for all the good things which he hath done unto me? In his first work he gave me unto myself; in the second, he gave himself to me; and by giving himself, restored me unto myself. Being then both given and restored, I owe myself unto him for myself, and so am twice due. But what then shall I give unto God for giving himself? For though I could give myself a thousand times for recompense, what am I in comparison of him? Besides which argument of thankfulness, which might move us to perform all duties of God's service, there is another of necessity, which like a strong chain tieth us unto them: Seeing our Savior Christ hath propounded this as the main end of our Redemption, yea, hath also ratified it by his solemn Oth, that all those who are by him redeemed out of the hands of their spiritual enemies, shall serve him in holiness and righteousness, before him,

all the days of their lives. He therefore died, that he might be Lord of all, not in bare title and profession only (for that will nothing profit us at the day of Judgment, as himself telleth us) but in deed and truth, by performing unto him faithful and diligent service. He hath bought us, that we should no more be our own, (and much less the devils or the worlds) but his, and glorify him both in our souls and bodies, seeing they are his, as the Apostle telleth us. And therefore unless we think that Christ may fail of his end which he hath propounded, and so die in vain, yea, if he may not fail of his truth, and falsify his Oath, let us not imagine that we are his redeemed, or have any part in that great work of salvation wrought by him, unless we labor and endeavor to serve him in the duties of holiness and righteousness, and that not by fits and flashes only, but, from the time of our conversion, all the remainder of our lives.

Sect. 3 - That by the Covenant of Grace we are strongly bound unto all Christian duties of a godly life.

The fifth benefit, is the Covenant of Grace, which God hath made with us in Jesus Christ; for being redeemed by his full satisfaction, death, and obedience, the Lord hath made a new Covenant with us, not like that under the Law, the condition whereof, was perfect obedience, the which being impossible unto us, by reason of our imperfections and corruptions, the promise was made void and unprofitable; seeing this new Covenant is not grounded upon our works and worthiness, but upon the free mercies of God, and the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ. In which, the Lord promiseth for his part, that he will be our gracious God and loving Father, that he will pardon and forgive us all our sins, and give unto us all good things spiritual and temporal in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come. And we for our part promise unto God again, that he shall be our God, and we his people, and that we will receive and embrace all his blessings promised, by a true and lively faith, and especially, Jesus Christ and all his benefits, and wholly rest upon him, for our

justification and salvation, that he may be all in all, and have the whole glory of his own gracious and free gifts. And because a dead and fruitless faith cannot do this, therefore by a necessary consequence we promise, that we will approve our faith to be lively and effectual for these uses, by bringing forth the fruits thereof in unfeigned and hearty repentance and amendment of life. Now whereas we covenant that he shall be our God, and we will be his people, we do not promise that we will make a bare profession of these things in word only, but that in deed and truth we will have him to be our God, in our hearts by desiring and endeavoring to cleave unto him alone, loving, fearing, hoping, and trusting in him and no other, and that in our lives and actions we will labor to glorify him, by living as it becometh his people, and bringing forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness, in the whole course of our conversation. The which Covenant strongly bindeth us to these duties; seeing as it is on God's part most unchangeable, being effectually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, by God's own hand-writing in his Word and Gospel, whereunto he hath annexed his seals and Sacraments; yea, by his solemn Oth, wherein it is impossible that God should lie; for having no greater to swear by, he hath sworn by himself, that he will not fail of any of his promises made in Christ: so is it confirmed on our part by our solemn Vow in Baptism, where (as it were) by a sacramental oath we have bound ourselves to renounce the service of sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, and that we will serve God and no other, in the duties of holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. To which end we make a solemn profession of our faith, and take upon us God's Livery and Cognizance, promising, that we will fight under his Colors and Standard, against all the enemies of our salvation. And therefore seeing we have made this vow and promise unto God, and have, upon many occasions, renewed our covenant, that we will in all things serve and please him; we must, in the whole course of our lives, carefully endeavor to perform what we have promised, unless we would be esteemed covenant breakers, falsifiers of our word and promise, not to men, but to God himself, yea perfidious traitors to him and our own souls. The which will be much more intolerable and

inexcusable, seeing in this Covenant of Grace, God doth not stand upon strict terms with us, exacting legal and perfect performance, but only Evangelical sincerity and truth, and that we desire and endeavor to keep our promise as much as we are able. And seeing also, because our strength is but small, the Lord hath graciously promised the assistance of his holy Spirit, to strengthen us in our good endeavors, and enable us to perform what he requireth, and we have undertaken, in some such manner as may be acceptable in his sight. Now what stronger motive can there be unto the duties of a godly life, consisting in a lively faith and unfeigned repentance, then to consider that we are tied hereunto by this covenant, which is the main ground of all our good, the remission of our sins, grace and glory, which if we make void, by our impenitency and infidelity, we can have no part in God's mercies and gracious promises, nor in Jesus Christ and all his benefits? Especially considering, that if we but resolve and endeavor to please God in these holy duties, both we and our service shall be accepted in Jesus Christ, our imperfections being covered with his perfect obedience, and our corruptions washed away with his blood: which if we neglect to perform, and live still in our infidelity and impenitency, without any serious desire or constant endeavor to know God, or to fear and serve him, whatsoever profession and show we make to the contrary, yet most certain it is, that we are not yet in this Covenant, nor shall, as long as we continue in this state, have any part in the benefits promised; seeing the Lord, who cannot fail of his word, hath in this covenant assured us, that he will not only bestow his blessings, but will also fit and enable all his Elect, with whom only he maketh it, to perform what he require that their hands, that he will enlighten them with the knowledge of himself and his will, and write his Law in their hearts, thereby working in them these resolutions and endeavors to observe and keep it; that he will be their God, and they his people; and that he will knit them so unto him, as that they shall never depart from him; and therefore so long as we find no such things wrought in us, we can have no assurance, that as yet we have any part in this Covenant, or in any of the benefits therein promised.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Of two other reasons moving us to a godly life: the one, taken from our effectual Calling; the other, from our free Justification by faith.

Sect. 1 - That the benefit of our effectual Calling should move us to serve God in the duties of a godly life.

The sixth benefit, is our effectual Calling, whereby the Lord vouchsafeth, by the preaching of the Gospel, to make known unto us his good will and pleasure, concerning the eternal salvation of our souls, in and for Jesus Christ, and by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, working with the outward ministry, to beget in us a true and lively faith, whereby we apply unto ourselves Christ Jesus and all his benefits. For in the ministry of the Word, God not only offereth unto us Christ to be our Savior and Redeemer, but also prepareth and fitteth us to receive him, giving unto us a true sight of our sin and misery, by which our hearts are humbled and broken, and working in them an earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ and his righteousness, that by him we may be recovered out of our wretched estate, and attain unto life and salvation by his merits and obedience. The which fervent desires he graciously satisfieth, by working faith in us, grounded upon his infinite mercies, the all-sufficient merits of Christ, and his free and indefinite promises, whereby we apply him unto us with all his benefits. So that in this benefit of our effectual Calling, three things chiefly concur: first, the saving hearing of the Word, whereby our ears and hearts are opened, and our minds enlightened with the knowledge of the great work of Redemption wrought by Christ. Secondly, the donation of God the Father, whereby he offereth and giveth Christ unto us, to be our Savior, and us unto Christ, to be saved and redeemed by him. Thirdly, incision into Christ, and union with him, he becoming our Head, and we his members, the bond whereof, on his part, is his holy Spirit, and on our part, a true and lively faith. All which afford unto us strong

motives to persuade us unto all duties of a godly life. For first, what an incomparable benefit is this, that the Lord passing by innumerable others, who either never heard the sound of the Gospel, or hearing, have made no benefit by it, wanting the inward assistance of his holy Spirit, he should both grant unto us this light, and also open our eyes that we should behold it? And that he should hereby choose and call us out of the corrupt mass of mankind, which still lieth dead in sin, and make us true members of his Church, giving Christ unto us, and us unto Christ, and uniting us unto him, as lively members of his body, that we might be partakers of him and all his benefits? And how should this affect our hearts, and provoke us to make a right use of such inestimable blessings, which is the end why God hath bestowed them? For why hath he enlightened our eyes more than others, but that by the benefit of this light, we should walk in the ways of holiness and righteousness, and so glorify him in our salvation? Wherefore hath he called and culled us out of the world, but that we should walk worthy of this high calling, and renouncing the world and worldly lusts, devote ourselves wholly to his service? Why hath he given Christ unto us, and us unto Christ, but that he might save us from our sins, not only in respect of their guilt and punishment, but also from their corruption, and that he reigning in us by his grace and holy Spirit, might depose sin and Satan from their regency, and suffer them no longer to rule and reign in our mortal bodies? Why hath he united us unto Christ by his Spirit, but that we should be led and ruled by it, and not by our own lusts, and that we should submit ourselves as becometh members, to his government, seeing it were a thing monstrous in the body, for any inferior part, to rebel against the Head, and to withdraw it itself from its regiment and jurisdiction; and utterly unsuitable, that so holy an Head should have any members delighting in wickedness, and drawing it, as much as they are able, into the fellowship and communion of the same sins? And that this is the main end of our calling, that we should glorify God by serving him in holiness and righteousness, it is clear and evident by the Scriptures. For the Apostle telleth us, that God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, that the grace of God which bringeth salvation,

appearing or shining unto us, in the ministry of the Gospel, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: which lesson if we learn not, we had been better to have sat still in darkness, seeing our knowledge will but aggravate our sin, and increase our condemnation, according to that of the Apostle, To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin; and that of our Savior, The servant that knoweth his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Finally, our Savior telleth us, that if we be grafted in him, we must bring forth fruit; seeing every branch that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and casteth forth as a branch that is dead and withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. And therefore if we would have any assurance that we are effectually called, that Christ is ours, and we his, and that being united unto him, as lively members of his body, we have right unto him, and all his benefits, let us, as the Apostle exhorteth, walk worthy the vocation wherewith we are called; and as the Apostle Peter persuadeth, Let us make our Calling and Election sure, by adding one virtue unto another, and bringing forth the fruits of them all in a godly and Christian life.

Sect. 2 - The second reason taken from our Justification, and the fruits which follow it.

Finally, the benefit of our Justification, with all the fruits that do follow it, are so many strong motives to incite us unto the duties of a godly life: for God, in our Justification, of his free grace, imputing unto us the death and obedience of Jesus Christ, hath forgiven us all our sins, and pronounced us just and righteous, in his righteousness. By which inestimable benefit, he hath bound us to serve and glorify him in all holy duties, who hath done so great things for us. For seeing there is no evil, like the evil of sin, no tyranny and bondage alike miserable, therefore when God of his free grace hath freed us from it, we must with all care flee sin, and take heed, that we do not

again come into this thralldom. And seeing he hath forgiven us so great a debt, let this make us love him much, and express our love, by serving and pleasing him in the duties of holiness and righteousness. The which use the Apostle maketh of this benefit, namely, that being dead unto sin, that is, freed from the power and tyranny of it, and alive unto God, we should not let sin any longer reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof, but that we should yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God; and that being made free from sin, we should become the servants of righteousness. Which if we do not, we can have no assurance that we are redeemed by Christ and justified; seeing the same virtue and power of Christ's death and Resurrection, which taketh away the guilt and punishment of our sins in our Justification, is as effectual to sanctify us in the killing and crucifying of our corruptions, and our spiritual quickening to holiness and newness of life in our sanctification, and as well did there issue out of his pierced side the water of ablution, to cleanse us from the pollution of sin, as the blood of Redemption to free us from the guilt and punishment. The fruits also which follow our Justification, do effectually persuade us to serve God in all the duties of a godly life. For seeing we are reconciled unto God by the death of Christ, our care must be to walk in such a course as may preserve us in his love: for Christ hath, as the Apostle speaketh, reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death, to present us, holy, unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight. We have received the Spirit of Adoption crying in our hearts, Abba Father, that it may be also in us the Spirit of Sanctification, and enable us to please God in all things, as it beseemeth his children. And in whomsoever this Spirit is, them it regenerateth, raising them from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness. So our free access to the Throne of grace, should make us take heed of sin, which will be as a wall of separation between God and us, and to live in such holiness of life, as may still preserve our confidence in making our suits known unto God. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, will inflame them with love towards him, and make us careful to approve it, by living according to his will. The peace of

God following our Justification by faith, and passing all understanding, must make us diligent in shunning those things which might disturb it, and embracing and practicing such virtues and holy duties as will preserve it. Our spiritual joy and rejoicing in God, will make us avoid all known sins which would interrupt our joy, and turn it into sorrow, and to please the Lord in all things, that his face and favor may make us still glad. Our hope of heavenly happiness will also much encourage us in the work of our sanctification: for as many as have this hope, that they shall be like Christ in glory, purge themselves, as he also is pure, as the Apostle teacheth us. In a word, there is no benefit accompanying grace and salvation, which may not serve as an effectual reason to move us to the practice of all holy duties, both out of thankfulness towards God for such inestimable gifts, and for the better assuring ourselves, that we have received them, seeing God having given them all unto us for this end, we have no reason to persuade ourselves, that we have any interest in them, unless they further us to it, and stir us up in some measure to glorify God in all the duties of an holy life. And therefore if we have any love towards God, wrought in us by so many rich mercies, or any true love towards ourselves, which is chiefly showed in seeking the assurance of such inestimable benefits; let us above all things labor and endeavor to serve and please God, by bringing forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness, in the whole course of our lives and conversations.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Other motives arising from those duties which we owe unto God and our neighbors.

Sect. 1 - The first reason, taken from that thankfulness which we owe unto God.

And these are the reasons and arguments, respecting God's works and benefits towards us, which may persuade us to perform all the duties of a godly life with diligence and cheerfulness. Besides which, there are diverse other motives, arising from those duties which we owe unto God, in lieu of so many great and inestimable benefits, that are also effectual to the same purpose. As first, our unfeigned thankfulness towards God, which we are bound to testify and approve, by performing service unto him in the duties of holiness and righteousness. For we are not debtors unto the flesh, that we should live according to the lusts thereof; but so infinitely indebted unto God for his innumerable mercies, that we are never able in the least part to discharge it, and are therefore bound ever to remain thankful debtors, and to testify our thankfulness by magnifying his grace and holy Name, and by striving and endeavoring, as much as we are able, to do his will, and perform all such duties as are acceptable in his sight, acknowledging when we have done the best we can, that we are still unprofitable servants, who come far short of that duty which we owe unto him. His grace shining unto us when we were in darkness and shadow of death, requireth at our hands that we should no more do the works of darkness, but that we should now walk as it becometh children of the light, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, and by more than ordinary diligence and circumspection, redeeming our lost time, which we have misspent in the service of sin and Satan. The great work of Redemption also wrought by Christ, whereby he hath saved and delivered us out of that miserable bondage of sin and Satan, and purchased us unto himself, as his own peculiar people, should make us zealous of good works, and in thankfulness for so great a benefit, most careful to serve our Lord and Redeemer, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives; and seeing he hath reconciled us unto God his Father, by paying for our ransom, not silver or gold, or any corruptible, thing, but that precious price of himself, and his blood shed for our sins, that so he might present us holy, unblameable and

unreprovable in his sight; let not us ungratefully frustrate his end, by defiling ourselves with sin, but let us offer our bodies and souls a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service, as the Apostle exhorteth. He hath incorporated us into his own body, and so made us partakers of himself and all his benefits, the sons of God by adoption and grace, and coheirs with him in glory and happiness, and therefore let us bring forth fruits worthy so holy and happy a communion, and in all things submit ourselves to be ruled and governed by so gracious and good a Head. The Holy Ghost also hath applied unto us by his virtue and efficacy Christ's merits and obedience; and though heaven, and the heavens of heavens are not sufficient to contain him, nor the infiniteness of his Glory and Majesty; yet he is content to dwell with us, yea in us, yea in us, as in his Temples: and therefore let us not profane that which he hath sanctified with his presence, and so vex and grieve this Holy Spirit, but labor to preserve our bodies and souls in purity and honor, that being fit for his habitation, he may dwell in us with pleasure and delight.

Sect. 2 - The second reason taken from that desire which should be in us to glorify God.

Secondly, God's manifold and rich mercies should move us in thankfulness to glorify him, who hath been so good and gracious unto us, which is the main end why the Lord hath bestowed all his blessings and benefits upon us. For therefore he hath created us, that we should glorify him by our service; and for this end he hath redeemed us, that we should worship and serve him in holiness and righteousness, and that being no longer our own, but his, we should (as the Apostle exhorteth us) glorify him in our souls and bodies. Therefore hath he called us to be a chosen generation, a Royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should show forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. And this is the end why the Apostle prayeth so

earnestly for the Thessalonians, that he would count them worthy of their calling, and fulfill in them all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of Faith and power; to wit, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him. Now we thus glorify God, not by adding anything to his glory, but as we are instruments of manifesting it; or give occasion unto others of glorifying him. And thus we glorify him in our regeneration and New birth, when as his infinite wisdom, power and goodness do more wonderfully shine to his glory, in that marvelous change of our nature from death to life, from sinful uncleanness, to purity and holiness; and of our state from the deepest misery, to the highest happiness, then in our first creation. Thus also we glorify him by our fruits of new obedience, according to that of our Savior, Hereby is your heavenly Father glorified, if you bring much fruit. Seeing we make it manifest unto the world, that the God whom we serve, is himself holy, pure, and just, seeing he is so much delighted in the purity, holiness and righteousness of his servants, and cannot endure sin and wickedness in those that draw near unto him. And this argument our Savior useth to persuade us unto a holy conversation; Let your light (saith he) so shine before men, that seeing your good works, they may glorify your Father which is in heaven. And the Apostle Peter useth the same reason: Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Finally, we glorify him by our godly lives, when as by our outward service, we approve and testify, that inwardly we love, fear, reverence, and depend upon him, as being omniscient, who taketh notice of our works, omnipotent and all-sufficient to reward our well-doing, and of infallible truth in all his promises, made unto all those that fear and serve him. Now what stronger motive can there be to persuade us unto all the duties of a godly life, then to consider, that God, infinite in Glory and Majesty, doth vouchsafe unto us this honor to make us, who are so base and contemptible, instruments of his glory, and that not because he needeth our help, but that he may take occasion hereby to glorify us, and to crown our works with glory and happiness?

Sect. 3 - The third reason taken from the will of God, that we should thus serve him.

Finally, it may be an effectual reason to move us, to embrace holiness, and to bring forth the fruits of it in a godly life, because it is the will of God, that we should so do, according to that of the Apostle, This is the will of God, even your sanctification. For the will of God is the perfect rule of all Justice and goodness, according to which we must frame all our actions, which that we may fulfill, we must utterly renounce ourselves and our own pleasure, saying with our Savior, Not my will, but thine be done: and with him esteeming it our meat and drink, to do the will of our heavenly Father. And this is that we daily ask in the Lord's Prayer, that the will of God may be done in earth as it is heaven; that is, that we may obey it with that speed and diligence, cheerfulness and delight, as the holy Angels. And therefore unless we pray in hypocrisy, we must labor and endeavor, that we may in our practice attain unto that, which we crave at God's hands in our daily prayers. Now that it is the will of God, that we should serve him in keeping his Law, and performing all the holy duties of a godly life required in it, it is clear and evident by his Word, wherein he hath revealed his will, and by innumerable precepts and exhortations, by which we are pressed and persuaded to sanctification and new obedience. So the Apostle exhorteth us as God's Ambassador, to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And again; If any man be in Christ, let him be a new creature. And be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Awake to righteousness and sin not; Fly also youthful lusts; but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, &c. Thus the Lord exhorteth by the Prophet Isaiah: Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, &c. And finally, the Wiseman after a long discourse concludeth with this, as the sum of all which either he could teach, or any other, Fear God

and keep his Commandment, for this is the whole duty of man. And therefore seeing the Lord, who hath absolute authority over us, and full right unto us, doth in these and innumerable other places command and exhort us to perform the duties of holiness and righteousness, and thereby to serve him in the whole course of our lives, who is our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, we must carefully endeavor to yield our obedience, unless we would rather show ourselves stubbornly rebellious, and enemies both to his glory and our own salvation. And that we may be encouraged to serve God in all Christian duties with more diligence and cheerfulness, let us remember that if we do our best endeavor, we and our service shall be accepted, though it be full of imperfections and stained with many corruptions. For he doth not deal with us as a severe Judge according to the rigor of the Law, but like a gracious Father, he passeth by our infirmities, and accepteth the will for the work. And though nothing as it is stained and imperfect, can be pleasing unto God, whose exact Justice and pure eye can endure no blemish; yet the duties which we perform unto him, respectively do please him, and move him also to delight in us. For they please him not as they are tainted with the corruption of our will, but as by them we do his will, who hath commanded us to do them. Not as they are done by us who are defiled with sin, for how can anything clean, come out of us that are unclean? But as they are done in Christ, in whom he is well pleased, and fruits of this Vine which we bear, being engrafted in him by a true and lively faith. Not as they are imperfect and stained, but as their imperfections are covered with Christ's perfect righteousness, and their corruption washed away by his blood. Not as they are done by us, but as they are the fruits and effects of his own holy Spirit, working in, and by us. They do not please him in their own worth, but because our persons are accepted and please him, being justified by faith in Jesus Christ, reconciled unto him, and children by adoption and grace, whose poor endeavors are accepted of our gracious Father for perfect obedience; and the rather, because howsoever we fail through weakness and infirmity, yet the main end which we propound in them unto ourselves is, that we may, by performing our duty, glorify our heavenly Father; and because,

though our works be imperfect, yet they are done with perfect hearts, that is, in uprightness and sincerity, which maketh us do the best we can, and to bewail our imperfections, because we can do no better. Finally, they please God, not that he hath any pleasure in unrighteousness or imperfect righteousness, but because we doing them out of love and filial obedience, he also loveth us, and so is well pleased with our works of piety and righteousness, because they tend to our good, to whom in his love he wisheth so well, as being the way which will bring us unto eternal life and happiness.

Sect. 4 - The fourth reason is, that we may adorn the Gospel of God which we profess.

The last motive respecting our duty towards God, which may persuade us to serve him by a godly life, is, that hereby we may adorn the Gospel of God, and of Jesus Christ which we profess; and cause it to be well spoken of by all that see the fruits of it in our unblameable and holy conversation. And this argument the Lord useth to persuade his people to observe his Commandments, because hereby they should not only get honor unto themselves amongst the Nations, but move them likewise to speak well of his Laws and statutes, when as they should see the fruits of them in their obedience. And thus the Apostle persuadeth Christians in diverse callings to perform their duties in them, that they might not cause the Word of God to be blasphemed; seeing it is the common custom of worldly and wicked men, to lay the faults of Professors upon their profession, and to impute their scandalous sins, to their much going to Church and hearing of the Word, as though their profession and hearing were the cause of their wicked and unlawful courses, whereas in truth, they would (if they abused them not) be as strong cables to draw them from all impiety and unrighteous dealing. And contrariwise, he would have them to live in a holy conversation, that they might adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For men are apt to speak of the Religion and truth which we profess,

either in the better or worser part, according to the fruits which we bring forth of it in our lives; thinking our Religion to be pure and good, if we approve ourselves to be so, by our holy and Christian practice and conversation; but contrariwise, if (like those of whom the Apostle speaketh) we have only a form of Godliness, and in our lives deny the power there of, or profess that we know God, but in our works disclaim him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate; we shall open their mouths, not only against us, but also against all Professors of God's true Religion, yea even against the Religion and Doctrine of truth itself which we profess. For if ever David himself fall into foul sins, it will not only tend to his own dishonor, but also give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, as though he were a patron or approver of such crimes.

Sect. 5 - The 1. reason, that we may avoid giving of offense.

And so much of those reasons which respect God. The second sort respect our neighbors, from whom also we may draw diverse arguments to persuade us to a holy conversation. And first, because we shall, being unblameable, avoid giving unto them any just offense, either by laying stumbling blocks in their way, whereby they should be hindered from the professing of the true Religion, when as they are able to take exceptions to the lives of Professors; or if they be religious, be grieved in their righteous souls, when they see our lives full of blots and blemishes; or make the weak fall by our ill example. The which we must carefully avoid, because our Savior pronounceth a fearful woe against those by whom such offenses come; and contrariwise, labor with the Apostle, to exercise ourselves daily in this, that we may have always a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men. Secondly, we may be moved to the practice of all holy duties of a godly life, that we may gain those that are without, to Christ, and to embrace that true Religion which we profess. For if we have our conversation honest among the Gentiles, they seeing our

good works, will glorify God in the day of their visitation. And this argument the Apostle Peter useth to persuade wives unto their duty, that they which obeyed not the Word, might without the Word be won with their Christian conversation. The which so much prevailed with the Apostle Paul, that he utterly denied himself and his own will, and became all things to all men, that he might gain some to Christ, and was content to please all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved. And how much more then should we with all willingness walk in such a course of holiness and righteousness, which in gaining others, will profit ourselves, and not only save them by gaining them to Christ, through our good example, but assure ourselves also of our salvation? Finally, we may be persuaded unto all holy and Christian duties, because they so much tend to the good and profit of our brethren, who are in the same holy communion with us. First, because by the light of our godly lives, we shall move them, together with us, to glorify our heavenly Father, who is the Author and Fountain of all good things which they see in us. Secondly, because we shall edify them by our good example, and move them to imitate those good things they shall see in us, and by our communion and fellowship with them (like kindled coals on the same heap) we shall inflame their zeal, and by a holy emulation make them strive to match us in their Christian duties; as the Apostle showeth in the example of the Corinthians, whose zeal in Christian beneficence, had (as he saith) provoked many. And thus he persuadeth Timothy to be an example unto believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in saith, in purity: And exhorteth us all to consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. To which purpose nothing can be more effectual than good examples, when as we see those duties constantly performed by our brethren with much comfort and delight, which we feared as tedious, troublesome and almost impossible, and in this regard durst not undertake them. Finally, we shall do good to our brethren even in the duties themselves, both of piety, by teaching, admonishing, exhorting, comforting, and counseling them that need our help; and also of mercy, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick,

and such like works of Christian charity, whereby we minister unto their necessities.

CHAPTER XL.

Of such reasons moving us to the duties of a godly life as respect ourselves.

Sect. 1 - The first reason taken from that dignity unto which God hath called us.

In respect of ourselves, there are also many effectual arguments and reasons, which may move and persuade us unto all duties of a godly life. As first, that high and heavenly dignity, unto which, God of his free grace and goodness hath called us, out of a most miserable and wretched condition, which should effectually move us to walk worthy this high and excellent calling, as the Apostle exhorteth us. For we were in darkness and in the shadow of death, but the Lord hath called us into a marvelous light, revealing clearly unto us the knowledge of himself and his will, the great mystery of salvation by Jesus Christ, and the means whereby we may be made partakers of the fruits and benefits of it; in which respect it becometh us to walk as children of light, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. He hath called and separated us from the world, which lieth still dead in sin, and hath made us his own peculiar people, who are made partakers of all the privileges of his Kingdom, to the end that we should no longer fashion ourselves to the world, but that we should walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his Kingdom and glory, and serve him as it becometh his subjects, being zealous of good works; and be no more earthly-minded, but have our conversation in heaven, whereof

we are Citizens, and mind those things which are above. He hath justified us, and forgiven us all our sins, that being freed from sin, we should become servants of righteousness. He hath made us a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; to the end we should behave ourselves as becometh those who are thus dignified, and that we should show forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into this marvelous light, as the Apostle Peter teacheth us. He hath made us living stones, that we might adorn the spiritual building of his House and Church; and a holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ. Yea, he hath made us Temples of the holy Ghost, which it becometh to be purged from all pollution of sin, which is odious unto him, and to be decked and adorned with holiness and righteousness, wherein he is chiefly delighted, whereas naturally we were like cages of unclean birds, and the loathsome habitations of sin and Satan. And therefore we must beautify ourselves with these ornaments which so much please him, and keep ourselves undefiled from the filth of sin, which he hateth and abhorreth, lest leaving us unto Satan, as more fit for his dwelling, we become worse than Baals temple, which was turned into a common draught house, and receptacle of all pollution. Finally, he hath called us who were the children of wrath, and bond-slaves of sin and Satan, unto the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and hath made us his own children by adoption and grace, and co-heirs with Christ in heavenly happiness; and therefore we must carry ourselves in holiness of conversation, as it becometh children of such an holy Father. For let us assure ourselves, that the Lord, who hath called us to these great and heavenly privileges, will attain unto his end, and make those fit to receive them, upon whom he bestoweth them. Neither will he, who hath commanded us not to cast holy things to dogs, nor pearls before swine, commit this error himself, by giving his choice and best gifts unto Dogs and Swine, who neglect the ways of holiness and righteousness, returning to their vomit, and to wallow themselves in the mire of sin.

Sect. 2 - The second reason is, because hereby we are assured that we shall prosper in all our ways.

Secondly, if we set ourselves to serve God in the duties of holiness and righteousness, we shall be hereby assured, that we shall prosper in our ways, and that whatsoever troubles we endure for the time, yet it shall go well with us in the latter end. For he that delighteth in the Law of the Lord, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, which bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth, shall prosper. So the Lord biddeth the Prophet to say to the righteous, that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings; and to denounce a woe to the wicked, for it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. Innumerable places might be alleged to this purpose out of the Scriptures, and especially the Book of the Psalms, which set forth the happiness of those in all estates and conditions, who fear and serve the Lord, seeing he watcheth over them, upholdeth them when they are ready to fall, preserveth them from danger, protecteth them from all enemies, delivereth them out of all their troubles, provideth and giveth them all that is good, feedeth them in the days of famine, and supplieth plentifully whatsoever is wanting either to their souls or bodies. So that if we put on this breast-plate of righteousness, that is, bring forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness, with an upright heart and good conscience, it will be armor of proof, to preserve us against the encounters of all evil; And we shall be secured by it against all dangers, according to that of Solomon; He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely: so that though they fall into many troubles, yet they shall not perish in them, because the Lord delivereth them out of all; though their beginnings may be turmoiled with many crosses, yet their end is peace, as the Psalmist speaketh. And though the wicked may exceed them in worldly and momentary prosperity, yet when they are so rooted out, that their place can no more be found, the righteous, after many storms, shall safely arrive in the Haven of their hopes. According to that of Solomon, Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged; yet surely I know it shall be well with them that

fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he feareth not before God.

Sect. 3 - The third reason, because without this endeavor all outward exercises are vain.

The third reason may be this, that without this study and endeavor to serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life, all outward exercises of Religion are vain and unprofitable, as the hearing and reading of the Word, the receiving of the Sacraments, Prayer, Fasting, profession of Religion, and the rest, seeing they cannot please God, yea, are odious unto him; nor profit us, nor we take profit by them. Thus the Lord profeseth, that he abhorred their new Moons and solemn feasts, their Sacrifices and Oblations, because they neglected the works of righteousness, and lived in their sins. That he who killed an Ox, was as he that slew a man, he that sacrificed a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs head, &c. because their lives were not reformed, but their souls delighted in their abominations. So when the people rejected God's Law, and thought to have pleased him with Oblations, and (as it were) to have stopped his mouth with bribes, the Lord rejecteth their service as vain and unprofitable. To what purpose (saith he) cometh there to me incense from Sheba? And the sweet cane from a far Country? Your offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me. Thus the Lord rejecteth their solemn feasts, because they were not joined with the works of Justice and mercy. So Solomon telleth us, that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. And David saith, that if he did regard wickedness in his heart, the Lord would not hear him. Whereas in other places he telleth us, that the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Sect. 4 - The fourth reason, taken from the consideration of our lost time before our conversion.

The fourth argument may be taken from the consideration of our lost time, which we have mis-spent before our conversion, whilst we lived in ignorance, and in the state of Infidelity, when as we wholly neglected all duties of God's service, and the means which might have enriched us with all saving graces, and furthered the assurance of our salvation; and have spent all our strength in pursuing of worldly vanities, and in the unfruitful works of darkness, to the great dishonor of our good God, the wounding of our consciences, and the burthening and defiling of our souls with the guilt and corruption of sin. The which should be a powerful reason, after that we are effectually called, to make us more zealous of God's service, that we may in the remainder of our lives, as much glorify him by our holy conversation, as we have before dishonored him by our sinful lives, and that we may by our extraordinary endeavor and diligence, attain unto the treasures of his spiritual graces, whereby we may be enabled to travail in the ways of godliness with so much the greater speed, by how much we have been more late in setting forth in our spiritual Journey, and more sluggish and slothful in travailing in this way which leadeth us to our heavenly Country. And as those who have mis-spent their youth in riotous living, neglected all means of thriving, and wasted their states by prodigal courses, when they come to riper age, and see their folly, being beaten by their own experience, do not only desist from their former vain and prodigal courses, but are sorry and ashamed of them, and set themselves with so much the more care and diligence to recover and repair their decayed estates, and with the greater earnestness use all good means of thriving; And as those who being to travail about important business, nearly concerning them in their life and state, if they have over slept themselves in the morning, or trifled out their time, about things of no worth; when they see their error and folly, do make more haste in their way all the day following, that they may not be benighted, and so coming short of their journey, be frustrated of their hopes: so must we do in this case, laboring with so much more

earnestness, after the spiritual riches of God's grace, and the assurance of our heavenly hopes, by how much the longer we have neglected this spiritual thrift, and traveling so much more speedily in the ways of godliness, by how much the longer we have deferred our journey, and have loitered by the way, fearing (as the Apostle speaketh) lest a promise being left us of entering into God's Rest, we should come short of it, for want of care and diligence. And this argument the Apostle useth, that seeing we have formerly lived in darkness, and have spent our time in sleep and sluggishness, we should now, when we are awaked, walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. And seeing we have been scandalous in our sinful courses, hindering others from the profession and practice of godliness by our ill example; therefore as he exhorteth, we must now walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time, by a more earnest endeavor in seeking their conversion, by our holy communication and graceful speeches, and by shining before them in the light of Godliness, that we may move them to glorify our heavenly Father. So, persuading the Romans to sanctification and holiness of life, he putteth them in mind of their former condition, and the little fruit which they received by it, that it might be as a spur in their sides, to hasten their speed in the Christian race. For as ye have (saith he) yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity (having no other fruit of sinning, but sin) even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness, &c. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. And thus the Apostle Peter exhorteth us, that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; because the time past of our life may suffice, to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, and in all wicked and sinful lusts.

CHAPTER XLI.

Other reasons taken from our own profit, and the manifold benefits of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That godliness is the chiefest gain.

But among all other arguments which respect ourselves, none are more effectual to prevail with us, then those which are drawn from our own profit, seeing, as the Psalmist speaketh, every man is ready to inquire, who will show them any good. And therefore if I shall plainly show that godliness is the greatest gain, and nothing in the world so profitable and beneficial to all uses and purposes, as the practice of holy and righteous duties, belonging to a Christian life; I hope it will be effectual to persuade all, who well weigh and consider the inestimable gain and profit which they shall assuredly reap unto themselves, that constantly go on in the ways of godliness, to spend their time and chief strength and endeavors in that, whereby they may receive so great advantage; and to neglect the pleasures of sin, and the eager pursuit of worldly vanities, which profit not, as bringing in comparison, no true good, sound comfort, or solid contentment for the present; and when they be taken from us, or we from them (one of which must needs happen, and we know not how soon) leave nothing behind them, but woe and misery. Do not therefore (I beseech thee Christian Reader) as thou tenderest the everlasting salvation of thy precious soul, O do not suffer thine eyes to be blinded and dazzled with the sudden flashes of worldly vanities, which like lightening pass swiftly away, and leave nothing behind but black darkness, so as thou canst not discern the beauty and brightness of spiritual graces and heavenly excellencies. Do not content thyself with a slight and superficial view of these following reasons, which persuade thee for thine own good, unto the duties of a godly life, nor to have read them over with a curious eye, rather to

see what may be said, then with a purpose to make use of them for thy practice of holiness, if thou be thoroughly convinced by evidence of truth shining in them: but ponder them seriously with thyself, and if thou find them to bear any weight, be persuaded by them to neglect no longer thine own good, nor to defer and put off the serving of God in the duties of a godly life, but seek first his Kingdom and righteousness, when as thou shalt plainly discern, that his glory, and thy good, are through his mercy so matched together, that thou canst not seek the one, but thou shalt assuredly find the other.

Sect. 2 - That by leading of a godly life, we are assured of freedom from all our sins, both in respect of their guilt, punishment, and corruption.

Now the good things which accompany the duties of a godly life, are either the benefits, which as fruits and effects, attend upon it; or those special and rich privileges, wherewith God of his free mercy is pleased to crown his own graces, and to reward, as with rich wages, that poor service which we perform unto him. The benefits which follow a godly life, are either privative, consisting in our freedom from evil; or positive, in the fruition of good, and both of them either temporal or eternal. The privative benefits of this life are many, according to the multitude of evils unto which it is liable, both in respect of sin and punishment, from which, in the greatest and worst part, we are by the benefit of a godly life freed and delivered. For first, if we lead a godly life, it will be a means to assure us of our freedom from the guilt of all our sins, by sole virtue of Christ's death and blood-shed, applied unto us by faith, both in regard that these holy duties of a godly life are the undoubted fruits of a lively faith, approving it to be sincere and unfeigned; and as fruits of our Sanctification, assuring us, that the same virtue of Christ's death and Resurrection, which we find effectual for the mortifying of our sins, and our spiritual quickening unto holiness and newness of life, hath been already alike effectual unto us, for the freeing of us from the

guilt of sin in our Justification, of which the other are but fruits and effects. And secondly, we shall hereby be freed, in the greatest part, from our fleshly corruption, and innumerable actual sins; seeing those that are careful to please God in the duties of a godly life, do bend their whole force in the use of all good means, for the subduing of their carnal lusts, that though they dwell, yet they may not rule and reign in them; resist, as much as in them lieth, all the temptations of their spiritual enemies, alluring and drawing them into sin, and keep a conscionable and diligent watch over themselves, that they may not wittingly and willingly commit anything which God's Law hath forbidden and condemned. Whereof it cometh to pass, that howsoever they are sometime (and it may be not seldom) overtaken through human frailty and infirmity, and so, contrary to their purpose and resolution, are led captive into sin, yet are they, by this care and circumspection, preserved from falling into any known transgression, for the most part, and from heinous and grievous sins, which wound and waste the conscience, and like the hectic fever, consume the graces of God (as it were) the vital spirits, which preserve the spiritual life; into which, worldly and carnal men, who neglect the duties of a Godly life, do ordinarily fall, and make them (as it were) their ordinary trade. Or if through violence of temptation, and neglect of keeping their watch, they have been surprised upon a sudden, and overtaken of such sins, yet having this care to please God in the duties of a godly life, this will but very rarely happen; and when it doth, yet they do not like wicked men, multiply their transgressions, by committing often the same heinous sin; nor impenitently continue in it from day today, and year to year, but being through frailty fallen, they do not lie still, but labor to come out of it by unfeigned repentance. Now how inestimable this benefit is, which accompanieth a godly life, whereby, in the greatest part, we get victory over our corruptions, by which, others are conquered, and as slaves held captive, and preserved from falling into innumerable, and those the most heinous sins; it will easily appear, if we consider the greatness of the evil from which we are hereby delivered, namely, from sin, which, above all things in the world is most odious unto God, and most pernicious unto our souls and bodies, as being the

root and fountain of all those mischiefs and miseries, unto which men are liable, both in this life, and the life to come.

Sect. 3 - That by leading a godly life, we are freed from the punishment of our sins.

The which also may be a second motive to persuade us unto a godly life, in that being thereby in the greatest part freed from our sins in respect of their corruption and sinful acts, and wholly in assurance of faith from the guilt of them, by virtue of Christ's death and obedience applied unto us, we do also hereby escape the punishments which are due unto them. Of both which the saying of Solomon is verified; The fear of the Lord tendeth to life, and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil; to wit, either of sin and punishment. And again, The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to make us depart from the snares of death. For first, the faithful which walk in the ways of holiness and righteousness, are wholly freed by the death and sufferings of Christ, from all punishments properly so called, which are inflicted to satisfy God's Justice, seeing Christ hath made full satisfaction for all their sins; and therefore as it would not stand with the Justice of God, to let them go unpunished, so neither that they should be twice punished, once in our surety, and the second time in ourselves, as I have proved at large in another place. Whereas those who make no conscience of their ways, and neglect the duties of a godly life, being out of Christ, do bear the punishment of their sins themselves, both in this world and the world to come. Secondly, by leading of a godly life, they also escape many temporary judgments, and sharp afflictions, whereby God, like a gracious and wise Father, doth correct his children, when they neglect their duty, and sin against him, which differ nothing from the punishments that are in this life inflicted upon the wicked, in their matter, and oftentimes very little in the quantity and sharpness of the stripes, but only in the causes from which they proceed, which is the love of a gracious Father towards the one, and the anger of a just and severe

Judge towards the other, and also their diverse ends; the chastisements of the Faithful, being intended for their good and amendment, that they may not, being judged, be condemned with the world, but the punishments of the wicked, for the satisfying of God's Justice, by inflicting on them deserved punishments. But howsoever, the sins of the Faithful cannot move the Lord to reject them, or cause his love to depart from them, seeing it is one branch of the covenant made in Christ, that he will love them with an everlasting love, and pardon all their sins; yet they do move him to correct them with the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men; for he chastiseth every son whom he loveth and receiveth, that being pulled out of their sins by strong hand, which they would not flee and forsake out of mere love, they may, by their unfeigned repentance and amendment, escape eternal condemnation; as we see in the example of David, the Corinthians and many others. The which his just, yet gracious severity, there is no possible means to escape, no not though Noah, Daniel and Job should intercede for us, or any other who are most highly in his favor, unless we prevent these sharp corrections, by leading a godly life, and fleeing from sin, which is the cause of them; or stay God's hand, by turning from our sins by unfeigned repentance. Which course if we take, we shall be freed not only from eternal punishments, but also from temporary afflictions, which our sins do bring upon us, unless it be such as the Lord inflicteth for the trial of his graces in us, that being approved, they may be crowned with an answerable measure of joy and heavenly happiness. According to that of Solomon; A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. Or if by our sins we have brought them upon us, yet repenting of them, and returning into the ways of righteousness, we shall, when we cry unto God, obtain help and deliverance, according to that of the Psalmist; The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Seeing then no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, what a strong motive should this be, to persuade us to forsake all our sins, and to serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life, seeing we have hereby this singular benefit, of being freed from temporary afflictions, which are so sharp

and bitter unto us? A third benefit which will redound unto us by leading of a godly life, is, that being unblameable, and giving unto none any just cause of offense, we shall hereby stop the mouths of wicked men, so as they shall not be able to reproach us, nor blemish our good name by their calumnies and slanders, with any shadow or color of truth. And this was a strong reason to move the Apostle to walk in a godly and unblameable life, that by exercising himself herein, he might have always a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men. And this argument he useth, to persuade Titus to show himself in all things a pattern of good works, that he who was of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of him. Thus the Apostle Peter exhorteth us to sanctify the Lord in our hearts, and to have a good conscience in all things, that whereas wicked men speak evil of us, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed, that falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ. And persuadeth the Faithful to abstain from fleshly lusts, and to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they spake evil of them, as of evil doers, they might by their good works which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. And thus he moveth subjects to show all obedience to Magistrates, because it is the will of God, that by well-doing, they should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Or if we cannot thus far prevail with them by our holy conversation, in respect of their maliciousness, but that they will seek to disgrace us by their unjust slanders and reproaches, yet may we in the confidence, and peaceable clearness of a good conscience, stand out against them as a brazen wall, beating back their false calumnies upon their own heads, and like immovable rocks, return their foam and froth upon themselves, when as all that hear them, shall condemn their malice and falls-hood; Yea, they shall by their slanders but give occasion unto all men to speak of our innocence, in which respect (as Job speaketh) though they should write a book against us, we might take it upon our shoulders, and bind it as a crown unto us; and that not only a Crown of Fame in this life, but of Glory also in the life to come; according to that of our Savior; Blessed are ye 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, for great is your reward in Heaven. And that of the Apostle Peter: If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory, and of God resteth upon you. Now what a strong reason this should be, to move us to walk unblameably in the duties of a Godly life, it may hereby appear, if we consider how precious and excellent a good name is, seeing as the Wiseman speaketh; A Good name is rather to be chosen than great Riches, and loving favor rather than Silver and Gold. And is to be preferred before the most precious ointment, seeing it smelleth most sweetly, both to ourselves and others which are near and far off.

Sect. 4 - That a godly life doth much strengthen us against Satan's temptations.

A fourth benefit of a godly life is, that it much strengtheneth us against the assaults of Satan, and so armeth us against all his temptations, that they shall not be able to do us any hurt. For whereas those who live in their sins, and neglect the duties of a godly life, do give unto him all advantage against them, and by leaving off the breastplate of Righteousness, do lie open to his poisonous darts; so as he may easily persuade them, that they are subject to God's wrath and the curse of the Law, seeing they continue in their sins: that they are not engrafted into Christ, seeing they bring forth no fruits of holiness and righteousness; that they are out of God's favor, seeing they have no care to please him, by performing such duties as are acceptable in his sight; and finally, that they are not the children of God, because they are nothing like him, nor reformed according to his image; nor heirs of heavenly happiness, seeing they have not purged themselves, as it becometh those who have this hope. Contrariwise, when we keep this breastplate of Righteousness fast buckled unto us, we may without danger repel all his fiery darts, seeing we are assured that we are in God's favor, whilst we labor in all things to please him; that we are in Christ, seeing without him we

could do nothing; that we are God's children, seeing we resemble him in holiness and righteousness, and labor after perfection, as he is perfect. That we are freed from the curse of the Law, and the guilt and punishment of all our sins, seeing we feel the virtue of Christ's death effectual in us, for the mortifying and subduing of our corruptions. And finally, that maugre all the malice of our spiritual enemies, we shall attain unto heavenly happiness, seeing our merciful God hath graciously promised, that he will reward our temporary service with this inestimable and eternal wages, and crown his own graces in us, and the fruits which we have brought forth of them in the Christian duties of a godly life, with endless joy and immortality.

Sect. 5 - That by a godly life we are prepared against the day of death.

The fourth benefit of a godly life is, that thereby we are continually prepared against the day of death, so that the manifold evils which accompany it cannot hurt us, nor the dreadful terrors thereof daunt and dismay us. For howsoever it is appointed that all must die, and this sentence, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, is irrevocable, yet to those that walk in the ways of godliness, the nature of death is quite changed, and the sting thereof taken away. For of the last and greatest evil, it is made unto them, a preparative to the chiefest good; of an enemy, it is become a friend; of a Sargeant to arrest us and imprison us in hell, it is become a joyful messenger sent of God, to deliver us out of all worldly miseries, and to bring us into the joys of heaven. In which regard the Wise man saith, that howsoever the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, yet the righteous hath hope in his death. And that riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death, that is, from the sting of death, and all the evils that do accompany it. And the Spirit of God pronounceth them Blessed, that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them; Namely, that they may be crowned with joy and immortality. The which if it were well weighed,

might justly, not only free the faithful from the immoderate fear of death, but also make it appear precious in their eyes, as it is in the sight of God, and move them with the Apostle, to desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, seeing that is best of all; and (as one saith) not to die patiently, but to live with patience, and to die with joy. For who rejoiceth not, when after a wearisome pilgrimage, he approacheth near unto his own Country; when after a dangerous passage, wherein he hath been tossed and turmoiled with adverse winds and tempestuous storms, he is ready to arrive safely in the long expected haven; when after his days labor, he cometh to receive liberal wages; and when after a dangerous and doubtful fight, having conquered all his enemies, he is to be presented by the holy Angels before his Sovereign King, that he may receive the Crown of victory? And howsoever death hath many terrors which do accompany it, yet to those that have served God in the duties of a godly life, they need not seem terrible, seeing against every blow they have their ward, against every poison their sovereign antidote. They must leave the world; but they must go to heaven; forgo their riches, but for them enjoy heavenly treasures; be deprived of momentary delights, but that they may attain unto everlasting joys; lose the comfort of all their friends, but in lieu of it, shall have the sweet society of the Saints and Angels, yea, the fruition of God himself, and his Christ and holy Spirit, whom to enjoy, is to be perfectly happy. Yea, but it is a grievous sight to behold our friends mourning for our departure: but this is recompensed with the hope of our happy meeting; and the present joys of our heavenly entertainment, by the rest of our friends that are gone before us. Yea, but death is a straight and painful passage; but it bringeth us to a spacious and glorious Palace. In our bodies we are afflicted with many griefs of sickness; but these are eased with the inward peace of conscience, and comfort of the Spirit. We are in every part of our bodies racked with pain; but they are only the throws, that go before our heavenly birth, whereby we are born to everlasting and immortal glory. Our bodies must be buried and corrupt in the earth; but being sown in corruption, they shall arise incorruptible, and our mortal shall put on immortality, our weakness, strength; and our baseness, glory. Finally, if living in

God's fear, we die in his favor, we may be strongly armed against all the terrors of death, and expect it at all times with a joyful countenance.

Sect. 6 - That by leading of a godly life we are assured to be freed from judgment and condemnation.

Lastly, by leading of a godly life, we may be assured, that we shall be freed from Judgment, and condemnation in the world to come. For if we live here in the fear of God, our sins shall not come into Judgment, because they are already judged in Christ, who hath satisfied God's Justice for them, and paid our debt to the uttermost farthing. If we have been careful here to play the good Stewards, and daily keeping our reckonings straight, receive our acquittance and discharge before we sleep, sealed with the blood of Christ, applied unto us by a lively and renewed faith, we shall have nothing to account for at the Day of Judgment. If we have been faithful and diligent in our Masters service, we shall have nothing to do then, but to receive with joy our reward and wages. If we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, we are in Jesus Christ, and there is no condemnation due unto us; for he was condemned, that we might be acquitted, and suffered the punishment of our sins, that God's Justice being satisfied, and wrath appeased, we might be freed from hell and death. If we be partakers of the first Resurrection, from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness, the second death shall have no power over us. Now what stronger motives can there be unto a godly life, then to be thereby assured of deliverance from these greatest evils? For how terrible a thing is it to fall into the hands of the ever-living God? And to be called to account before his Judgment Seat, who searcheth the heart and reins, and will call us to a reckoning for every idle word? Whose justice is so perfect, and his examination so strict, that though we were as just as Job, yet we should not be able to answer one of a thousand. Though we were as holy as David, yet had we need to pray with him, Enter not into

Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. How fearful and intolerable, endless and easeless, are those hellish torments which they must endure, who are not in this life acquitted from them? And consequently, how inestimable is this benefit, and worthy to be valued more than ten thousand worlds, to be fully assured, that we have through Christ escaped this severe Judgment, hellish condemnation, and everlasting torments with the devil and his angels? Which assurance we can no otherwise attain unto, then by serving God in the duties of a godly life, and bringing forth the fruits of our faith in repentance and new obedience. But I shall not need to press these points any further, although much more might be said of them, as being most effectual motives to persuade us to flee all sin, and to practice all Christian duties in the whole course of our lives, seeing they are much beaten upon, and largely handled by many others, there being scarce any that omit them, who write of and persuade unto Christian resolution.

CHAPTER XLII.

Other reasons, taken from those singular privileges, which are peculiar unto those who serve God in the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - The first privilege is, that the image of God is repaired in us.

And so much concerning the privative benefits which accompany a godly life. The positive benefits which we receive by it, are manifold. For first, hereby the image of God is repaired in us, and we are made like unto him, seeing this image chiefly consisteth in wisdom, holiness and righteousness, whereby knowing God and his will, we are transformed in all holy obedience unto it. So the Apostle saith, that we have put on the New man, which is renewed in knowledge,

after the image of him that created us. And exhorteth us to be renewed in the Spirit of our minds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. So that if we be renewed in wisdom and knowledge, in holiness and righteousness, we shall become like unto God, having his image through Christ renewed in us, after which we were created, but had it defaced in us by the fall of Adam. And this argument the Scriptures do often use to persuade us unto a holy and righteous life. So the Lord himself presseth this reason to his people: For I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy. And again, Ye shall sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God. And our Savior Christ exhorteth us to be therefore perfect, that, as children of our heavenly Father, we may resemble him in perfection. So the Apostle would have us to approve ourselves to be the sons of God, by being blameless, harmless, and without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. And the Apostle John teacheth us, how we may approve ourselves to have fellowship with God, namely, by walking in the light, as he is in the light. And finally, the Apostle Peter persuadeth us to a holy life by the same reason: As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. Neither in truth can anything be more effectual to persuade us to a holy life, then this argument, if it be well weighed. For the nearer we come to this most absolute and perfect pattern, the more we shall be restored to that state of excellency and perfection, in which we were created; the more we resemble him who is the chief Goodness and blessedness, the more we shall exceed in goodness and glory, in holiness and happiness, the which always accompany one another. The more like we are unto God, the more communion we shall have with him; the more he will love us and delight in us, as a Father ordinarily best loveth that child, that most resembleth him in favor and nature, though oftentimes out of mere self-love, because he seemeth to live in him, and not for any excellency that is in those parts and qualities which he loveth in him. And if generally likeness causeth love, when there is no worth in the thing beloved, how much more will God infinitely love us, when as by our likeness we shall be

made most lovely, and that for his own sake, with a pure and perfect love, because his Image is stamped in us, and he after a sort liveth in us, and we in him, his holiness and righteousness being manifested in our godly life and conversation?

Sect. 2 - The second privilege is, that by a godly life we have title and interest in all God's promises, and first, of temporal blessings.

Secondly, by a godly life we have interest unto all God's promises, whereby he hath assured us of all his blessings and benefits, both temporal and eternal, according to that of the Apostle; Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. So the Psalmist saith, that they which seek and fear the Lord, shall not want any good thing. For the Lord God is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. And the Apostle Peter testifieth, that God, according to his divine power, hath given unto us (that is, all the faithful who serve him in holiness and righteousness) all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, &c. Now these blessings and benefits which God hath promised as the gracious rewards of a godly conversation, are either temporal, and of this life, or eternal, and of the life to come. Those of this life; are either corporal, concerning the body and outward estate; or spiritual, respecting chiefly the good of the soul, by enriching it with all sanctifying and saving graces. The benefits of the former kind are promised to all those who serve the Lord, and carefully observe all his Commandments, although not absolutely, but conditionally, so far forth as the corporal blessings will best stand with God's glory, and our spiritual and eternal good. Thus the Lord promiseth in the Law, that he will give unto those who observe and keep it, all the blessings of this life, respecting either their persons or states. As that he will bless them in themselves, and also in their children and posterity;

that he will give them health of body, and a long life and good days, prosperity and plenty of all good things, strength of body, and gifts of the mind, as wisdom, fortitude, and the rest, that he will bless them in the field and in the house, at home in the city, and abroad, by giving them victory over all their enemies, and causing them to be had in honor and high esteem amongst all the nations which dwelt about them. All which his gifts, are unto those that fear God, double blessings, because he not only giveth the things themselves, but also the right use of them, whereby they become truly profitable. Secondly, because he maketh his gifts sufficient, in what proportion soever they are, for their preservation and comfort, and by giving contentment with them, causeth them to satisfy their desires; whereas worldly men are insatiable, like the grave and hell, which never say, Enough. Thirdly, because he doth measure out unto them such a proportion of worldly blessings, as is most fit for their spiritual estate, that they may be more mindful of him, and have their faith, hope, affiance, humility, and other saving graces exercised and increased, and doth not suffer them to abound in such superfluous excess, as would be rather an heavy burden unto them then a benefit; a means to quench his graces in them, and to distract them in all religious duties; a snare to entangle them in worldly cares, and to withdraw their hearts from him, and to fasten them upon the world; an occasion to make them forget him, and like pampered horses, to kick against him that feedeth them; to weaken their affiance, and to make them trust in themselves and their own provisions; to puff them up in pride towards him, and insolency towards their neighbors, as though they excelled them as much in true worth, as they exceed them in worldly wealth. The which is a singular benefit to the faithful; that seeing they cannot, through natural corruption, measure their appetite, the Lord, like a careful and skillful Physician, should stint and diet them, letting them have so much, not as they desire, but as they are well able to digest, seeing a greater quantity would but surcharge their stomachs and cause a surfeit, turning all the superfluity into crudities, and the hurtful humors of vice and sin, as pride, covetousness, love of the world, and such like, which would much hazard and impair their spiritual

health. And thus the Lord promiseth corporal blessings unto them that serve him, not simply and absolutely, but so as they may be truly beneficial; not because he would have them so mercenary as to serve him chiefly for worldly wages, as the devil charged Job (for he respecteth only that filial obedience which ariseth out of a lively faith, and unfeigned love) but seeing we are so sensual, that we have things present in great esteem, and neglect future blessings much more precious and permanent, therefore the Lord graciously condescending unto our weakness and infirmities, doth also promise and give unto us corporal benefits, as it were temporary wages, that receiving, besides our future hopes, this present pay, we might the rather be encouraged to perform unto him diligent service. Thus the Lord persuadeth us not to forget his Law, but to apply our hearts to keep his Commandments, because length of days, long life, and peace they shall add unto us. Thus wisdom moveth all to embrace her, not only for her spiritual excellencies, but also because riches and honor are with her; (and those which seldom meet) durable riches and righteousness, unless these promises are rather to be taken in a spiritual sense. And our Savior Christ persuadeth us to forsake the world and ourselves by this argument, because no man that leaveth house, or brethren, or sisters, &c. for his sake and the Gospels, but they shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, &c. and in the world to come eternal life. The Apostle also useth this reason to persuade unto Christian beneficence, not only because they should reap a plentiful harvest, of their seed so sown, in heaven, but also because God was able to return unto them such sufficient plenty of temporal blessings, that they might still abound unto every good work. So that God's earthly and corporal benefits, which he hath promised to those that serve him, may serve as strong, though not the strongest reasons, to make us diligent in all Christian duties. For howsoever carnal and worldly men are to be condemned, who stand most affected to temporary rewards, enquiring who will show them any good, and what profit there is in serving the Almighty, when any man persuadeth them unto it; yet God's own children, though they are chiefly to regard spiritual grace and heavenly glory, may have, in

performance of their duty, some respect to earthly benefits, and encourage themselves in God's service, in hope to receive such a proportion of them, as will stand with their spiritual good and eternal salvation, to which end God hath promised them.

Sect. 3 - That by a godly life, God's saving graces are much increased in us.

The second sort of the benefits of this life, are God's spiritual graces, all which are much increased by a godly life. And first, hereby our faith is much confirmed and increased, by our frequent performing the duties of holiness and righteousness. For as often Acts do confirm and increase a habit; and both our bodily strength, and all faculties of the mind, are not only preserved, but also much improved by continual exercise; so virtuous actions and works of piety and righteousness, being the exercises of our faith, do tend much to the strengthening of it; whereas contrariwise, by the neglect of these duties, it is much weakened, and by the contrary vices and acts of sin exceedingly shaken, and grievously wounded. In which regard, the Apostle joineth the holding of faith, and a good conscience, because the one will not stay without the other, being such loving twins as cannot be divided, but live and die together. More especially, the duties of a godly life, do confirm our faith in the assurance of our election, not as causes, for the election of God is free of grace, and not of works, but as the effects and fruits of it, and as the end unto which we are elected, for we are not chosen because we were holy, but to the end that we might be holy, as the Apostle showeth. Thus the Apostle Peter exhorting us to make our calling and election sure, prescribeth this as the only means, the joining of one virtue and Christian duty with another, telling us, that if we do these things, we shall never fall. The Psalmist likewise setting down the marks and signs, whereby we may know whether God hath chosen us to dwell in his holy mountain, maketh this the first and chief, to walk uprightly, and work righteousness, and to have clean

hands, and a pure heart. Secondly, hereby our faith is persuaded of God's grace and love in Christ. For by keeping of God's Commandments, we are assured that we love God, according to that of the Apostle John, Who so keepeth his Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; and consequently, that he loveth us, seeing we love him, because he loved us first, our love being but a spark of that divine and infinite flame. Thirdly, of our effectual calling, this being the means which the Apostle prescribeth to make it sure. For hereby we know, that the grace of God, bringing salvation, hath shined unto us, when as we are taught thereby, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that we have in a saving manner heard God's Word, when having received it into honest hearts, we have brought forth fruits with patience. That we are engrafted into Christ the true Vine, when we bring forth the ripe Grapes of holiness and righteousness. That we are trees of righteousness of God's own planting, when like the tree planted by the rivers of waters, we bring forth fruit in due season. That we are good men, when out of the good treasure of our heart we bring forth that which is good. That we are of God, and the Sheep of Christ, when we hear God's Word, and follow him. And that we are truly akin to Christ, when we do the will of his Father which is in heaven. Fourthly, by a godly life, and the works of piety and righteousness, our faith is assured of itself, that it is lively and unfeigned; for as our good works do show it unto others, so also they approve it unto ourselves, as being the fruits of this tree, and the very breath of this body, without which, it is but a dead stock and rotten carcass. For as the Apostle James telleth us, Faith, if it have no works, is dead, being alone; And as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Fifthly, our faith is hereby assured of our justification, and of all the fruits and benefits that do accompany it. As that we are freed from our sins, both in respect of their guilt and punishment, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, when as by the virtue and power of them, we feel ourselves delivered from the corruption of them, so as they do not rule and reign in us, as in former times, and quickened in the inner man unto holiness and newness of life. That we are reconciled unto God, when

as we feel an earnest desire and constant endeavor wrought in us of pleasing him in all things. That we are his children by adoption and grace, when we live as it becometh his children, and resemble our heavenly Father in holiness and righteousness. That we are sanctified by his Spirit, when as we bring forth the fruits of our sanctification in a godly and Christian life. That we have unfeignedly repented of our sins, when as we bring forth fruits worthy amendment, and do daily exercise ourselves in good works. Finally, that we are Citizens of heaven, and heirs of everlasting happiness, when as we have our conversation there, setting our hearts and affections on things above, and not on things beneath; and when having this hope, that we shall be made like unto Christ, we have purged ourselves, as he also is pure.

Sect. 4 - That a godly life strengtheneth and increaseth our hope and confidence in God.

The second spiritual benefit of a godly life is, that it strengtheneth and increaseth our hope and confidence in God, grounded upon this assurance, that he will preserve all those that fear and serve him, from all evil, all perils and dangers, and the malice and might of all their enemies, and that he will provide for them all things necessary, seeing he, who is so bountiful even to his enemies, will not let his own children want anything that is good, who have a desire to serve and please him. So that they which fear the Lord, have great cause to trust in the Lord, as the Psalmist exhorteth, because he is their help and shield. And this made the three Children so confident, that they cared not for the rage of the Tyrant, nor for the fiery Furnace, though sevenfold hotter than ordinary, because they had served God with a good conscience, and thereby were assured, that the God whom they served, was both able and willing to deliver them. This made Daniel to serve God constantly, whom he had formerly served, notwithstanding the cruel edict of the King; because he well knew, that the God whom he served, was able to deliver him from the

Lions, as Darius also acknowledged. From which confidence there arise diverse other singular benefits, as inward joy and comfort in all estates, seeing in this confidence we have cast all our care upon God; patience in all troubles, seeing we trust assuredly in God for help and deliverance, in that time which shall be most seasonable, both for his glory, and our own spiritual good and everlasting salvation. Cheerfulness in the ways of godliness, when they seem fullest of difficulty and danger, because the Lord, in whom we trust, is able to support and defend us. And finally, conscience of our well doing, and our earnest desire to glorify and please God in all Christian and holy duties, doth not only much strengthen our faith in the assurance of God's infinite mercies, and Christ's all-sufficient merits, but also exceedingly confirm our affiance, in the sense and feeling of God's love, so that we are thereby enabled, with great confidence, to have our access unto the Throne of grace, and with much liberty of speech and spirit, to make all our suits known unto him, with assurance that they shall be graciously heard and granted. For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And we are assured, with David, that the God of our righteousness will hear our prayers, and that the Lord, who setteth apart him that is godly, for himself, will hear us (being such) when we call upon him; That the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and that his ears are open to hear their cry. The which the Apostle Peter useth, as an effectual argument, to move us to eschew evil, and do good, to seek peace, and ensue it, because it confirmeth our confidence, that God will hear and grant all our suits; seeing, as the Psalmist speaketh, He will fulfill the desires of them that fear him, he also will hear their cry, and will save them. For howsoever the chief and principal cause of our confidence and boldness be not anything in ourselves, but only Jesus Christ, in whom God is well pleased with us, according to that of the Apostle; In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him: And though this be the main ground of our affiance, when we make our suits known unto God, because Christ our high Priest maketh intercession for us, in confidence whereof we may, as the Apostle exhorteth, come boldly unto the Throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, yet we may

draw near with much more boldness, and with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, when we have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; that is, not only the blood of Redemption, which purgeth us from the guilt of our sins, but also the water of ablution, which cleansing us from the corruption of sin, doth assure us, that we are washed in that Lauer of Christ's blood; and when our consciences are so purged from dead works thereby, as that we are enabled, in some good measure, to serve the living God. For if we regard wickedness in our hearts, we can have no assurance that God will hear us; if we come into God's presence with guilty consciences, accusing us for the neglect of his service, and for living in sin without repentance, shame will cover our faces, and take away all boldness and confidence, when we make our suits unto him. For we know, that if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; but if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God: And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. For this maketh him to entertain our suits, not only graciously in respect of us, but also with great pleasure in himself, according to that of Solomon; The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight. Whereof it is that David, though a man highly in God's favor, would not rashly press into his presence, to make his suits unto him, before he had renewed his righteousness by faith and repentance. For he professeth, that he would first wash his hands in innocence, and then he would compass God's Altar. Now what greater benefit then this, or what more effectual motive unto a godly life, then to have hereby the grace and favor of our Sovereign Lord and King, so as we may at all times, with boldness, come into his presence, and as his chief favorites, have his ear still open unto us, so as we may freely make all our suits known unto him, with assured confidence, that they shall be heard and granted, seeing he taketh delight in our prayers, and is as well pleased in giving, as we in receiving?

Sect. 5 - That a godly life bringeth courage and true fortitude.

The third spiritual benefit which a godly life bringeth, is Christian courage and true fortitude: For being assured of God's favor and gracious assistance, no dangers are able to daunt us; and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, we fear not the encounters of any enemies. According to that of Solomon; The wicked flee, when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a Lion. An example whereof we have in David, who was so courageous in the assurance of God's assistance, that he saith, he would not be afraid of ten thousand of people, that had set themselves against him round about. And professeth, that because God was his refuge and strength, he would not fear though the earth were removed, and though the Mountains were carried into the midst of the sea. Yea, though he should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet he would fear no evil, because God was with him, and his rod and staff comforted him. Neither was this his case alone, but of all those that fear and serve the Lord, who, as he showeth at large, stand in fear of no evil, though dangers beset them on all sides, because they have made God their refuge and fortress, who will therefore deliver them from the fear of the Fowler, and from the noisome pestilence, &c. And give his Angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways; who shall bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone. And therefore if we would be truly courageous, let us serve God in the duties of a godly life, and being safe under his protection, and having him on our side, we shall not need to care who set against us, nor to fear what man can do unto us.

Sect. 6 - That a godly life keepeth our consciences pure and peaceable.

The fourth benefit is, that this godly life doth keep our consciences pure and peaceable. For when we set ourselves with full resolution to please God in all things, we carefully flee all known sins, whereby the

conscience would be defiled. And so having nothing to lay to our charge, or to accuse us of before God, saving human frailties and infirmities, for which we have (as it were) a pardon of course, sealed by the blood of Christ; the conscience becometh peaceable, and speaketh nothing but good and joyful things unto us, testifying the remission of our sins, our reconciliation with God, and that we and our works are accepted of him. So that if with uprightness of heart we will serve the true Melchizedek, in the duties of a godly life, he will be unto us, not only a King of righteousness, but also a King of peace. For dying for our sins, and rising again to justify us, he hath at his departure left this rich legacy to all his true Disciples; Peace I leave with you, may peace I give unto you. The which is not to be esteemed a gift of small value, seeing as the Apostle telleth us, it passeth all understanding; being one of those fruits, wherein the Kingdom of heaven, and our everlasting happiness is begun in us in this life; for as he saith, The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. The which may effectually move us to all Christian and holy duties of a godly life, seeing these first fruits of heavenly joy, are incomparably of more value, then a whole harvest of all earthly happiness, even in their present worth, as bringing with them more sound comfort and contentment, more durable and lasting joy; and also because they are sure evidences and earnest-pennies of our heavenly Inheritance, and full fruition of everlasting blessedness.

Sect. 7 - That a godly life causeth constancy and perseverance unto the end.

The fifth benefit which we shall receive by a godly life is, that if we once with a firm resolution and earnest endeavor set ourselves to serve and please God, we shall continue in this estate, notwithstanding our manifold infirmities and corruptions which make us daily prone to fall into sin. For they who are once received into covenant with God, have not only the gracious promise of the

remission of their sins, but also have the means offered unto them, yea wrought in them by God, of unfeigned repentance, whereby turning unto him from their sins, and renewing their faith, which is the condition of the covenant, in the assurance that they are all pardoned in Christ, they may with peace and comfort proceed again in their course of godliness, as if they had never failed in it, nor gone astray. Neither doth the Lord only, as a gracious Father, provide fit nourishment for his children, to preserve them in their health and strength; but like a skillful and wise Physician, sovereign medicines to recover them when they are sick and weak; and not only affordeth unto them means to keep them whole and sound, but the precious Balm of Gilead, the blood of Christ, applied by faith; and the salve of all sores of sin, unfeigned repentance, to heal them, when in the spiritual conflict they are hurt and wounded. The which he proudeth for them, and (as it were) putteth it into their hands by his earnest exhortations, O Israel, turn unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take unto you words, and turn to the Lord; Say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. And again; As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, ye house of Israel? Yea, he is displeased with them, and sharply reproveth them, if they neglect this medicine when he offereth it unto them, that they may be cured: Why is this people slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done, &c? And if thus they are not moved to return, his bowels are troubled, and yearn with compassion, as the Prophet speaketh; and he is sorry that they sorrow not, as we see in the example of our Savior Christ, who wept over Jerusalem, because they would not make use of the acceptable Day whilst it lasted, that they might repent, and so escape God's imminent Judgments. Yea, he doth not so leave them, but effectually worketh, in the hearts of his faithful and chosen Ones, this repentance which he requireth: for he giveth repentance to the house of Israel: he taketh away their stony hearts, and giveth them hearts of flesh: he poureth the Spirit of grace upon the house of Judah, and

causeth them to bewail their sins. The which may be unto us a singular encouragement in our Christian course, when as we are assured, that notwithstanding our many frailties and infirmities, we shall not be cast off, and though we have many foils and falls, yet we shall not lie still and perish in our sins; seeing the Lord giveth unto all his that fear and serve him, the grace of unfeigned repentance, so as they rise again, and recover their former estate of holiness, and withal his wonted grace and favor, as though they had never sinned, and with it their wonted peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Sect. 8 - Of the benefits which a godly life bringeth at the hour of death.

And these are the benefits which accompany a godly life, whilst we continue in the world: the benefits which it bringeth, when by death we are to depart out of it, are also great and inestimable: For when all worldly blessings fail, and like miserable comforters leave and forsake us; when being in greatest agony and distress, we stand in most need of help, then the consolations which it bringeth, do exceedingly cheer and refresh us. For the good Spirit of God, which hath ruled and guided us throughout the whole course of our lives, doth not leave and forsake us at the hour of death, but then especially doth accompany and assist us, and the more our afflictions and griefs abound, the more it causeth our consolations to abound also. For it sealeth in our hearts and consciences, the assurance of the pardon and remission of all our sins, and saith unto us, as sometimes Christ to the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. It encourageth us against the fear of death, by assuring us, that it hath lost its sting, and therefore though like a serpent it still hiss, yet it is not able to do us any hurt. It causeth the beams of God's love to shine clearly in our hearts, by which they are so warmed and cheered, that the chill and cold terrors of death cannot daunt and dismay us. It calleth to our remembrance our

former care to serve and please God, and how we have walked with him and before him, though not in legal perfection, yet with integrity and uprightness of heart, and how we have done that which is good in God's sight. It witnesseth with our consciences, that we have been faithful Stewards, who have well husbanded God's talents entrusted unto us; and that our accounts are even, so that we need not fear now when we are called to a reckoning. Yea, it putteth into our hands a general acquittance, sealed with the blood of Christ, that we may have it in readiness, when we appear before our Judge. It telleth us, that now all our labors are ended, and that nothing remaineth, but to receive our wages, and to keep with God, his Saints and holy Angels a perpetual Sabbath in all joy and happiness; that now we are safely passed through a sea of danger, and are arriving and entering into the heavenly Haven of everlasting rest; that we have fought a good fight, and finished it with an happy victory, and that now nothing remaineth, but to receive the Crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge hath laid up for us, and is now ready to set upon our heads with triumph and glory. Again, a godly life changeth the nature of death, and of a curse for sin, maketh it to become a great blessing; as being a means to free us from all evils, and to enter us into the fruition of the chiefest good; so that whosoever with the Apostle have led their lives in the true fear of God, may say with him; For to me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain. For the death of the godly puts an end to all their troubles, that all tears may be wiped from their eyes. It causeth them cease to sin, which so long as they live in the flesh, hangeth upon them as a heavy burden, and presseth out of them many a sorrowful sigh and deep groan. It bringeth with it a joyful rest from all their labors, which in this life are so tedious and troublesome, and putteth an end to their wearisome pilgrimage. It freeth them from all worldly miseries, from poverty and penury, sores and sicknesses, slanders and disgraces, and bringeth with it heavenly plenty, and the riches of God's Kingdom, perpetual health and everlasting glory. It putteth an end to the spiritual conflict, and to all the assaults of our many, mighty and malicious enemies, so as they shall never more be able to disturb our peace. It separateth us from the society of wicked worldlings, which whilst we live, is so

irksome and dangerous, and from participating with them either in their sins or punishments. It secureth us from the evils to come, and acquitteth us from approaching dangers. Finally, as it putteth an end to all our evils both of punishment and sin, so it serveth as an entrance into the full fruition of all good, and for a strait gate, whereby we pass into heavenly happiness. All which considerations should be effectual reasons to persuade to the leading of a godly life, which is always attended upon by such a blessed death, that bringeth so many comforts with it, when all other comforts fail; and so many joys after it; of all which they deprive themselves, who neglect God's service, and spend their time and strength in the eager pursuit of worldly vanities.

Sect. 9 - Of the inestimable benefits which a godly life will bring in the world to come.

Finally, as a godly life is in this world profitable to all purposes, so is it most beneficial in respect of the life to come. For thereby we are secured from that everlasting woe and misery, prepared for all those who live and die in their sins, seeing there is no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and the second death shall have no power over them, who have their part in the first resurrection, to holiness and newness of life. Secondly, we are assured hereby of heavenly happiness; For they that have followed Christ in the regeneration, shall accompany him in glory. They that have lived like God's children in holiness and righteousness, as in this life they have the adoption of sons, and the Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts Abba, Father, so shall they in the life to come, receive from their Father their heavenly inheritance; whereas they who have neglected these duties, can neither have this hope here, nor that fruition hereafter, seeing without holiness no man shall see God. For howsoever (as one saith) God made us without ourselves, yet he will not so save us. But having given us a Being, reasonable souls, and his Word, whereby he hath

made us acquainted with his will, and required our conformity and obedience, he will have us join with him in working out our own salvation, by performing those duties which he hath prescribed; and to walk in the way of holiness and righteousness, which leadeth to everlasting happiness. So that though our service of God in holy duties be not the cause of eternal life and glory, but the free mercies of God and merits of Christ, yet being the way which leadeth unto it, all may be assured that they shall attain to heavenly happiness, who go constantly in it; whereas contrariwise they who never go in this way, can never come unto that glory unto which it leadeth. Finally, a godly life is most profitable in respect of the life to come, because God graciously crowneth his own graces in his children, and the fruits of them in their new obedience, with a proportionable measure of glory and happiness, so that they who have in this life shined brightest in the light of grace and godliness, shall in that life shine brightest in glory and blessedness. They who have most glorified him by their holy conversation, he will impart unto them the greatest measure of glory, and both make them capable, and replenish them with greatest joys. So that if we have any care or desire to be secured from endless miseries, or to be assured of eternal happiness, let us be moved hereby to serve and please God in the duties of an holy life; yea, seeing the Lord in some proportion fitteth his wages to our works, and the rich rewards of his free grace, according to those endeavors which he hath wrought in us of seeking his glory; let us, being transported with an holy ambition, devote ourselves wholly to his service, and not only labor to keep an ordinary pace with others, but striving for the richest prize, let us endeavor to out-strip all that run with us in the race of godliness.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Of other singular privileges, wherewith God crowneth a godly life.

Sect. 1 - Their conceits confuted, who imagine that God wholly reserveth the rewards of those that serve him, for the life to come.

Having seen the benefits which accompany a godly life, let us now also consider of the privileges wherewith God crowneth those that lead it. Although in truth there is little difference between these two, seeing those benefits are privileges, as being peculiar prerogatives belonging only to the godly; and these privileges singular benefits, which are promised and given them as rewards of their godliness. But because I would not glut the Readers appetite with satiety, by setting before him all at once, a multitude of dishes cooked after the same fashion, I thought it not amiss to reserve these that follow (as it were) for an after-course or second service, dressed in somewhat a different manner; for as I considered the former benefits as the fruits of a godly life; so I will consider these, as privileges coming directly from God, wherewith he endoweth and investeth the persons of the godly, who desire and endeavor to serve and please him. Although here again I must confess, that those fruits of godliness are the free gifts of God's grace, and these privileges wherewith God peculiarly advanceth the godly, may in some sort be called the fruits of their godliness. But that we may come to our present purpose. It is the conceit of wicked worldlings, that God wholly deferreth to reward those that leave their sins, and devote themselves unto his service, till the Day of Judgment; and the punishments of those who neglect him, and serve their own lusts, to the same time, if at least they believe at all, that there will be such a Day, or such a retribution of rewards and punishments: And that in the mean while all things happen alike to all, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and clean, and to the evil and unclean, &c. Now because (according to the Jews proverb) the days are prolonged, therefore they conclude, that all prophecies shall fail, being ready with those scornors to ask; Where is the promise of his coming? And because sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily, therefore their hearts are fully set in them to do evil; and because good works, and the sincere

service of God is not (as they think) in this life rewarded, they measuring all things by sense and outward appearance, conclude that there is no profit in it. And that therefore they will not buy uncertain hopes at so high a price, as to forgo for them the pleasures of sin, which are so sweet to their carnal taste, and to weary themselves in God's service, which is so distasteful to their corrupt appetite.

Sect. 2 - That God ordinarily giveth greatest plenty of worldly blessings to worldly men.

And surely it cannot be denied, but that God, in the greatest part, reserveth in his own keeping the rewards which he hath promised to his own servants, and maketh them to live more by faith than sense. That ordinarily he giveth outward and temporal things in greatest plenty, to such beasts as he fatteth for the slaughter, and letteth his own sheep feed upon bare Commons; that he filleth the bellies of wicked men with his hid treasures, and causeth their eyes to stand out with fatness; because (according to their own desires) he giveth unto them their portion in this life, and all the good things which they are ever to enjoy; and keepeth his own children to a shorter allowance and more spare diet, training them up in his School, with more severe discipline, that learning his will and ways, they may be made fit for their heavenly Inheritance. It is true, that God's servants also are most commonly subject to crosses and afflictions more than other men; and always debarred of many pleasures of sin, which are sweet and delightful to the carnal appetite, of which bewitching cups the wicked of the world do drink their fill. So that if they should be sequestered from their hopes, and judged only according to outward appearance, they, above all others, would seem most miserable. But what more than brutish blockishness were this, if we should by all this be encouraged in sin, or discouraged in God's service? For can we imagine that the just Judge of heaven and earth should deal unjustly? Or that Wisdom itself should be so unwise in the

dispensation of rewards and punishments? Is God thus bountiful to strangers and enemies, that he causeth them to abound with earthly blessings; and reserveth he nothing better in store for his own children that serve and please him? Doth he correct their slips and falls with such smarting rods of temporary afflictions? And hath he not three-stringed whips, Strappadoes and Racks, for such as traitorously rebel against him, and willfully dishonor him by their outrageous wickedness? Shall we, who have not so much as the least spark of that justice and truth, bounty and goodness, which is in him as an infinite flame, perform our promises which we have made to our servants? And shall not God keep his covenant with his? Shall we prefer those of our own family before strangers, and extend our bounty to those that serve and please us by doing our will, much more then to others who neglect us, yea rather disgrace and wrong us by their ill carriage? And shall the Lord, whom we see so bountiful to his enemies, be ungenerous to his friends? And not reserve his richest rewards for those which have endeavored to do him best service, seeing heaven and earth are at his disposing? Let us not then so much look upon our severe education, as upon the inheritance unto which we are thus trained. Not upon the sorrowful seed-time, but upon our joyful harvest. Not upon our sharp conflict, wounds and scars, but upon our Victory, Triumph and Crown: And so shall we be easily able to make Moses his choice, and rather desire to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which last but for a season.

Sect. 3 - That even in this life God endoweth the Godly with many singular and peculiar privileges, and first, that he loveth them above all other his creatures.

Yet, that secure worldlings may not be proud of their present preferments, nor pleasing themselves with their portion, neglect to do God better service, because they think he hath no better wages then the temporary pay of worldly benefits; and that God's faithful

Servants may not be discouraged in holy and Christian duties, because all their estate standeth in hopes, and little in fruition; let us consider in the next place, that even in this life the faithful have many rich and royal privileges, as the present pay and earnest of their heavenly happiness, for their better encouragement in all Christian duties, of which, wicked worldlings that utterly neglect them, are wholly destitute. Whereof we are to take the better notice, because howsoever they generally belong to all God's children, yet many take little comfort by them, either by reason of their ignorance, which causeth them not to know them; or their carelessness, which will not let them seriously consider of them; or their earthly-mindedness, which maketh them, with Lots wife, more to look back upon the pleasures of Sodom, then upon those privileges which lie before them, as they are going on in the ways of godliness, and to cast their eyes so much upon the false splendor and brightness of worldly vanities, that being dazzled therewith, they are not able to discern spiritual and heavenly excellencies; or finally, because they are so negligent in the duties of God's service, and weaken their faith with so many slips and falls, wants and imperfections, that they are not able to make use of their privileges, nor to apply them unto themselves with any comfort and assurance. And to speak nothing of that reward which virtue and holy duties bring with them, in their own excellency, and in the conscience of well-doing; nor of the foulness of vice, which is punished in itself, and with those checks of conscience, and terrors of mind accompanying sinful actions, which make the heart sorrowful and full of disquietness, when there is nothing but mirth and jollity in outward appearance (in which regard, notwithstanding piety in the service of God, is much to be preferred before the pleasing of our own sinful lusts, though there were no after-reckoning, no heaven or hell, rewards or punishments) there are many special and rich privileges, wherewith God even in this life crowneth that faithful service which is done unto him. The first, and fountain of all the rest, is, that God loveth them above all other his creatures, with a special and singular love, which moveth him to multiply all his favors upon them, in all things which may further their temporary good and everlasting happiness. For he

loveth those that fear and serve him, with an everlasting love, and having set his affection upon them, he loveth them to the end; which he hath notably manifested unto them, in that this love could not be broken off by their enmity against him, but when they were yet sinners and enemies, he sent his Son, his only Son, the Son of his love, to die for their sins, that they by him might attain unto everlasting life and happiness. In him he hath adopted them for his sons and children, and loveth them as a tender father loveth his child, accepting graciously of all their imperfect service, passing by all their infirmities, and pardoning all their sins. Yea, he numbereth them among his chiefest Jewels, and endoweth them with such special testimonies of his love, that it is easy to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that feareth God, and him that serveth him not. But though the love of a father be great towards his child, yet it doth not sufficiently express God's love towards his, and therefore he compareth it to the love of a tender-hearted mother towards her sucking infant. And yet this cometh short (as it needs must: for how can that which is finite reach to that which is infinite?) and therefore he saith, that though a woman may forget her sucking child, yet he will not forget them. And in this regard, to express the greatness of his love, he taketh a resemblance, from the highest degree of love amongst men, which is of an husband towards his wife, yea of a Bridegroom to his Bride, unto which, the love of parents and friends, yea, of any other thing in the world, giveth place, seeing they are coupled in such near union and communion, that they are no more two, but one flesh; so that the one, in loving the other, loveth himself, and cannot make much of his Spouse, but he cherisheth his own flesh, (as it were) in another body. The which infinite love of God towards those that serve him, giveth unto them full assurance, as of his present favors, so especially of heavenly happiness. For if the Lord delight in us, then he will assuredly bring us into this heavenly Canaan, which floweth with a large stream of far greater blessings then milk and honey, even with a flood of pleasures, which are at God's right hand for evermore. If the Lord so dearly love us, then he will delight in our company, and where he is, there we shall be also. For where should the children be, but in their

fathers family? Where should the Bride be, but with her Bridegroom, who take their chief pleasure in the mutual fruition of one another's love? The which high and holy privilege, is a most effectual reason to make us diligent in all the duties of God's service, which assureth us that we are in this love and liking with God, upon which dependeth our eternal happiness. For if men think it such an high prerogative to be the favorites of great Princes, that they think all pains and service too little, which may endear them to their love, because this alone entitleth them to all other benefits of honors, riches, and pleasures which a kingdom can yield unto them; then with what cheerfulness should we perform all holy duties of God's service, which assure us, that we shall be, and are his special Favorites, who hath heaven and earth at his disposing, with all the rich treasures and joyful pleasures contained in them, in the assurance whereof, our Savior telleth us, that we have much more cause to rejoyce, then in the gift of miracles, or that the foul spirits are subdued unto us?

Sect. 4 - That God watcheth over the godly with his special providence; and the benefits of this privilege.

The second privilege which God vouchsafeth unto all those that lead a godly life, is, that loving them with this fatherly love, he watcheth over them with his providence, to confer upon them all manner of good. For howsoever all things in heaven and earth are subject to this all-seeing and all-ruling providence, yet after a more special manner he watcheth over those that fear him, as his own peculiar people; and though his power and presence extend to all the world, like the power of a King unto his whole Dominions, yet he is hereby chiefly beneficial to those that fear and serve him, as being of his own family, yea his adopted children in Jesus Christ. Thus the Psalmist saith, that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. And again, The eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him; And as Elihu speaketh, He withdraweth not his eyes from them. So David in another place; The Lord knoweth the

days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. Yea, but the eyes of the Lord are upon all things, and there is nothing so secret, that is unknown unto him; and what privilege then have those herein that serve him, above those that serve him not? It consists not in the general view, and notice which God taketh of one thing as well as of another; but in that he hath a more watchful and benign eye over those that fear him, to preserve them from all evil, and to bestow upon them all that is good; by reason whereof they are so far from miscarrying by any chance and casualty, any malice or fury of their enemies, that not so much as an hair can fall from their head without the will of their heavenly Father. In which respect, the Lord compareth himself to an Eagle, which safely carrieth her young, and defendeth them from all other ravenous birds, when they are unable to shift for themselves. And to a careful Shepherd, who not only keepeth his Sheep from the Wolf, but also feeds them in green Pastures, driveth them to the still waters, cureth the sick, and carrieth in his arms the lame and weak, as David also showeth by his own experience. And thus our Savior called himself the good Shepherd, who watched over his Sheep with such love and care, that he was ready to lay down his life for them, rather than they should perish by any danger. Now the benefits which we have by this privilege, are many and inestimable. For by this special providence, God, like a faithful Shepherd, leadeth us out and in, and directeth us in all our courses, guideth us in the ways of his Commandments, and keepeth us from wandering in the by-paths of error, and from losing ourselves in the deserts of sin. And thus the Psalmist saith, that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way; whereby he is kept from falling into many sins, unto which he is prone through natural corruption, and wherewith others, that are not thus guided and governed, are often and easily overtaken; and also into many dangers and evils, to which their frail lives are subject, whereinto others not thus directed, do rush and perish in them. Secondly, by this special providence, those that serve the Lord, are preserved from all evils, and protected against all enemies; and that not after a slight and ordinary manner, but with such vigilant care and tenderness, as a man watcheth over the apple of his eye, as

the Lord professeth, and David also found by his own experience. The which, though it be all-sufficient to preserve us from all danger of evil, yet for our greater comfort, and the better confirming of communion and love between his holy Spirits and us, he causeth his Angels to encamp round about those that fear him, and delivereth them; yea, he committeth them unto them, as their special charge, to keep them in all their ways, and to bear them in their hands, that they dash not their foot against a stone. Of which, we have many examples; as of the three children thus preserved in the fiery furnace; and Daniel in the Lions den; and in that mighty Army of holy Spirits, sent for the comfort and encouragement of Elisha servant. Thirdly, by this special providence, God both upholdeth his children that serve him, when they are ready to fall into sin and danger, and raiseth them up being fallen; preserveth them from troubles and afflictions, and delivereth them out of them when they call upon him. For he covereth them with his feathers, and under his wings they shall be safe, his truth shall be their shield and buckler, &c. The eyes of the Lord are upon those that fear him, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. In which regard, the Lord encourageth his servants against all dangers; Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed: for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness, &c. Or if for their chastisement they be afflicted and foiled with any evil, either of sin or punishment, yet they shall not be forsaken, and suffered to lie and perish in it, and as the Psalmist speaketh, Though they fall, they shall not utterly be cast down, for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand. Yea, though many be the troubles of the righteous, yet the Lord delivereth them out of all; and though he beateth them with his rods, yet he keepeth all their bones, so that not one of them is broken. For the Lord upholdeth them in their integrity, and setteth them always before his face, as David speaketh out of his own experience. Finally, as God by this special providence preserveth those that serve him, from all evil; so also he provideth for them all that is good, supplying all their wants, and relieving them in all their necessities. For if we trust in the Lord, and do good, we shall dwell in the Land, and verily we shall be fed; if we

delight ourselves in the Lord, he will give us the desires of our hearts. Which argument David useth, to move all unto God's fear: O fear the Lord (saith he) ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lions lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord, shall not want any good thing. Now what greater privilege, then to be thus at God's finding? to have him our guide to direct us, our King to govern and defend us; our loving Father, and careful Shepherd, to feed us, and supply all our wants; to preserve us from dangers, and deliver us out of all our troubles; to heal our wounds, and cure our diseases: seeing he beholdeth all our wants, and is all-sufficient to supply them? What stronger motive then this, to move us wholly to devote ourselves unto his service, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, seeing our frail lives are liable to so many evils, both of sin and punishment, obnoxious to so many dangers, and stand in need of so many helps and comforts, that if the Lord should but for the least moment withdraw his hand, and cast us from under the protection of his wise and powerful providence, we should utterly perish and come to nothing?

Sect. 5 - That he guideth and governeth the godly with his grace and holy Spirit: First, in their prosperity.

The third privilege which the Lord vouchsafeth unto the godly, is, that he so guideth and governeth them by his grace and holy Spirit, that they make a right use of all estates, both of prosperity and adversity, and turn all things which happen unto them by the Divine providence, to their spiritual good, the enriching of their souls with all saving graces, and the furthering and assuring of their eternal salvation. For whereas wicked men, enjoying worldly prosperity, do stand in slippery places, their table becoming a snare unto them, and their honors, riches and pleasures, the baits of sin, which make them to fall into the devils nets of perdition (for their honors nourish and increase their ambition, their riches serve as sweet drinks, to make them thirst the more, and increase their swelling dropsy of covetous

desires, their pleasures make them more sensual and voluptuous, and all together work in them pride, and forgetfulness of God, carnal self-love, and love of the world, affiance in earthly vanities, and contempt of spiritual and heavenly things) The Lord preserveth those that fear and serve him, from falling into these temptations, by moderating their desires, and mortifying their carnal concupiscence, so as they do not excessively affect these worldly vanities, nor dote upon them when they have them, but use them only as helps and comforts of their pilgrimage, and not set their hearts upon them as their Paradise, and the rewards of their Country, because they know them to be vain and uncertain, both in their getting and keeping; momentary and mutable, being every day ready to leave us, or we them. Their honors do not puff them up in pride, but make them the more humble, seeing they possess them not as their own proprieties, but as God's Talent, whereof one day they must give a reckoning; as we see in the example of David, who though he were advanced from a low estate to a Kingdom, yet professeth, that his heart was not haughty, nor his eyes lofty, but that he behaved himself in all meekness and mildness, as a child weaned of his mother. Their riches do not withdraw their hearts from God, though they abound in them, neither do they trust in them, because they know them to be uncertain, but in the ever living God, who giveth them richly all things to enjoy; as we see in the example of Job, who though he were the wealthiest man in all the East, yet he did not make gold his hope, nor said unto the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; nor rejoiced, because his wealth was great, nor because his hand had gotten much. But only they use them as the great instruments of well doing, and as means to enable them to exercise themselves in the works of mercy, according to Job's example, who being rich and able to do good, did not withhold from the poor their desire, nor caused the eyes of the widow to fail, nor did eat his morsels alone, but did let the fatherless eat thereof, nor would see any perish for want of clothing, nor the poor to lie without a covering. Their pleasures, though as great as they enjoy, who have eminent places in Kings Courts, do not, like intoxicating cups, bewitch them, and make them so drunk, that they forget the joys of heaven, unto which they aspire, but even when they

have drunk the deepest draught of them, they can (with Solomon) say of them, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and that there is no profit under the Sun. And when they are put to their choice, so as they must of necessity leave the one, to embrace the other, they will, with Moses, have such respect to the recompense of their heavenly reward, that they will choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Finally, though with the Patriarchs they abound with God's blessings, yet they will not fixe their hearts upon them, because here they have no continuing City, but they seek one to come, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; and therefore like the Workman, is permanent and everlasting. Now what a privilege is this, to be upheld in such slippery places, in which, all that are left to themselves, do fearfully fall? To have antidotes against these dangerous drinks, wherewith all that want them, are poisoned? To be made more humble, mindful of God, and thankful unto him by these worldly things, which make the most proud, forgetful and ungrateful? Finally, to have such a right use of all these earthly and temporary blessings, that they become unto us pledges of God's love, and earnest pennies of eternal happiness, and so to enjoy both earth and heaven, all the comforts of this life, as helps and furtherance's to assure us of the glory and joys of the life to come? Of which, seeing none but the godly are partakers, what a strong motive should it be to persuade us unto the service of God in an holy life?

Sect. 6 - Secondly, he guideth the godly in the time of their afflictions.

In respect also of the afflictions of this present life, godliness hath no less privileges. For first, they which carefully serve and please God, are wholly delivered from them, as they are punishments of sin to satisfy God's Justice, because Christ hath in their stead satisfied for them, and paid their debt to the uttermost farthing, and by taking away their sins through his death and sufferings, hath also cancelled

the hand-writing which was against them, freed them from the curse of the Law, and all the punishments which were due unto them. Secondly, by leading of a godly life, we are freed from afflictions in the greatest part, as they are the corrections of God's children. For howsoever sometimes the chief end, at which God aimeth in afflicting the godly, is the trial of those graces which he hath given them, that being approved, he may be glorified that gave them, and his gifts crowned in those that have received them; yet for the most part, sin being the occasion, even of these trials, and the cause of other crosses, according to that in the Lamentations; Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man suffereth for his sins? Hereof it followeth, that we may escape these afflictions, if we carefully flee sin, and serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life. For though the Lord judgeth his children in this life, that they may not be condemned in the life to come; yet it is not as they are innocents (for then they should never come into judgment) but as offenders, who by their sins and negligence in his service, have deserved these, and far greater punishments. Though he chastiseth every son whom he receiveth, yet not being faultless, but when by their sins they have displeased him, that he may bring them to repentance and amendment. And therefore he prescribeth this repentance as a means to prevent his corrections, seeing, by reason of natural frailty and corruption, we cannot be wholly innocent: As many as I love, I rebuke and chastise; be zealous therefore and amend. Though he make afflictions to serve for sovereign salves to his Children, yet he would not apply them to the whole skin, and sound flesh, but because they have sores which need to be cured, being so festered, that the balm of his benefits will not heal them. Finally, when by afflictions he weaneth them from the love of the world, it presupposeth that they dote too much upon it, and argueth, that if, as they ought, they did loath and contemn it, in comparison of spiritual graces, and heavenly glory, they should not have it imbittered unto them: For what mother would rub her teat with mustard, or wormwood, to wean her child, if he had wit and will to leave it in due time? So that if we would carefully flee sin, and please our heavenly Father, by doing our duty, we should not need to fear

stripes, but should be continually cherished and encouraged with rewards. If we would not surfeit of sin and wound our consciences, we should not be troubled with the bitter medicine, and sharp and searching salve. But we might, with comfort and assurance, apply God's promises of preservation, both from outward and inward afflictions, even when they are most rife in the world, and seize upon others round about us, according to that of Eliphaz to Job, He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee. And that of the Psalmist, Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Thirdly, if by our sins we have brought afflictions upon us, yet walking before God in our ordinary course, after a holy manner, we shall have hereby this privilege, that those afflictions which are pernicious unto others, both in respect of their souls and bodies, shall not be able to do them any harm. Or though, like the Serpent, they bite them by the heel, and cause some temporary smart, yet being armed with the breast-plate of righteousness, they shall not hurt their vital parts, nor any whit hinder them of everlasting happiness. Yea contrariwise, through the good blessing of God, and assistance of his holy Spirit, sanctifying them to their use, they, with all other things, shall work together for their good, by drawing them nearer unto God, through unfeigned repentance, by mortifying their sins, weaning them from the world, strengthening them in all grace, and by being unto them infallible signs of God's love, and their adoption. In all which, and innumerable other respects, they may conclude (not from the sense and smart of their afflictions, which, as the Apostle speaketh, seem not joyous, but grievous) but from the fruits of righteousness, which spring from them; that it is good for them that they have been afflicted, that they might learn God's Statutes; and that it is good for a man that he bear the yoke from his youth: yea, that they are blessed whom the Lord chasteneth, and teacheth them out of his Law. Finally, by leading of a godly life, we have this privilege in respect of our afflictions, that we shall have seasonable deliverance out of them, when as it shall be most fitting, both for God's glory, and our own spiritual and everlasting good. For as the Wise man saith, The righteousness of the upright shall deliver

him, but transgressors shall be taken in their naughtiness. So the Psalmist saith, that many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all. For, When the righteous cry, the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles: according to his gracious promise, Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. And therefore this also should effectually move us unto the duties of a godly life, feeling hereby all estates are sanctified unto us, and even afflictions themselves are turned to our good, which in their own nature are the punishments of sin. For seeing through our intemperate lusts, we oftentimes surfeit of the pleasures of sin, and thereby cast ourselves into many afflictions (as it were) dangerous diseases, who would not esteem much of such a cordial, as will keep the poison of the disease from the vital parts? Yea, which will cause the sickness itself to become a means of increasing and confirming our spiritual health? But such a cordial is true godliness, which converteth afflictions, which in their own nature are the diseases of our souls, and states, caused by surfeiting upon sin, into notable helps and means for the bettering of our spiritual estates, by making us to flee sin more carefully, whereupon we have surfeited, and by confirming and increasing all God's graces in us.

Sect. 7 - That God inwardly guideth the godly by his grace and holy Spirit.

The fourth privilege which the Lord bestoweth upon the godly, is, that as he outwardly governeth, defendeth and preserveth them by his wise and powerful providence; so he giveth unto them an inward guide to direct and rule them, to excite, uphold and strengthen them in all good courses, to purge them from all their corruptions, and to enable them unto every good work; even his own holy Spirit, and that not to visit them sometimes by fits, but to dwell in them as in his temples, and to keep in their souls and bodies continual residence, that he may be always ready to direct and guide them in all their ways, to strengthen their weakness, and to comfort their feeble hearts, that they may not faint in their Christian course. And this the

Lord promiseth to the faithful; I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes; and, Ye shall keep my Judgments and do them. Neither doth this Spirit come alone, but richly and royally attended with a choice troop and train of all sanctifying and saving graces; as faith, hope, charity, patience, humility, and a good conscience, with the rest, which are of incomparable more value than the whole world, as bringing with them, for the present, the greatest comfort and contentment, and being for the time to come, earnest-pennies of everlasting joy and happiness. Nor doth this holy Spirit give us these graces in the first and least degrees only, but doth daily nourish and increase them in us, from one degree to another, till from infancy to child-hood, and from thence to youth, we do at last grow up unto a perfect age in Christ, bringing forth most fruit in our latter end. For being assisted and comforted by the Spirit, we overcome all difficulties, and those duties which at the first seemed hard and almost impossible, become familiar and pleasant; that yoke of Christ which at first galled us, doth not hurt us at all, when we are anointed with this oil, and his burden which seemed intolerable, having this Companion to help and assist us, becometh light and easy, yea, sweet and delightful. And so on the other side, when we submit ourselves to be guided and governed by the Spirit in the duties of a godly life, and do not grieve it by quenching the good motions which it suggesteth unto us, we cause the good Spirit of God to take pleasure in his habitation, and to delight in us to do us good, multiplying and increasing his graces in us, of which we have brought forth such good fruits, and redoubling our talents, when as we have rightly used them to our Masters advantage; according to that of our Savior; To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; and from him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Other singular privileges, wherewith God in this life crowneth the godly, which are the fruits and effects of his holy Spirit.

Sect. 1 - That God sealeth unto the godly, the assurance of their adoption.

The fifth privilege peculiar to the godly, is the fruits and effects of the Spirit, the first and chief whereof is this, that the Spirit witnesseth and sealeth in their hearts and consciences the assurance of their adoption, whereby of the children of wrath and firebrands of hell, they become the children of God, and coheirs with Jesus Christ of their heavenly Inheritance. For as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. For ye have not (saith the Apostle) received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. And again, Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father. So the Evangelist John saith, that as many as received Christ, to them he gave this privilege to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. So that whosoever lay hold upon Christ by a true and lively faith, and bring forth the fruits thereof in holiness and newness of life, thereby approving themselves to be such as are led by the Spirit, they have this high and honorable privilege, that they are the sons of God, and coheirs with Christ in his Kingdom of glory. The which should be a most effectual regiment to persuade us to flee all manner of sin, that we may not grieve the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of Redemption, and to lead a godly and Christian life, that we may walk worthy this high calling, and approve ourselves to be God's children, by resembling our heavenly Father in holiness and righteousness. For if we would think no pains too much in the service of an earthly King, if thereby we could be assured, that he would

adopt us for his sons, yea, make us heirs apparent to his Crown and Kingdom, though corruptible and momentary; how diligent should we be in serving and pleasing God, who hath of his free grace assured all those that fear and serve him, that they shall be his adopted sons, and heirs of his incorruptible and glorious Kingdom, which shall have no end; seeing this Crown bringeth no care with it, but all security, and such surpassing joy and glory, as neither the eye hath seen, the ear heard, nor the heart of man can possibly conceive?

Sect. 2 - The second special privilege, is spiritual illumination.

The second special privilege and fruit of the Spirit, peculiar to the godly, is, that he openeth their eyes blinded with natural ignorance, so as they see the wonderful things of God's Law, and enlighteneth their dark minds with supernatural, spiritual and heavenly Wisdom and prudence, so as they not only conceive of the high and hidden mysteries of God's Kingdom, which the wisest of the world that are not thus illuminated, are not capable of; but also in a saving manner are able to bring all they know to use, for their spiritual direction in all the ways of godliness, which will bring them to heavenly happiness. For it is the oil of the Spirit, wherewith our eyes being anointed, do see and know all things. It is this comfortable School-master that teacheth us all things, as our Savior speaketh; without whose instruction we remain ignorant of God's will. For as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. And whatsoever God maketh known unto us of his secret counsels, he revealeth it unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. He is that spiritual eye-salve, wherewith Christ anointeth our eyes that we may see. It is he which by his secret whisperings (as it were) a voice behind us, teacheth us the way of salvation, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. But yet this voice is not heard of all, but the faithful only, whose ears God hath opened. This heavenly Light shineth not to all in all places, but only

in Goshen to the true Israel of God, all others still remaining in a more then Egyptian darkness; and to whomsoever it appeareth, it teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously, and godly in this present world. This spiritual and divine School-master teacheth not all men; but those that truly fear God; according to that of the Psalmist, The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. And again, What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. And to such alone, who meditate in his Testimonies, and keep his Precepts, he giveth more wisdom and understanding then to the ancient, or then to their teachers. The which should be a powerful reason to move us unto the practice of all holy duties in a godly life, seeing hereby we are assured of this spiritual illumination and heavenly Wisdom, which is so high a privilege, that it far exceedeth all worldly treasures, in so much as he who best knew it, could not tell how to value it, or to equal it with any price. Happy (saith he) is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandize thereof is better than the merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof then fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her, &c. So Job, But where shall Wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the Land of the living. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious Onix, and the Sapphire, &c. And therefore if men think no pains too much to obtain gold and precious treasures, how much more should we labor without weariness for the getting of this Spiritual Wisdom, which in true worth doth so far exceed them? What care should we take to be in the number of the godly, to whom this divine Light only shineth? Yea, to be richly stored with this treasure of godliness, wherein this heavenly Wisdom chiefly consisteth? For the fear of the Lord is Wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding. Or as the Psalmist speaketh; The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.

Sect. 3 - The third special privilege, is Sanctification by the Spirit.

The third special privilege bestowed upon the godly, is, that the Spirit of God sanctifieth them, changing and renewing their natures, from sinful corruption, to sanctity and holiness. For it so enlighteneth their minds, that they behold sin as it is in its own nature, most ugly and deformed, and causeth them to condemn it as the greatest evil. It worketh their wills, hearts and affections to a loathing and detestation of it, so that they consent not unto it, so far forth as they are renewed, even when the Law of their members, warring against the Law of their minds, doth lead them captive. Neither can they sin, as in former times, with full consent of will, because it is in part sanctified, nilling that which the flesh willeth, in which regard the Apostle John saith, that he who is born of God, sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. And as being thus sanctified, they are inwardly kept from sin, in respect of the love of it, and free and full consent unto it; so also from innumerable outward acts of sin, into which others fall; partly, because they look more carefully and conscionably to their ways, but especially, because the good Spirit of God dwelling in them, quencheth the fiery darts of Satan's temptations, by his holy motions and monitions, which oppose and fight against them, and so stayeth them when they are ready to slip, and upholdeth them when they are ready to fall. Yea, by renewing and changing of our natures, it worketh in us, so far forth as we are sanctified, an utter averseness to sin, and maketh us spiritually to hate it as much as ever we naturally loved it; so that it is no pain to us, nor any violence offered unto our will, when we resist and flee from sin, as it is to the wicked and unregenerate, who naturally drinking in iniquity as the Fish water, are (as it were) tormented with thirst, when they are forced to forbear it. But though there were no shame nor punishment to restrain them, no law to condemn them, nor heaven or hell to reward or punish them, yet they would be a law to themselves, and with all cheerfulness flee and forsake sin, out of

that hatred and detestation which they have conceived of it. And as they are thus preserved from sin; so being quickened by the Spirit of God dwelling in them, they receive power and spiritual strength, whereby they are enabled to do God's will, and to serve and please him in the duties of a godly life, and that not with that irksome tediousness which the unregenerate feel in themselves, because God's will and theirs are opposite and contrary one to the other, but with cheerfulness and delight, as the Angels in heaven, because their wills, being changed and renewed, are conformed to the will of God, so that in doing his will, they do their own, in which regard it is their meat and drink, when as with our Savior they perform the will of their heavenly Father. Now what a singular privilege is this, to be freed from the tyranny of sin and Satan, so as they have no dominion over them, to rule and carry them which way they list, to their utter ruin and destruction? To leave sin, not as wicked men, for fear of punishment, though they love it better than the first born of their bodies, yea than their own lives, but out of mere hatred and detestation of it, because there is an averseness of their renewed nature unto it? To yield obedience unto God's Law, not out of terror and constraint, but out of love and liking? To long and thirst in our souls after God's presence, and the fruition of his holy ordinances, and even to break with longing after God's Judgments at all times, that we may yield unto them that perfect obedience which he requireth, and we desire? To esteem sin the greatest bondage, and to complain most bitterly, when we are led captive by it? Finally, to be freed from all burden and wearisomeness in our obedience, and to esteem Christ's yoke light and easy, yea sweet and pleasant; seeing God's glory and our salvation, our obedience and eternal blessedness, are inseparably linked together? All which inestimable privileges accompanying a godly life, may, as effectual reasons, move us to embrace it.

Sect. 4 - The fourth special privilege, is internal and spiritual joy.

The fourth special privilege, which the Spirit of God bringeth to the godly, is internal joy, which the Apostle numbereth among the fruits of the Spirit, and is a grace that ariseth out of our justification and reconciliation with God, peace of conscience, and assurance of our salvation, which cannot be crossed by any occurrent. The which joy far exceedeth all the joys of the world. For they satisfy not, but leave the soul empty, so that the joy of one pleasure, doth but stir up the appetite to hunger after another, which if it should not be enjoyed, leaves nothing but sorrow behind; whereas this (as our Savior speaketh) is a full joy, in the fruition of God, partly, in sense and feeling, according to that of the Psalmist, O taste and see that the Lord is good! And partly, in the assurance of faith, which maketh us rejoice in expectation of full fruition. Worldly joy is short, and momentary, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, which causeth a sudden blaze, and as suddenly goeth out: but the joy of the Spirit is lasting and permanent, and no man (as our Savior saith) can take it from us. That consists in eating and drinking, and the enjoining of such company as are like ourselves; but this, in the souls fruition of her beloved Spouse, whose love is better than wine; seeing his favors are so full of ravishing delight, that the heart is not able to contain them, as we see in the example of the Spouse in the Canticles, who being brought by her Bridegroom into his banqueting house, was so filled, that she even surfeited of his delicacies, which forced her to cry out, Stay me with flagons: Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. Of which sweet and gracious entertainment of the faithful soul, the Psalmist also speaketh, They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy House, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. Finally, the joy of worldlings accompanieth their prosperity; but when the evil day cometh, it leaveth and forsaketh them, and is turned into sorrow and grief of heart: but the godly rejoice even in their tribulation and affliction, in their assurance of God's love, and because they know that they shall work together for their good, these light and momentary afflictions causing unto them a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory. They account it all joy (as the Apostle James speaketh) when they fall into diverse temptations, knowing that the trial of their faith worketh patience.

And when they are persecuted for righteousness sake, they being blessed in their sufferings, rejoice, and are exceeding glad, because their reward is great in heaven. And thus the Apostle saith, that the Thessalonians received the Word in much affliction, and with joy in the holy Ghost. And that the Hebrews took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing themselves, that they had in heaven a better, and enduring substance. The which joy is a supernatural gift, and fruit of the sanctifying Spirit, which all cannot attain unto, but the faithful only; and therefore the Apostle prayeth for the Romans, that the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghost. It is a privilege wherein wicked men have no portion, but is peculiar to the godly, in whom the Kingdom of God is begun in this life, which none enjoy, but they which seek also his righteousness; seeing it consisteth not only in peace and joy in the holy Ghost, but also in righteousness, as the Apostle speaketh: and therefore, seeing those things cannot be separated, which God hath conjoined, we must labor after righteousness, if we would be partakers of this joy; unto which, if we do attain, we shall assuredly be filled with it. For if the Apostle rejoiced in it, as in his Crown and joy, when he had been a means of converting others, and bringing them into the way of truth and righteousness; and if the Apostle John rejoiced so greatly, that he professeth he had no greater joy in any outward thing, then when he saw his children walking in this way; then what inestimable joy must this needs cause unto us, when ourselves, by walking in the way of holiness and righteousness, do attain unto the assurance of our own happiness?

Sect. 5 - The last special privilege is Christian liberty.

The last special privilege peculiar unto the godly, which the Spirit bringeth, is Christian liberty, whereby being freed out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, we serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness without fear, and so attain unto the glorious liberty of

the sons of God, seeing his service is perfect freedom; and have power and dominion over all the creatures, so as we may use them to all purposes, both for necessity and comfort, having full right and interest in them by our adoption. The which privilege also is a fruit of the Spirit, according to that of the Apostle, Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And is derived unto us, when as the holy Ghost, by a lively faith applieth unto us the virtue and efficacy of Christ Jesus his death and satisfaction, whereby this liberty was first purchased for us; in which respect, our Savior also challengeth unto himself this power and prerogative of setting us at liberty, as being our alone Redeemer, who hath delivered us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies; If (saith he) the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. We were subject to the wrath of God, but our Savior hath freed us from it, and by satisfying his Justice, hath reconciled us unto him. We were under the curse of the Law, but he hath freed us, by being made a curse for us. We were the wretched slaves of Satan, and in the state of death and condemnation: but he by his death hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, that he might deliver them, who through the fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage. We were servants to the world, and the vassals of the earthly Mammon; but Christ hath overcome the world, both for himself and all his Elect, and so set us at liberty out of this thralldom. We were the servants of sin, which made us slaves to all other enemies, and obeyed it in the wicked lusts thereof: for as our Savior saith, He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin; For his servants we are whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. And though with the Jews we were ready to boast of our freedom, and (as it were) out of our store, to promise liberty unto others, like those of whom the Apostle Peter speaketh, yet were we (like them) ourselves, servants of corruption. For of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage. Finally, we were slaves to our own sinful lusts, vile affections, and turbulent passions, as wrath, pride, ambition, covetousness, and voluptuousness, which were the most cruel Lord's that ever tyrannized over any, seeing they kept such a narrow watch over us, that they gave us not so much as a breathing time of liberty,

but forced us to drudge night and day, not only in the sight of others, but when we were retired into the most secret corners, because they held in miserable bondage our souls, as well as our bodies, our judgments, wills, and affections, so as we liked and pleased ourselves in our thralldom, and had no desire to come out of it. But our Savior hath freed us from these enemies also, by mortifying our sins, and crucifying our corruptions, by virtue of his death, applied unto us by his holy Spirit. And lastly, we had no right to any of the creatures, having by sin lost our dominion over them; but our Savior and his holy Spirit, by giving us the liberties and privileges of sons, hath restored us to our right, so that they are all become good and pure unto us, being sanctified by the Word and prayer. But this royal privilege of Christian liberty belongeth not to all, but only to the faithful, who desire to serve and please God in the duties of holiness and righteousness. Neither can we ever attain unto any assurance that we have right and title unto it, till we feel it effectual in us for our sanctification. For all those who are by Christ freed from God's wrath, and reconciled unto him, have hereby a desire wrought in them to serve and please him, and will not willingly for any worldly hire provoke his displeasure. They that are freed from the curse of the Law by the Cross of Christ, will crucify their own lusts, and not run such a course, as will again make them accursed. They that are delivered out of the hands of their spiritual enemies, do worship and serve their Lord and Savior in holiness and righteousness, and being redeemed, that they may be his peculiar people, they become zealous of good works. They that are freed from sin, in respect of the guilt and punishment, are also in some measure freed from the corruption of it, so as it doeth not reign and rule in their mortal bodies, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, but being freed from sin, they become the servants of righteousness. The which should be a forcible argument to move us unto the duties of a godly life, seeing hereby we may be assured of this royal privilege of Christian liberty, according to that of our Savior; If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Whereas if we neglect them, and still live in sin, yielding obedience unto our own carnal lusts; we lose the benefit and

comfort of this privilege, and have just cause to fear, that as yet we remain in that miserable bondage of the devil, the world, and our own lusts.

CHAPTER XLV.

Of four other main privileges, wherewith God crowneth the godly, both in this life and the life to come.

Sect. 1 - The sixth main privilege, is, that God bestoweth upon the godly the spirit of prayer and supplication.

The sixth main privilege which God vouchsafeth to the godly, is, that he bestoweth upon them the Spirit of prayer and supplication, and both heareth and granteth all the suites which they make unto him. For he poureth upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication, as he hath promised; and whereas naturally we know not how to pray, nor what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God. Yea, he not only by his Spirit teacheth us how to pray, and what to ask, but hath also bound himself by his gracious and free promises, that he will hear all our suites made in the name of his Son, and indicted by his Spirit, according to that of our Savior; Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. And again, Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Now what an high and holy privilege is this, to have always free access unto God in all our wants and necessities, who is alone able to help us, and will

also do it because of his promise? To have a dear and able friend, into whose bosom we may with boldness and comfort pour out all our complaints, who is ready to pity and ease us? To have a key always in our keeping, which through Christ will open unto us the treasury of God's graces, where we may relieve our wants, and store ourselves with all things needful for his glory, and our own spiritual good and everlasting salvation. Finally, to converse with the supreme and glorious King of heaven and earth in a familiar manner, and to talk with him, as a man talketh with his friend? For as the Lord speaketh to the Israelites, What nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? But this privilege is peculiar unto them who serve the Lord, by observing his will, according to that of our Savior; If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you; and not unto wicked men, who turn away their ear from hearing the Law, and neglect the duties of God's service, whose sacrifices and prayers are abominable (as before I have showed) and shall not be heard or granted of God, as he telleth the rebellious Jews; When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. And therefore let this also effectually move us to serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life, that we may be partakers of this rich and royal privilege, having not only the Spirit of God as our Counselor, to draw all our suites and Petitions in such manner and form as is agreeable to God's will, and Christ our Advocate and Master of Requests, to prefer them unto God in our behalf, not pleading our deserts, but his own merits and his Fathers promises; but also this high Court of Requests night and day open unto us, that in all our necessities we may make our suites and supplications known unto God, with confidence and assurance that they shall be heard and granted.

Sect. 2 - The seventh main privilege, is, that God granteth unto them the means to build them up in grace unto salvation.

The seventh privilege peculiar to the godly, is, that God granteth unto them the means to build them up in grace, and to bring them to salvation, with hearts to use them, and the inward assistance of his holy Spirit, whereby they become profitable and effectual to their ends. The which is to be understood, first, of the public means, as hearing the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer, which the most in the world have not at all, but those only that live in the Church, of which the fewest, and least number enjoy them to their use and benefit, either because they neglect and contemn them, or use them after a cold, careless and formal manner, without any desire and endeavor to profit by them, wanting in themselves faith, and a good conscience, and also the inward co-operation of God's holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify them to their use. By reason whereof it cometh to pass, that after they have long been partakers of God's holy ordinances, they are never the better, but remain as ignorant and full of infidelity, as impenitent and unprofitable as they were at the first; yea in truth much the worse, seeing for want of faith and preparation, the preaching of the Word, which is in its own nature, God's strong power to their salvation, and the savor of life unto life, becometh unto them the savor of death, to their deeper condemnation; and the Sacrament, which is the seal of salvation, through their unworthy receiving of it, sealeth unto them judgment and condemnation; yea even their prayers themselves are turned into sin, whilst they know not how to pray as they ought, with faith and fervency, in spirit and truth, but draw near unto God with their lips only, when as their hearts are far from him: whereas unto the godly, they are great and inestimable privileges, because the Lord by his Spirit stirreth up their appetite to hunger and thirst after them, and giveth grace to use them aright, after that manner as hath before been shewed, mixing faith with them, whereby they become profitable, and that not only a justifying faith, without which it is impossible to please God, but a special faith or branch of the other, whereby they use God's holy ordinances without doubting, assuring themselves that he will, according to his gracious promise, accompany their diligent, careful and conscionable use of the outward means, with the inward operation of his holy Spirit, and

make them effectual for the enriching of their souls with all spiritual and sanctifying graces, and the furthering of their everlasting salvation. And secondly, the godly have this privilege more peculiar unto themselves, in respect of the private means before spoken of; as watchfulness, meditation, examination of themselves, private prayer, and the rest, seeing scarce any but they use them; or if they do, slightly, coldly, and to no purpose: whereas God giveth them grace to use them aright, and with an earnest desire to profit by them; the which he also satisfieth, whilst by the inward assistance of his holy Spirit, he maketh them powerful and effectual for their spiritual nourishment, and the enriching of their souls with all sanctifying and saving graces. And this also may be an effectual reason to move us to godliness, that we may enjoy these great privileges, and not only have and use them with others, but also have them blessed and sanctified by God's Spirit, that they may become profitable and effectual to our salvation, without which, our nourishment itself will turn to poison, and God's holy ordinances, which are the means of life and happiness, being abused by us for want of grace and godliness, will but harden us in our sins, and so increase our condemnation and punishment.

Sect. 3 - The eighth main privilege is, that they shall persevere in the state of grace unto salvation.

The eighth privilege peculiar to the godly, is, that they shall persevere in the state of grace and salvation unto the end; and howsoever, through the violence of the temptations of their spiritual enemies, and their own frailty and corruption, they have many slips and falls, yet they shall never fall away; and though they err sometimes out of the way of righteousness, into the by-ways of sin, yet they return into it again by unfeigned repentance, and redeem this lost time with more than ordinary diligence in God's service. So that though there may be, and are some ill premises in their lives which truly fear God, yet they always make a good conclusion; though they have many rubs

in the way, yet at length they come safely to their journeys end. And though they have many faults and failings in their lives, yet they are always blessed in their death; according to that of the Psalmist; Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace: and that of the Preacher, Though a sinner do ill a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know, it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. The which their perseverance in the state of grace unto the end, is not grounded upon themselves, or the strength of the graces which they have received (for then it were but a poor privilege, which would every day be subject to losing) but upon the power and promises of God, his Nature and Attributes, the Intercession of Christ, and the virtue of his holy Spirit assisting and strengthening them. For, It is God which establisheth us in Christ. It is his strength, whereby we are enabled to stand fast against all the temptations of our spiritual enemies: it is his power, whereby we are kept through faith unto salvation. And though we are able to do nothing of ourselves, yet we can (with the Apostle) do all things, though the power of Christ, which strengtheneth us: neither is our spiritual life in our own custody, but it is hid with Christ in God, as the Apostle speaketh. It standeth not upon the strength of our own free will, but of God's will; and as our Savior telleth us, This is the Fathers will, that of all which he had given him, he should not lose one, but should raise it up at the last Day. It standeth upon, not our resolution or love towards God, but upon his unchangeable counsel and decree, which shall stand, who hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; and upon his love which is immutable and everlasting: for whom he loveth, to the end he loveth them. Not upon our strength, but upon the power of God, who is more mighty to save, then all our enemies to hurt and destroy us; so that though we be weak, and unable to hold out, yet we shall be established; for God is able to make us stand, and to keep that which we have committed unto him, against that great Day of Christ's appearing; for, he is greater than all, and none is able to pull us out of his hand. Finally, it resteth not upon the truth of our promises made to God, but of his promises made to us, who is a faithful and true witness, and all his

promises in Christ, Yea and Amen. For the Lord hath made his covenant with us, and promised, that he will put his Law in our inward parts, and write it in our hearts, and will be our God, and we shall be his people. That he will forgive our iniquity, and remember our sins no more: that he will put his Spirit upon us, and that his words which he hath put into our mouths, shall not depart out of them, from henceforth even forever: and that he will make an everlasting Covenant with us, and not turn away from us to do us good, but will put his fear into our hearts, so as we shall not depart from him. That though we fall, we shall not be cast off, because the Lord putteth under his hand. That our righteousness shall remain forever, and that we shall never be moved, but shall be had in everlasting remembrance. The which Covenant and promises of God are most immutable and unchangeable. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills shall be removed, but God's kindness shall not depart from us, neither shall the Covenant of his peace be removed. Yea, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, then one tittle of his Word to fail. The which may serve as a forcible argument to persuade us to serve the Lord in the duties of a godly life; seeing when we are once entered into it, we shall be sure to hold out in our Christian course unto salvation, notwithstanding our own frailty and corruption, the many and great difficulties which we find in the way, and the might and malice of all our spiritual enemies; for he that hath begun this good work of grace in us, is able and willing to perfect it unto the end. The which argument, taken from the infallibility of God's counsel, ordaining us to salvation, the Apostle useth to with-hold us from all sin; The foundation of God (saith he) standeth sure, and the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. Yea, that we might the better be encouraged to forsake all sin, and to serve God in holiness and righteousness, he hath not kept this royal and inestimable privilege of our perseverance in grace unto salvation, as a secret to himself, but hath so plainly revealed it in his Word, that we may take notice and be assured of it, according to that of the Apostle; These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that he hath eternal

life. To the end that thereby our hearts may be replenished with gladness, and we encouraged to hold on in our course with joy, seeing though we have many lets and mighty oppositions in the way, yet we are sure that at the last we shall come safely to our journeys end.

Sect. 4 - The great and inestimable privileges wherewith God crowneth a godly life in the world to come.

And these, with many other, are the rich and royal privileges, wherewith God in this world doth reward and crown a godly life: which though they be great and inestimable, yet are they all little, in comparison of that glorious happiness, which God hath reserved for those that love and serve him in the world to come, being all but short preludes to that heavenly harmony, and small earnest-pennies and first-fruits of that main bargain, and plentiful harvest. For there we shall, both in our souls and bodies, be perfectly freed from all miseries and evils both of sin and punishment, and all tears shall be clean wiped from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, as the holy Ghost speaketh. And contrariwise, we shall there in joy such honors, riches and joys, as neither the tongue can utter, nor the heart conceive. For we shall inherit a Kingdom, a heavenly Kingdom: yea, the Kingdom of God, which like himself, because it chiefly consisteth in the fruition of himself, is most absolute and infinite in all perfection. There we shall be crowned with a Crown of life, an incorruptible Crown, a Crown of glory. There we shall be perpetually feasted at the great feast and marriage Supper of the Kings Son, where there shall be nothing but mirth and gladness, plenty without want, and fullness without satiety. There we shall rest from all our labors, and sanctify unto God a perpetual Sabbath, continually singing praises unto him, who is the Author and Fountain of all our happiness. There we shall swim in a river and torrent of pleasure, and have fullness of joy at God's right hand for evermore. There we

shall have spiritual bodies, that is, such as shall be endued with spiritual and excellent qualities; as immortality and agility, strength and impassibility, beauty and comeliness, brightness and glory. There our souls shall be perfectly renewed according to God's Image, being endued with such wisdom and understanding, that we shall know God and his will, ourselves, and all the secrets and mysteries both of nature and grace; and with such complete holiness and righteousness, that there shall be neither spot nor wrinkle in them. There we shall have the blessed and glorious society of all the holy Saints and blessed Angels, and perfectly loving them as ourselves, we shall rejoice in their happiness, as much as in our own, whereby our joys shall be, according to their innumerable number, multiplied and increased. There we shall enjoy the company of our Savior Christ himself in his perfect glory; and that which shall be the top and perfection of all our happiness, we shall have the vision and fruition of God himself, the Father, Son and holy Spirit, who being infinite in goodness, glory, beauty, excellency, wisdom, power and all perfection, will be the full consummation of all our joy and happiness; which blessed estate we shall enjoy, not for a thousand, or many thousand millions of years, but these pleasures shall last for evermore, and of this Kingdom there shall be no end. All which points I do here but briefly touch, having entreated of them at large in another place. Only let us here take notice, that this rich privilege and incomparable happiness belongeth not to all or the greatest part of men, but is peculiar to the faithful, who desire and endeavor to serve and please God in the duties of a godly life: For though eternal life be the free gift of God, and he may bestow it where he will, yet he giveth it not unto any, whom he doth not first fit for it, induing them with grace, before he advanceth them to glory, and working holiness in them whom he purposeth to bring unto happiness; without which no man shall see God, as the Apostle speaketh. Though we are not saved and glorified for a godly life, but for the merits and righteousness of Christ applied by faith, yet we are not saved without it, seeing it is the way which leadeth us unto this place of heavenly happiness, in which if we travail not, we can never come to the end of our journey. It is a free inheritance, but yet given to none who have

not approved themselves the children of God, by resembling their Father in holiness, and righteousness. It is not Wolves or Goats that must feed in this heavenly pasture, but only the Sheep of Christ, who stand at his right hand: and none are in this number, but those which hear his voice and follow him. And therefore the Apostle calleth this heavenly happiness a Crown of righteousness, not only because it was purchased by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, but also because it is given to none but the righteous, and their righteousness (not by merit, but of grace) is crowned with it. So he telleth us, that we must first be freed from the service of sin, and become servants to God, bringing forth the fruits of holiness, before we can attain unto that end of everlasting life. The which, above all other reasons, should powerfully move us unto the duties of God's service in a godly life. For seeing, as the Apostle speaketh, we expect to receive a Kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. And so I will conclude this part of my Treatise, containing the arguments and reasons, which may effectually persuade us to the leading of a godly life. And now nothing remaineth, but that I entreat thee (Christian Reader) not slightly to pass over what hath been said, but that thou consider and weigh seriously these reasons which I have produced. And if they convince thy Judgments (as they must needs, if it be not willfully blinded) that the godly life is most happy and blessed; both in respect of God's glory, and thy own benefit; freedom from evil, and fruition of good; present comfort, and future hope; be encouraged to go forward in this way with more diligence and greater speed, if already thou walkest in it; or be persuaded by them, if thou art not as yet entered into this course of Christianity, now to resolve of a happy beginning, leaving thine eager pursuit of worldly vanities; which, if nothing else, yet miserable experience in the end will teach thee, to be not only unprofitable, but (if thou prefer them in thy judgment, and love them in thine heart, before spiritual and heavenly excellencies) hurtful and pernicious, and betaking thyself unto a new course, endeavor to serve and please God throughout the whole remainder of thy days in the duties of a godly life. For be thou well assured, that these reasons shall be powerful and effectual, either to

persuade thee, or to condemn thee, and shall serve as evidences of truth to draw thee, unto God in the duties of holiness and righteousness, or as evidences of terror to convince thee before God at the day of Judgment, for thy willful neglect and contempt of all means and motives, which in this acceptable time and day of salvation he hath graciously granted thee, to draw thee by the way of Grace and godliness, into that his heavenly Kingdom, full of glory and happiness.

THE SIXTH AND LAST BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE

In treating of the impediments which usually hinder and discourage men from entering into, and proceeding in the Christian duties which are required unto it, and of the helps and means whereby they may be removed.

CHAPTER I.

Of those impediments which are cast into our way, to hinder us in the duties of a godly life, by Satan the Arch-enemy of our salvation.

Sect. 1 - That Satan bendeth all his forces against us, to hinder us in the duties of a godly life.

Having spoken of the duties of a godly life, and of the means whereby we may be enabled to perform them; it now followeth, according to the order which we have propounded in the beginning of this Treatise, that we in the last place set down the impediments, which usually hinder us from entering into this Christian course, and from proceeding, when we have resolved to begin and go forward in it. For as there is nothing excellent and of great moment, wherein we meet

not with some mighty opposition and notable hindrances, which, if we be not well armed and prepared, will discourage us from attempting it, or disable us in achieving it: so nothing in the world findeth more lets and discouragements, then our entrance into the course of Christianity, and our progress in the ways of godliness. For whereas all the promises of this life, and the life to come, do infallibly belong unto all those who serve the Lord in the duties of holiness and righteousness (from whence there ariseth an impossibility that they should miscarry, who conscionably perform them, or not attain unto everlasting happiness, who walk constantly in the way that leadeth unto it) hereof it is, that the enemies of our salvation bend all their might and malice, to keep us from entering into this way, or to divert us out of it, if we have already begun to run this race. These enemies are the devil (who is the chief and principal) the world and the flesh, which are his two chief captains that under their conduct lead all his forces. How mighty and dangerous these enemies are, I have showed at large in another place; only let it here suffice to know, that the great red Dragon, as he is ready to spit out his venom against us at all times and upon all occasions, that he may show his malice and spite against God by seeking our destruction, who were created according to his Image; so he disgorgeth against us whole floods of hellish poison, when we set ourselves to serve God in the duties of a godly life, that he may, by making our ways slippery, cause us to fall. And though he suffer us quietly to go on in our own ways which lead to perdition, without stop or check, yea laboreth all he can to make them easy and pleasant to our corrupt flesh; yet when we set our face towards the heavenly Canaan, he pursueth us with all malice and fury, encountreth us with an huge host of hellish temptations, and stoppeth our course with innumerable impediments and discouragements, which he casteth in our way, that we may return again into the Egyptian slavery, and glut ourselves with sensual and sinful pleasures. Yea, no sooner do we conceive a good thought or godly motion, but he watcheth us that he may take all opportunities of killing it in the womb, and to make it an abortive birth, or of strangling it as soon as it is born and seeth the light, that so he may dishearten us by many discouragements, from proceeding in well

doing. Let us know, that as he is a malicious Dragon, so a strong and mighty Lyon, who still standeth in our way, armed with sufficient power to destroy and devour us, if we were left to his fury. That he is a crafty old Serpent, excelling in natural subtlety, and through long and great experience, able by a thousand cunning devices to supplant and stop us in the ways of godliness, being well able through his deep policy, to use and employ all his forces for his best advantage. Finally, that he is most vigilant and never sleepeth, most diligent and never resteth, but night and day goeth about seeking to devour us, by enticing us to come within the reach of his cruel paws, whilst we wander and go astray out of the ways of Godliness, and so are out of the protection of our great and gracious Shepherd.

Sect. 2 - How we may remove the former impediments.

But that this may not discourage us from entering into, and proceeding in the ways of godliness, let us consider, that whilst we study and endeavor to serve and please God in all holy and Christian duties, we are in his grace and favor, and under his protection, and having him on our side, we need not to fear, though Satan and all the power of hell bandy themselves against us. And therefore let us encourage ourselves against the malice of the devil, by setting against it God's infinite and inestimable love towards all that fear and serve him, which is more powerful to save and defend us, then Satan's malice to hurt and destroy us. Let us remember, that the Lord hath loved us with an everlasting love, yea so loved us, that he hath given unto us his only begotten and dearly beloved Son to the death, that we thereby might attain to life and happiness. That he thus loved us when we were strangers and enemies, and out of this inestimable love redeemed us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, that we might serve him in holiness and righteousness, and therefore much more will this love move him to save and deliver us from their malice and fury, when we have wholly consecrated ourselves to his worship and service. That this love maketh him so jealous of our

safety, that he who toucheth us, toucheth the apple of his eye; and therefore as well will he suffer Satan's malice to impeach his own Majesty, as to hurt us who are so dear unto him. And though he hath such a spite and spleen against us, that he willeth and desireth above all things, that God might be dishonored in our destruction, yet let us cheerfully go on in the ways of godliness, seeing God's Almighty and All-ruling will opposeth and overwayeth his, and with no less earnestness seeketh our preservation and salvation. According to that of our Savior; This is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Sect. 3 - That Satan's might and malice compared with our weakness and simplicity, must not discourage us, and the reasons hereof.

Neither let Satan's power consisting in his might and strength, and in his craft and policy, compared with our weakness and simplicity, discourage us from serving God in the duties of holiness and righteousness. But when we have set our faces towards the heavenly Canaan, and are travailing unto it in the ways of godliness, though we see mountainous difficulties, impossible in respect of our own strength to be overpassed, on either hand, a sea of troubles and dangers before us, and an huge host of spiritual enemies armed at all points with hellish temptations, pursuing us at our backs; let us go on in our course without dread, seeing those which are on our side are more, and more mighty, then those which are against us. And first, when we see our own wants and weaknesses opposed with such malicious might and hellish fury, let not this dismay us, seeing it is a great part of our strength to see our weakness, and we are best armed, when we see, acknowledge and bewail our own nakedness. For this will make us more careful to provide and put on the spiritual Armor, especially the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, whereby we shall be enabled to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, and to stand fast and firm against all his temptations in the evil

day, wherewith if we be thoroughly armed, we can never be foiled. Or if through our frailties and infirmities, we find herein many wants and imperfections, this must not discourage us, seeing our armor hath not so much sufficiency to defend us in its own strength, as from the Author that made it, and gave it for our use, who being Almighty, to make good his own work, and to be of high proof against all temptations, will never suffer those to be vanquished, who are of his arming, but will manifest his power in their infirmities, and glorify himself in their victory. Again, the sight and sense of our weakness, and our enemies power, must not so dismay us, as that we should desist in our course, but drive us unto the God of our strength, crying with Moses unto him for help and deliverance, when we are pursued by our spiritual enemies. And acknowledging with Asa our own impotency to resist them, let us make it our ground, to implore God's help. Let us be as children in the hand of our heavenly Father, and the more we find and feel our own weakness and proneness to fall, let us take so much the surer hold of him by a lively faith, and implore his help with the more fervency, who is able and willing to support us, and by the assistance of his holy Spirit to do all our works for us, as the Prophet speaketh. Finally, when we are most weak in ourselves, this is no hindrance unto us, but that we may be so strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, as that we may be able to withstand and overcome all Satan's temptations, whereby he laboreth to hinder us in the ways of godliness. For though this strong armed man is able to keep in safety all that he possesseth, against weaker opposition, yet God, who is stronger than he, is able to disarm him, and to set us at liberty from under his tyranny. Though our adversary be mighty, yet our Savior, who hath redeemed and delivered us, is almighty, and no power of earth or hell is able to pull us out of his hand. And therefore when we see our own weakness, let us labor also to see the exceeding greatness of God's power, not only in himself, but also towards us who believe in him; and pray for ourselves, as the Apostle for the Colossians, not only that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, but also that we may be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, and overcome all difficulties,

which our spiritual adversaries cast in our way, to stop and hinder us in this course of godliness. The like comforts we may have in the performance of all good duties, when as we consider Satan's craft and policy, and compare it with our ignorance and simplicity, seeing this need not to discourage us, if we deny our own wisdom as insufficient to guide us, and suffer ourselves to be wholly directed by the light of God's truth, which is sufficient to discover and defeat all his subtleties and hellish stratagems whereby he endeavoreth to circumvent us; and give ourselves over to be guided in all our ways by the good Spirit of God, who being infinite in wisdom, is able to turn this Ahithophel's policies into foolishness, to frustrate all his cunning plots and projects, and so to direct us in all our courses, that we shall easily avoid all the snares and secret ambushments of this subtle enemy. And finally, his vigilancy and diligence, in seeking to turn us out of the right way, that we may fall into his snares, cannot discourage us, if denying our own providence and watchfulness, we commit and commend ourselves unto God's protection, seeing he is that great Watch-man of Israel, who never slumbereth or sleepeth, but continually keepeth us under the all-seeing eye of his providence, that he may preserve us safe from the malice and might of Satan and all the enemies of our salvation.

Sect. 4 - Satan's temptations, whereby he impugneth our faith.

And thus we see, how we may generally encourage ourselves in the duties of a godly life, against those impediments which arise from the nature of this grand enemy, who opposeth us in them. Many others there are which are cast in our way by his temptations, which either respect our faith, or the fruits of it in a godly life. Concerning the former; this wily and experienced enemy mainly bendeth all his forces and engines of battery against our faith, because he well knoweth, that if he can destroy the root, the branches and fruits which spring from it, will wither and fail of their own accord. And therefore sometime taking advantage of our wants and

unworthiness, our falls, frailties, and infirmities, he persuadeth us that we have no faith at all, when as we have it; and sometimes laboreth to make us neglect all means of getting faith when it is wanting, by causing us to rest upon that show and shadow of it, carnal security and fond presumption. Yea, he assaulteth our faith diversely, in respect of all the causes and means of our salvation, that so he may hinder us in the ways of godliness. For first, he moveth us either falsely to believe, that all men are beloved of God, and so we among the rest, because we enjoy testimonies of his favor in worldly prosperity, though these outward gifts are given in common to the good and bad; or to doubt of God's love, in respect of our afflictions, and so to neglect all duties of his service, because we know not whether we or our works are accepted of him. Secondly, he persuadeth us either to think that all are elected to salvation, and so we among others, live as we list; or if some be elected, and some reprobated, that this Decree is unchangeable; and therefore if we be elected, we shall be saved, though we take our pleasure and neglect all good duties; or if we be rejected, we shall be condemned, though we take never so much pains in the ways of godliness. Finally, that we can have no assurance that we are elected, and therefore it is in vain to labor after it, but rather, that it is our wisest course to leave it to the venter, and take the benefit of present pleasures. Thirdly, he will tell us that all are redeemed by Christ, and we with others, and therefore we may live in our sins, seeing he hath satisfied for them; or that if he have redeemed but some only, that we cannot be assured that we are in this number, though we be never so diligent in God's service. Fourthly, he will suggest that all are universally called, and yet seeing many fall away, few are chosen, and consequently, that it is a matter impossible to be assured that we are in Christ's little flock, because when we have done all we can, we may become Apostates, and no better than Wolves and Goats; and therefore it were best to spare our pains, and to enjoy our pleasures when we may have them. Fifthly, he will tell us that we are justified by faith alone, and therefore by that faith which is alone, and that good works are not required to the act of justification, and therefore are needless to the party justified; that they are not the causes of our salvation, and

therefore we need not to walk in them, but may easily go to heaven by another way. Sixthly, that none upon earth can be perfectly sanctified, and therefore seeing we cannot be Saints here, we must live like other men, and not tire ourselves in vain, by laboring after impossibilities. Finally, that though we have never so much grace, and be as forward as any in the duties of godliness, yet we may fall from this state, and become as wicked as any other; and therefore seeing when we have done our best in serving God, and have with much pains stored ourselves with all spiritual graces, we may lose all our labor, and become, notwithstanding all our care and diligence, utter bankrupts in all goodness, it were our best course to give over this doubtful pains in the service of God, and to satisfy our own lusts with the present fruition of worldly delights. Of all which temptations, which Satan as impediments casteth in our way, to discourage us in the course of godliness, I have largely spoken in the first part of my Christian Warfare, and therefore here thus briefly pass them over, referring the Christian Reader to that Book, for his more full satisfaction in these points.

Sect. 5 - Satan's temptations, whereby he seeketh to hinder us from entering into the ways of godliness, or from proceeding in them.

In respect of the godly life itself, Satan raiseth against us many lets and impediments, either to hinder us from entering into the course of Christianity, or to make us perform the duties required in it superficially and unprofitably. In respect of the former, he useth many devices, to stop our entrance into the ways of godliness. And first, he laboreth to keep our eyes blinded with ignorance, that we may not see the ways of godliness wherein we should walk; or if they be discovered by the light of the Gospel shining unto us, he will endeavor to keep us from seeing the profit and necessity of walking in them. The former whereof we may avoid, by remembering and considering, that saving knowledge is one of the chief grounds of a godly life, without which, it is no more possible that we should

perform the duties of Christianity, then to walk in difficult ways, having no eyes to guide us, nor light to direct us in them. And therefore we must not content ourselves with our good meaning and ignorant devotion, which can bring forth no better fruits, then blind superstition and will-worship, which are odious unto God, but use all good means, whereby our minds may be enlightened with the saving knowledge of God's truth, and carefully inquire after the good and old ways (as the Prophet speaketh) that we may walk therein, and find rest to our souls. And for the avoiding of the other, we must know and remember, that nothing in the world is so profitable and necessary, as to walk in the ways of godliness, after that by the light of truth they are discovered unto us, seeing this alone, though all worldly things be wanting, will make us happy and blessed in this life and the life to come; whereas if we have all other things, and want this, we shall be wretched and miserable. Secondly, Satan laboreth to hinder us from entering into the ways of Christianity, by alluring us to continue in our sinful courses, with the baits of worldly vanities; and by causing us to content ourselves with the present possession of these earthly trifles, he maketh us to neglect our heavenly hopes, which are infinitely more excellent and permanent. For the escaping of which snare, we must labor to contemn these enticing baits, by considering that these worldly things are, in respect of spiritual grace and heavenly glory, vain and unprofitable, uncertain, mutable and momentary, as elsewhere I have plainly showed. Thirdly, he hindereth us from all duties of godliness, by the deceitfulness of sin, which he secretly windeth into our hearts by degrees, till by many acts of wickedness, he hath brought us unto a custom, which is like another nature, and hath in it the commanding force of an irresistible Law. Which hindrance if we would avoid, we must watch over ourselves, that our hearts be not hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin; to which purpose, we must shun the first occasions, withstand the first motions of it, and pluck up these cursed plants, before they be thoroughly rooted, or if we have already loaded our consciences with these dead works, our second care must be to break off our sins by unfeigned repentance, offering herein to our corrupt nature, an holy violence, and as the Apostle speaketh,

We must lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, clinging (as it were) about our necks, to hold us back, that we may so run with patience unto the Race which is set before us, making void, by degrees, the strong custom of sin, by the acts of piety and righteousness, until we have confirmed in us the contrary custom of godliness and new obedience. Finally, Satan laboreth to hinder us from entering into the course of Christianity, by persuading us to make delays; and when he cannot any longer make us believe that it is needless, or of small weight, but that seeing the profit and necessity of it, we do resolve to leave our former sinful lives, and to betake ourselves unto God's service, he will persuade us to defer it for a time, as a thing displeasing to our corrupt nature, and unprofitable to our worldly ends, until we may find some fitter opportunity, and have better settled our earthly business. The which impediment I shall have fitter occasion to remove in the following Discourse; Only let us here remember, that if we will be advised by our Saviors wise counsel, We must first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, which being a matter of greatest weight, and (in comparison) only necessary, we must not put it off till after-times, which are uncertain, but secure ourselves of it, whilst the day of salvation lasteth. And these are the common impediments which Satan casteth into our way, that he may stop us from entering into the ways of godliness; with which, if he cannot so far prevail, as to make us neglect all holy duties altogether, he will in the next place endeavor to make them unprofitable for our salvation. To which purpose, amongst many other lets, he chiefly and most usually useth these two. The first is, to keep us from feeling in them any power of godliness, for the bettering of our spiritual estate, by causing us to perform these duties in a cold and formal manner, more for custom than conscience sake. The other is, to make us fickle and unconstant in them, performing them by fits and flashes, when we have least to do, and have some spare time from our worldly employments. The former whereof we may avoid, by setting ourselves about the duties of Christianity, as our main business, with all resolute diligence, and zealous devotion, knowing that it is impossible to travail in this way, so full of difficulties and dangers, without serious endeavor, or to

perform duties of so high a nature, and so contrary to natural corruption, without diligent and painful labor. The latter, by tying ourselves unto a settled course, in the performance of all Christian duties, knowing that he who goeth sometime forward, and sometimes backward, can never make any riddance of his journey, nor come seasonably to the end of it. Both which weighty points I here thus briefly pass over, because I have already spoken of them at large. And let this suffice to have briefly mentioned those impediments, which Satan immediately by himself ordinarily useth to hinder us from entering into, or proceeding in the way of godliness; unto which, many more might be added, if I had not already handled the most of them in the first part of my Christian Warfare.

CHAPTER II.

Of worldly impediments which hinder a godly life; and first, such as are public.

Sect. 1 - The first public impediment arising from evil Magistrates.

Unto the impediments which the devil himself directly useth to hinder our proceeding in Christian duties, we will now add those which are cast into our way by the world and the flesh, who join all their forces with him, which are far more powerful and prevalent than his own temptations. The impediments of the world are either public, or private. The former respect superiors, as Magistrates and Ministers; or inferiors, as the people that are under their government. The impediments which oppose a godly life, respecting Magistrates, are chiefly two: the first is, their authority and greatness abused to impiety, as to the discountenancing of virtue and godliness, and the countenancing of vice and sin, the discouraging of the faithful in all good courses, and the heartening of the wicked in their impiety and profaneness. The which is done by their private favors, denied to the one, and imparted to the other; or by their public edicts and laws crying down the sincerity of Religion, and strengthening the sons of Belial in their outrageous wickedness. For the avoiding of which impediments, let us often consider how much better it is to have the favor of God, in which consisteth our life and happiness, and which being permanent and unchangeable, will never forsake us, then the favor of Princes and great men, whose favors are momentary, seeing (as the Psalmist speaketh) their breath being in their nostrils, they will sooner return to their dust; and also fickle and mutable, being ready to hate tomorrow, whom they love today; as we see in the example of Haman, and many others. That it is better to have the peace of a good conscience which accompanieth well-doing, than the praise and applause of the greatest Potentates, in our neglect of holy duties. That we shall have little comfort when

we are going to hell, though we carry in our hands their Passe or Patent, affording unto us a quiet passage without check or disturbance, no though we have themselves to bear us company, and countenance us in the way. Neither let the laws of evil Magistrates discourage us in Christian duties, seeing we have a superior Law of the supreme King of heaven and earth, whereunto both they and we are bound to yield obedience; and howsoever we are thereby tied to be subordinate unto them, so long as they hold their subordination unto God, yet when they leave him, we must leave them and their laws, choosing with the Apostles, to obey God, rather than men, and resolutely sustaining ourselves in our Christian obedience, by our invincible patience, in suffering with meekness, whatsoever might and malice can inflict upon us, and with our infallible hopes of enjoining that eternal happiness, which Christ hath promised to all those that suffer persecution for righteousness sake. The other impediment is the evil example of great men, which mightily draweth inferiors to imitation, if God stay them not with his Spirit. For seeing likeness causeth love, and this in great personages, is the staff and strength of inferiors hopes, expecting to rise by their means, hereof it is, that they conform themselves to imitate their manners, though neither out of love to their persons or conditions, but merely out of self-love, that they may hereby advance their own worldly ends. In which regard, as prosperity findeth many friends, so Princes and great men have many followers, because they are the chief dispensers of these worldly preferments. But if we would also leap over this block, and keep a constant course in the ways of godliness; we must live, not by examples, but by precepts, and not look what others do, but what God requireth of us. And as we must not follow a multitude, and (as it were) the whole Herd, in doing evil, so neither the mighty (as it were) the Rams of the flock, when as, like ill presidents, they mis-lead us out of the ways of godliness, into the by-paths of error and sin. And to this end let us remember, that greatness hath no privilege in grace and goodness, seeing (as the Apostle telleth us) Not many rich and mighty are called: yea rather (as the experience of all times hath taught us) they come as far behind the meanest sort (for the most part) in all grace and goodness, as they do exceed them in

glory and greatness. And therefore let not these glorious lights dazzle our eyes, and like the Ignis fatuus, or fools fire, bewitch and entice us to follow them into the ditches and quagmires of vice and sin, but leaving them where they leave the light of God's truth, let us wholly commit ourselves over to be guided by it, which will preserve us from being misled by such ill examples.

Sect. 2 - Of the impediments which arise from evil Ministers.

The other sort of public impediments, whereby the world hindereth us in the ways of godliness, arise from evil Ministers, both in respect of their doctrine, and also their lives and ill examples. In the former respect, the people are much hindered by such insufficient and unconscionable Ministers, as either cannot, or will not instruct them in the duties of a godly life, or else do it not after a right manner. And first, when such blind guides are set over them, as cannot see the way of truth, and much less lead and direct others in it; for when the blind lead the blind, they must needs both fall into the ditch, as our Savior speaketh. Which kind of Ministers are so far from deserving the esteem of true Pastors, that they are unworthy the place of the dogs of the flock, seeing they are dumb, and cannot bark and give any warning to the sheep when the Wolf cometh. Secondly, when such unconscionable Ministers have the charge of souls committed unto them, as having sufficiency of gifts, will not, through negligence and idleness, feed them with the Bread of life, and being more cruel then the Ostriches, or the Dragons (as Jeremiah speaketh in another case) will not pull out their breasts, though full of milk, for the feeding of God's children committed to them, but let them starve and perish for want of nourishment; herein worse than the other, who having dry breasts, cannot (though they would) afford unto them the sincere milk of the Word. Whereas these are so hard-hearted, that they can, but will not, choosing rather to let their milk corrupt in their breasts, and to dry up for want of drawing, then to preserve their own plenty, by communicating to the people's necessities. And

not much better are they who preach but very seldom, having gifts and strength sufficient, and then not so much out of conscience to perform their duty, as to avoid the penalty of the Law, or the blemish of ignorance and insufficiency. Seeing the life of grace in God's people, cannot ordinarily be preserved in any vigor by a monthly meal, but needeth frequent nourishment, as the people are able to hear and bear away. And therefore the Apostle layeth a strait charge upon Timothy, and in him, upon all God's Ministers, not only that they should preach the Word, but also that they should do it instantly, in season, and out of season, that is, often, and upon all occasions. Fourthly, the work of grace and godliness is much hindered in the people, when as the Ministers preach themselves, and not Christ, chiefly intending to show their own gifts, learning and eloquence, and not the edification and salvation of the people. When as they do not preach the Word with power and authority, like our Savior Christ, nor in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, to their hearts and consciences, that they may cast down the strong holds of sin; but come in the enticing speech of man's wisdom, to tickle the ear, and soar aloft in idle and heartless speculations, far out of the reach, and above the capacity of their hearers, filling their heads with the froth of witty conceits, which have in them no solid nourishment. Wherein they carry themselves contrary to the charge which our Savior giveth to the Apostle Peter, and all his faithful Ministers; namely, that in their teaching they should take care to feed, not only his sheep, but also his tender lambs. Finally, the people are much hindered in their growth of godliness, when as their Ministers take no pains publicly to catechize and instruct them in the main principles of Christian Religion, seeing no good building can be erected by them who neglect to lay a sure foundation; or privately to resolve their doubts, and to provoke them by holy conferences, and earnest exhortations and persuasions, to put in practice those duties which they have learned by their public ministry. Through which faults and defects in worldly and careless Ministers, the people committed to their charge, are much hindered in the ways of godliness. For where prophecy faileth, there the people must needs perish. Where there is a famine of the Word, what can

follow but faintness and feebleness for want of food? Where the Gospel is not preached, which is the power of God unto salvation, and the savor of life unto life, to all that believe: what can ensue hereupon, but impotent weakness unto all good duties, and death and destruction of body and soul? If the Watchmen sleep, who should give warning to God's people, of the approach of enemies, how easily may they surprise and vanquish them? If the Gardener, and Vintager be slothful and idle in planting and watering, how shall God's Plants and Vines flourish? And if they busy not themselves in pruning and weeding, how shall the Garden and Vineyard thrive, and not rather be over-grown with weeds and thistles? If the lights be put out, or hid under a bushel, what can follow but palpable darkness, through which the people of God must necessarily err out of the ways of truth? And if the Gospel of Christ be not painfully preached, which is the ordinary means of begetting Faith; how should the people come out of the state of infidelity, and believe, that they may be saved? And what can follow of all this, but the utter neglect of all the duties belonging to a godly life, when saving knowledge and a lively Faith, the foundations of it, are overthrown?

Sect. 3 - Of the means whereby the former impediments may be removed, first, in respect of the Ministers.

For the removing of which impediments, first, the Ministers are to be exhorted and persuaded to do their duty. And in the first place, that none presume to take upon them this high calling, which God hath never called unto it, being altogether unfitted and unfurnished with gifts necessarily required to this high duty; seeing they purchase their means and maintenance with the price of blood, not of the bodies, but of the precious souls of the people, the which shall be required at their hands in that terrible day, when as Christ shall come to judge both the quick and the dead. And secondly, those which God hath furnished with gifts, are to be moved and admonished in the fear of God, that with all care and good

conscience they feed the flock of Christ committed to their charge, not for filthy lucre, but with a willing mind, chiefly aiming at the glory of God in the salvation of the people. To which purpose, let them first remember those names and titles given them in the Scriptures, implying not only their duty, but great and high privileges whereby they should be encouraged unto it. For they are appointed of God to be the Lights of the world; and what sin and shame is it to hide their Light, and to let the people sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? They are the Salt of the earth, appointed not only to be savory in themselves, but also to season others, which salt of Grace and Wisdom if they lose, they are good for nothing, but to be cast upon the dung-hill, and to be trodden under feet. They are God's Watchmen, who have the care of his armies committed unto them, to give them warning of the approach of their enemies, which if they neglect, the blood of those which perish through their sloth, shall be required at their hands. They are appointed to be Captains over the people, to go out and in before them, and to train and teach them how to fight against the enemies of their salvation. They are God's Husbandmen, Gardeners and Vintagers, to plant and sow, purge, weed and prune his fields, gardens and vineyards, that they may bring forth fruit in due season. They are Stewards of his family, who must have in store both new and old, that they may give a fit portion to all their fellow servants. They are God's Ambassadors unto the people, who represent his own person, and deliver unto them the glad tidings of the Gospel, wherein God offereth unto them peace and reconciliation; and therefore being so highly honored, they must not be slack in doing their message. Finally, they are their spiritual Fathers, ordained of God as his instruments, to beget them unto himself by the immortal seed of the Word; which if they neglect, the people through their default remain the children of wrath, and dead in their sins. Secondly, let them remember that heavy woe and dreadful curse denounced against those who preach not the Gospel, or do the work of the Lord negligently. Thirdly, let them have in mind that fearful account which those have to make at the day of Judgment, that through their sloth, worldliness, or unconscionable kind of preaching, are found guilty of destroying the souls which

were committed to their charge. Fourthly, let them be encouraged to the diligent performance of their duty, by that inward peace of conscience, and unspeakable joy and comfort, which all God's faithful Ministers find and feel in their own hearts and consciences, when as by their Ministry they see God glorified in the salvation of his people committed to their charge. Finally, let them encourage themselves in their painful labors, by calling to mind that unspeakable recompense of reward, promised to all those who convert others unto righteousness, seeing they shall shine as stars of the firmament in the glory of God's Kingdom.

Sect. 4 - Of other means respecting the people.

Secondly, the people for their part, are to use all good helps and means for the removing of this impediment. And first, their care must be to place themselves under sufficient, godly, and faithful Ministers, who will carefully and conscionably break unto them the bread of life. And if in the days of their ignorance, they have seated themselves under blind guides, ignorant and insufficient Ministers, or if such be imposed upon them against their wills in those places where their lands and livings, trades and means do lie, they must not only sigh and mourn under this burden, but also use all lawful means to be freed from it as soon as they can, either by procuring some better means by their care and charge, or by removing their habitation (though with some worldly inconvenience) unto some other place; Esteeming this one thing necessary, to enjoy the means of their salvation, and with the wise Merchant purchasing this pearl and treasure at the highest rate, rather than be without it. For if we would be hired with no worldly gain, to live in such places as afford no food for the nourishment of our bodies; let us be no less wise and careful for our precious souls, and not hazard them to death and destruction, by continuing in those places for our worldly advantage, where there is a continual famine of the Word, but rather than want it, we must wander from sea to sea, and from the North to the East,

that we may seek and find it. But if the Ministers under whom God hath placed us, have sufficiency of gifts, and yet through sloth and negligence, worldliness or want of care and good conscience, neglect their duty, we are not so easily to abandon them, before we have used all good means whereby they may be made more painful and diligent. And first, we must labor with God by our fervent prayers, that he will sanctify their gifts, and give unto them, such faithful and honest hearts, as that they may more conscionably set themselves to seek God's glory in the salvation of the people committed to their charge, and so employ their talents which they have received, as that they may be able to make a cheerful account, when as they shall be called to give up their reckoning. For if those which are most faithful and diligent in discharge of their duty, need these helps, which made the Apostle so often to desire the prayers of the people; how much more do they need them, who have so many defects in the work of their Ministry? Secondly, we must endeavor to draw them on to more diligence by our good counsels and admonitions, in the Spirit of love and meekness, without all spleen and bitterness, or any disgrace offered to their persons. Thirdly, we must labor to win and encourage them, not only by avoiding causeless wranglings and contentions, but also by paying unto them justly and honestly their full due, which by the Laws of God and men belong unto them, and not take occasion upon the neglect of their duty to neglect ours. Yea, rather with open hearts and hands, we must carry ourselves liberally towards them according to our ability, that gaining their love, they may become more careful to seek our spiritual good, communicating unto us their ministerial gifts, when they see us willing to communicate unto them our corporal blessings. Fourthly, we must not vilify and contemn their Ministry, though there be therein some wants and imperfections, nor run from them to others, who in our judgment do exceed them; but bear with their infirmities, and do our best to reform and amend them. Finally, when they preach unto us, we are to hear them with all diligence and reverence, whereby we shall make them more careful to deliver things worth our hearing, and more ready to take greater pains, when they see them so much regarded. For as the sucking of the child draweth down the mothers

milk, and causeth it to come in greater plenty, whereas if the breast be not drawn, all the milk is soon dried up; so is it in this case between the Minister and the people. By all which and the like means if we prevail nothing, we are (if possibly we can) to remove ourselves from under their charge, seeing it is not much material unto us, whether they cannot or will not teach us the way of salvation, and no less necessity lieth upon us of hearing, then upon them of preaching the Gospel; nor a less woe, if through our own negligence we hear it not.

Sect. 5 - Of the impediment of a godly life, arising from the evil lives of some Ministers.

The last public impediment respecting the Ministry, is the evil lives of many, who take upon them to persuade others to the practice of Christian duties. For ordinarily the people imagine, that they go fast enough in the ways of godliness, if they keep full pace with those which are their Teachers. And though they hear them often in the Pulpit, use many arguments to draw them on to more perfection; yet they suppose that there is no necessity of serving God so strictly and sincerely, but that all is spoken for form and fashion sake; otherwise they who are so earnest in persuading us, would lead us the way by their good example. For the removing of which impediment, we are to know, that howsoever Ministers excel others in the common gifts of the Spirit, as knowledge, learning and such like, yet the saving graces of God are free, and not tied to any calling or profession more than others. And therefore seeing in this regard, the learned hath no privilege above the unlearned, the Doctor above the Artificer, or the Pharisee before the Fisherman, it is no great marvel, if the greatest Rabbins in the world be as small proficiencie in grace, and in the practice of holy and Christian duties, as those which they scorn for their ignorance and simplicity. But yet so long as they sit in Moses chair, we must not only hear them, but do as they say, though not as they do, seeing their speeches are not grounded upon the authority of

their persons or actions, but upon the Word of God, unto which we owe simple and absolute obedience, whosoever be the Messenger that bringeth it unto us. But of this I have written more largely in the first part of my Warfare, unto which I refer the Reader, who desireth in this point more full satisfaction.

Sect. 6 - Of the public impediments which respect the people.

The common impediments of a godly life which respect the people, are also diverse. As first, when they content themselves with a form of profession and Religion, without any desire to find in themselves the power, efficacy and fruit thereof, for the sanctifying of their hearts, and reforming of their lives. As when they profess Religion, because the State establisheth it; go to the Church and hear the Word, because the Law requireth it; pray in the Congregation, and go to the Communion, because it is the custom of the Country, and other of their neighbors do it as well as they. But this is to rest in a shadow without a substance, and in a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Which if we would avoid, our care must be to serve God in obedience to his Commandments, to worship him in Spirit and truth, and to join the inward service of the heart and soul, with the outward service of the body; and finally, that in all these duties we propound unto ourselves right ends, namely, to profit by them in knowledge, faith, and the practice of all holy duties of a godly life, that we may glorify God in the further assurance of our salvation. The second impediment respecting the people, is the neglect and contempt of the Preaching of God's Word, as a thing unnecessary for their salvation. For howsoever they suppose, that there is some use of it for their conversion unto God, the enlightening of their minds with some knowledge of the truth, and the working of faith in some first degrees; yet they hold it a needless task to be continually tied to these religious exercises, and that it is sufficient to use them sometimes at their best leisure. Which impediment if we would shun, we must remember, that as the Word

and the ministry thereof, is the immortal seed which begetteth us to God, so it is the spiritual food of our souls, whereby they must be continually nourished, that the graces of the Spirit begun, may be increased and confirmed in us, until we come to a perfect age in Jesus Christ. That it is the sword of the Spirit, whereof we have daily use in our spiritual warfare, (which lasteth as long as our lives last) for the repelling of our enemies, and the overcoming of all their dangerous temptations. That it is the only true light, which guideth us in all our ways, whereof if through negligence we deprive ourselves, we shall walk in darkness, and sit in the shadow of death. That it is our counselor in all our doubts, and our comforter in all our troubles; the means to strengthen and uphold us when we stand, and to recover and raise us when we are fallen; the chief help we have to keep us in the way of truth, and to recall us when we err and go astray; our food in time of health, and our physic to cure and restore us when we are sick. The third impediment to the life of grace and godliness is, when as the people are content to hear the Word, but without any cheerfulness and delight, with cloyed stomachs and lost appetites, whereof it is, that this delicious Manna is loathsome to their carnal and surfeited taste, and yieldeth no wholesome nourishment, because it is eaten against the stomach. Which if we would remove, we must labor often to quicken our appetite, that we may with David find and feel the sweetness of God's Word, far exceeding the honey and the honey-comb, and earnestly hunger and thirst after it, that we may profit by it, and have the graces of God's Spirit nourished and increased in us. To which end we must often meditate upon the excellency, profit and necessity of it, as being a Pearl above all price, and the only chief treasure which will make us truly rich. The fourth impediment, is want of diligence, reverence and attention in the hearing of the Word, whereby most of this precious liquor spilleth beside, and is utterly lost; and want of care to treasure it up in our memories, or to meditate upon it afterwards, that we may bring it home to our hearts and consciences, and practice it in our lives. Which if we would remove, we must consider, that it is not the deed done, which will make God's ordinances truly profitable, but the right manner of doing them; that God will never

bleſs unto us the means of our ſalvation, if we only bring our lips and ears, and outward man unto them, and do not perform theſe religious duties with our heart and ſpirit. And finally, that for our ſpiritual nourishment it is not ſufficient, that we have plenty of food ſet before us, unleſs we feed on it with good appetites, retain it in our memories (as it were) in the ſtomach; and well digeſt and apply it to our uſe by ſerious meditation: which duties if we neglect, either not feeding upon the food of our ſouls, or caſting it up again as ſoon as it is eaten, we can never attain unto any ſpiritual ſtrength, but muſt needs grow faint and languish in the life of godlineſs. The laſt impediment (which I will here ſpeak of) in the people, is too much curioſity, both in their hearing and applying of the Word. For ſuch itching ears have many, that they loath the ſincere milk of the Word, and all ordinary points handled in an ordinary manner; and affect nothing but novelties, idle ſpeculations and curious queſtions; witty diſcourſes and frothy conceits. But that we may ſhun this fooliſh curioſity, let us know, that as the Miniſters are bound to deliver the ſincere truth in the evidence of the Spirit and power, ſo they no leſs to hunger after it, even the ſincere milk of the Word, that they may grow up thereby: That as they are bound to teach, ſo we above all things muſt deſire to know Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified. That they who deſire to underſtand above that which is meet, and affect only niceties and novelties, do feed upon froth and wind, which will puff them up, but never nourish them; and finally, that hungering after continual variety, and ſtrange diſhes, is a ſign of a ſick and weak ſtomach, full of groſs humors, which needs to be purged, before it can be nourished. The like hindrance curioſity bringeth to our proceedings in godlineſs, in reſpect of applying the Word; when as men will not bring it home to their own hearts, but curioſly prying into, and examining the lives and manners of others, do put off all that is ſpoken from themſelves, and apply it unto them whom they think it more nearly concerneth. Which if we would avoid, we muſt conceive that God hath purpoſely ſent what we hear as a meſſage unto us, that all that is ſpoken, is for our own learning and uſe, as if there were none in the Church beſides. That the Word which we hear will not profit, unleſs it be mixed with faith, and that there is no

faith, where there is no application to our own use. Finally, that ye eat only that which nourisheth us which ourselves feed upon and digest, and not that which being carved unto us we do not eat, but put it away from us, or else lay it upon another man's trencher.

CHAPTER III.

Of such private impediments which the world useth, to hinder us in a godly life, and first, those on the right hand.

Sect. 1 - Of the temptations of prosperity, which are most dangerous impediments of a godly life.

What are the public impediments, which the world casteth in our way, to hinder us from proceeding in the duties of a godly life, we have showed in the former chapter: and now it remaineth that we entreat of those which are more private. And these are either the temptations wherewith the World usually assaulteth us; or certain scandals and offenses which it layeth before us, to discourage us in the ways of Godliness. The World tempteth us diversely, both on the right hand with earthly prosperity, and on the left with crosses and afflictions. The more dangerous of these two, are the temptations of prosperity, wherewith the world allureth us (as by her bewitching baits) to make us leave the narrow and afflicted path of righteousness and holiness, and to walk in the broad and easy way that leadeth to destruction. These are those intoxicating cups, whereby it maketh men so drunk, that they have neither list nor power to walk in the path of piety; those false lights, which so dazzle men's eyes, that they cannot discern the excellency of spiritual grace and heavenly glory; those enamoring potions, that make us to love the world, and to dote so on this painted Strumpet, that we think all

time lost which is not spent in her service; those waters, which quench in us the love of God, the zeal of his glory, and all fervency of desire in attaining to heavenly happiness; those thorns, which choke in us all good motions of God's Spirit; and finally, those entangling snares which catch and hold us, that we cannot go on in any religious duties or holy actions. Against these temptations, which as strong impediments hinder so many from the profession and practice of godliness, we may best arm ourselves, by considering that the love of the world and the love of God will not stand together, because, as the Apostle James teacheth us, The amity of the world is enmity against God, and he who maketh himself a friend to the one, doth make himself an enemy to the other. That the prosperity of the world is vain and uncertain, momentary and mutable, hard to get, and easily lost. And that it doth not usually further us towards the attaining of our main and chief ends, as neither adding anything to God's graces in us here, nor to our glory and happiness in the life to come. Yea, by reason of our corruption, which is apt to abuse it to our own harm, it usually becometh a great hindrance, and a notable pullback in running the Race of Christianity, making us forgetful of God and our own good, proud and high-minded, worldly and carnal, doting so upon the present fruition of earthly vanities, as that we utterly neglect all means of our future happiness.

Sect. 2 - Of such impediments as a life from worldly things, as honors, riches and pleasures, and from the society and familiarity of wicked men.

Now the special impediments of a godly life are diverse and manifold; but the chief and principal which the world useth to tempt us on the right hand, are honors, riches, pleasures, worldly friends and acquaintance, whose society and conversation are notable hindrances to a godly life. And these baits the world fitteth to every man's several humor and disposition; unto the ambitious, it propoundeth honors and the glory of the world; unto the covetous,

riches and earthly treasures; unto the voluptuous, pleasures and carnal delights, causing them to bend their whole thoughts, and to spend their whole time in compassing them, so as they have no leisure to think upon, much less to perform the duties of a godly life. Which impediments if we would avoid, we must learn to contemn these earthly vanities, as being vain and worthless, uncertain both in respect of getting and keeping, and unprofitable, yea hurtful and pernicious to all those who set their hearts upon them. All which, with many other to this purpose, I have largely handled in the second part of my Christian Warfare, and therefore do here thus briefly pass them over. Neither is it needful that I should here say much of the society, friendship, and familiarity with the wicked and profane, seeing I have already spoken of it in the former Discourse. Only let us here take notice, that it is one of the chief impediments which the world useth to hinder us in the ways of godliness. For no more apt is the contagious air, which we daily breathe, to poison and infect the body, then the company of ungodly and ungracious men, to taint and infect the soul. And no more possible is it to walk daily among snares and not be caught, or to live amongst thieves and not be robbed, then to preserve ourselves from being entangled in the nets and grins of the wicked, and to be spoiled of all God's graces, if we take delight to consort ourselves with such as are graceless and ungodly. So Solomon telleth us, that in the transgression of an evil man, there is a snare, whereby he doth not only more and more entangle himself, but also all others that bear him company. For society and familiarity ariseth out of likeness of minds and manners, and cannot long continue, if it do not either find, or at least make this similitude and correspondence, according to that of the Prophet; Can two walk together, and not be agreed? And as possible it is to reconcile light and darkness, truth and falsehood, good and evil, as the faithful and infidels, godly Christians and profane worldlings, both retaining their own properties and dispositions. For an unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in his way, is an abomination to the wicked. Neither let any so much presume upon their own strength, as to imagine that they can retain their sincerity, though they keep wicked company, and rather convert them to good,

then be perverted by them unto evil, seeing this is a matter of great difficulty. To be good (saith one) among the good, hath in its health and safety; among the wicked to be so, is also commendable and praise-worthy; in that, happiness is joined with much security; in this, much virtue with difficulty. For as he who is running down the hill, can sooner pull with him one that is ascending, then he who is going up, can cause him to ascend that is running down: so he who holdeth an headlong course in wickedness, can more easily carry with him one that is ascending the hill of virtue, being a motion contrary to natural disposition, then he can cause him to ascend with him. For in common experience we see, that the worser state prevaieth more, in altering the better to its condition, then the better to make the worse like itself. The infected are not so soon cured by the sound, as they tainted with their contagion; Rotten Apples lying with the sound, are not restored to soundness; but the sound are corrupted with their rottenness. Dead carcasses united to living bodies, are not thereby revived, unless it be by miracle, as we see in Elisha and Paul; but the living, if they continue any time united to the dead, partake with them in their mortality and corruption. And thus it is also in our spiritual state, wherein the worser more prevaieth to corrupt the better, then the better to reform the worse. For they being wholly flesh, are more earnest and diligent in the devils service, to draw others unto his Kingdom, then true Christians can be in the cause of God, seeing they are but in part regenerate, and the flesh opposeth the Spirit in all good actions, which either respect themselves or their neighbors. And therefore wicked men will leave no means unassayed, but will employ their whole strength and endeavor to draw others with them into the same excess of worldliness and wickedness. For first, they will infect them by their unsavory speeches and filthy communication, which is a powerful means to taint those that bear them company with their wickedness, according to that of the Apostle; Evil words corrupt good manners. Secondly, by their exhortations and persuasions, as the Wiseman excellently showeth in diverse places, unto which Sirens songs we are apt to give heed, unless we submit ourselves to be guided and directed with the voice of Wisdom, and be powerfully restrained with

the contrary motions of God's Spirit. Thirdly, wicked men do much hinder them who keep them company in the ways of godliness, and provoke them to accompany them in their sins, by their evil examples, especially when they see them thrive and prosper in their wickedness, as we see in David, who though he were a man according to God's own heart, yet his foot had almost slipped, when he saw the great prosperity of the ungodly, being ready to conclude, that he had cleansed his heart in vain, and washed his hands in innocence. The which temptation is of greater force, when we have the evil example not of some few, but of the multitude, or of some great and eminent persons, whose actions above others, are most exemplary. Finally, wicked men draw on those who keep them company, to have fellowship with them in their wickedness, by their fair promises, alluring baits, and liberal offers of rewards. And thus those sinful wretches of whom Solomon speaketh, draw on their companions to join with them in violence and oppression, by offering unto them part of the spoil, and large rewards, to encourage them in their wickedness: We shall find (say they) all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil. Cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse. Which dangerous impediment if we would avoid, let us with all care and diligence make choice of good company, which will both by their words, mutual exhortations, and good examples, help us forward, and better our speed in the ways of godliness, like runners in a race, who by striving who shall out-run one another, do all come to the goal in shorter time and with much more speed, then if they should run alone, and have no other to contend with them. And contrariwise, let us with like care shun familiar society with wicked men, though in worldly respects it is profitable unto us, assuring ourselves, that though for the present, we find some benefit by such society, yet in the end our spiritual loss will far exceed our worldly gain. Or if we be so fettered and hampered with such near bonds of consanguinity, alliance, necessary intercourse of dealing, or near neighborhood, that we cannot go far from them, yet at least let it be our grief, that we are constrained to live with them, and come into their company more often than we would, according to the example of holy David, who cried out in this case; Woe is me, that I sojourn in

Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar; and of Lot, whose righteous soul was much grieved, when living among the Sodomites, he was forced to see their filthy conversation. And to this end, let us remember first the many exhortations used in the Scriptures, inciting us, with all care and circumspection, to shun and avoid the society of the wicked: Be ye not partakers with them; neither have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Separate yourselves from them, and come out from amongst them, lest you be partakers of their plagues. Secondly, when their prosperity allureth us to accompany them in their evil courses, let us not judge according to outward appearance, nor consult with flesh and blood, but with David go into God's Sanctuary, and there we shall learn the end of these men, namely, that being set in slippery places, they shall quickly catch a fall, and be so wholly rooted out, that their place shall no more be found. Thirdly, that if we keep company with the wicked, we shall not only communicate with them in their sins, but also in their punishments; for the companions of fools shall be destroyed; and they that will not come out of Babylon, shall be partakers of her plagues. Finally, let us remember, that they are blessed, who walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But of these motives I have before spoken, and therefore content myself here, thus briefly to have touched them.

CHAPTER IV.

Of private impediments on the left hand, as afflictions and persecutions.

Sect. 1 - How the world seeketh to hinder our course in godliness by afflictions and persecutions.

On the left hand the World assaulteth us with afflictions and persecutions, that it may hinder and discourage us in the ways of godliness. For first, it loadeth us, as much as in it lieth, with crosses and calamities, even for righteousness sake, and then persuadeth us, that we serve God not only in vain, but even to our loss: and therefore that it were our best course, to take our liberty, and to live as others do, seeing we have no other rewards for all our painful service, our strictness of life, and abandoning of our pleasures, the unpleasant exercises of mortification, and denying in all things our own wills and delightful lusts, but misery and affliction. And thus David was assaulted, when he was ready to conclude, that he had cleansed his heart, and washed his hands to no purpose in innocence, seeing he was afflicted every morning. And with the like temptation Job was often discouraged, when as his three friends in so many places labor to persuade him, that all his former labors in God's service were vain and of no worth, because of the extraordinary afflictions which he endured. And Jeremiah likewise was so much troubled with the sight of the wicked's prosperity, and the sense of his own miseries, that he breaketh out into great impatience. For the removing of which impediment, we are to know, that howsoever the world, and worldly men use all their might and malice to hinder us in our course of godliness, yet they are no ways able to do what they intend, seeing they are not the chief causes of our afflictions, but only God's instruments who overruleth them at his pleasure, and so ordereth and disposeth of all our crosses and calamities which they inflict upon us, both in respect of their matter and manner, measure and time of continuance, as that they shall not any ways hurt us, but shall wholly tend to our good; not consume and destroy us, but purify and purge us (like gold in the fire) from the dross of our corruptions; not cool or quench our zeal and devotion, but rather kindle and inflame them; and finally, not hinder us at all in the duties of a godly life, but further and make us more forward and cheerful in performing them, causing us, by these many tribulations, to go more surely and safely, by the way of grace and godliness, into the Kingdom of heavenly joy and happiness.

Sect. 2 - Of the worlds professed hatred, whereby it seeketh to discourage us in the duties of a godly life.

Now these afflictions and persecutions, which the world raiseth against us to discourage us in all the duties of a godly life, are manifold, which in their own nature are to flesh and blood bitter and grievous. And first, it pursueth us with professed hatred, maligning all, with all spleen and spite, who leave the world, and love God. For though whilst we are of the world, it loveth us, because we are her own, yet when Christ hath chosen us out of the world, and we have given our names unto him, professing that we will be his soldiers and servants, then the world, out of that hatred which it beareth to our Lord and Master, will begin, for his sake to hate us. And as they who make themselves friends of the world, do, by reason of that enmity which is between them, make themselves thereby the enemies of God: so contrariwise, those that become friends unto God, do hereby make themselves enemies to the world. So David saith, that they who rendered evil for good, were his adversaries, because he did follow the thing that was good. And therefore he professeth the like enmity against them, because they were God's enemies: Do not (saith he) I hate them (O Lord) that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that speak against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies. The which hatred of the world, and malicious enmity against the faithful, is a strong temptation, and great discouragement, especially to those who are of mild, gentle and peaceable dispositions, to hinder their speed in the ways of godliness. Against which, that we may be the better armed, let us first consider, that it is a matter of mere necessity to undergo the worlds hatred, if we would be assured, that we either love God, or that we are beloved of him. For such enmity there is between them, that he who maketh himself a friend to the one, doth necessarily become an enemy to the other; and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So our Savior telleth us, that we cannot serve God, and Mammon, being Masters of such a contrary

disposition, but we shall hate the one, whilst we love the other; or else cleave to the one, and forsake the other. Secondly, let us consider, that there is no great loss of the worlds love, which doth us little good; yea, no little hurt, seeing (like a miry dog) the more it fawneth upon us, the more it defileth us; nor any great harm, yea no small gain in the worlds hatred, seeing it doth but so much the more wean our hearts and affections from the love of earthly vanities, that they may with more entireness cleave unto God, and be wholly fixed upon spiritual and heavenly excellencies. Thirdly, let us remember, that the hatred of the world hath been from the beginning, the portion of all God's Saints and servants, whom it hath pursued with deadly malice, because they have been beloved of God. Yea, above all others did it most hate and malign our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and therefore we must not think much if it pursueth us with the like malice. For as he hath told us, The servant is not greater than his Lord; If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. Fourthly, the worlds hatred needeth not to discourage us in the ways of godliness, seeing it is unto us a comfortable evidence, that we are not of the world, for then it would love his own, but that we are the true Disciples of Jesus Christ, whom he hath chosen out of the world. Yea contrariwise, if the world should love us, we had just cause to suspect ourselves, seeing love ariseth out of likeness; neither could we be so much in the worlds favor, unless we too much favored it. Fifthly, the worlds hatred cannot discourage us, if we consider, that it is abundantly recompensed with the love of God, and of his Saints and blessed Angels. For the worlds malice can but bring some temporary trouble, joined with much inward and spiritual comfort, but in the favor of the Lord is life and blessedness. And therefore as no wise man, who is highly in the favor of his Prince, his chief Nobles, and the best of the people, will greatly care for the hatred of base gally-slaves, and the abjects of the Land, especially when the favor of both will not stand together: so if we be truly wise for our own good, we will not, if we be assured of God's love, and all his faithful servants, regard much the hatred of the world, which can love none but those whom God hateth. Finally, this hatred of the world for righteousness sake, will not dismay us, if we always

remember, that it shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness, according to that of our Savior, Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake; rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers to the Prophets.

Sect. 3 - That the former point ought to be held with diverse cautions.

But yet some cautions must be here observed: as first, that howsoever we are not to love the world, nor to maintain near and inward familiarity with God's enemies, yet in respect of our private carriage, we must behave ourselves innocently and justly towards them, and as the Apostle speaketh (as much as in us lieth) have peace with all men. Secondly, we must so hate their sins, their worldliness and profaneness, as that in the mean time we love their persons, performing unto them all civil and religious duties, whereby we may gain them to Christ, and be means (as much as in us lieth) of their conversion and salvation. Thirdly, that under color of hating the world, we do not carry ourselves cynically and harshly, peevishly and contentiously with those which remain still professed worldlings, but go forward in the practice of all holy duties, with all meekness of conversation, opposing them in nothing, but when they oppose us in piety and righteousness. For the world is ready to hate us too much already, for our profession and practice of God's true Religion, though by our perverse behavior, and rigid stiffness, even about things indifferent, we do not give it any cause to hate our persons. And therefore let us avoid their error, who when they have taken upon them the profession of Christian Religion, think themselves bound to profess open enmity against all those who are contrary minded; and that they best approve their Christianity, when as the fire of dissension, by their tart behavior, is kindled between them,

because Christ came to bring a sword and fire upon the earth, and to set at variance, even those which are of a man's family. For in many other places, we are earnestly exhorted to use all meekness and love, that we may win them by our conversation who are without, unless it be in the cause of God, and the defense of his truth. And therefore that place of our Savior is not to be understood so much of the doings of the faithful, whereby standing upon terms of hostility, they should provoke the enemies of the Gospel against them, but rather of their sufferings and persecutions, which for Christ's sake and the Gospel they should endure at the hands of the wicked, though they behaved themselves as meekly and mildly, as innocently and lovingly, as the cause of God and defense of his truth would suffer them. Or if at all, of their doings and oppositions against profane worldlings, yet not in such things, wherein they might lawfully agree, but in matters weighty and important, as concerning God's glory and their own salvation; and not in spleen, and spite, or private revenge, but when they have lawful authority to suppress their fury, and curb in their malice; or by an open war, according to the Law of God and Nations proclaimed against them. Finally, we must take heed, that we do not esteem all them as worldlings, who go not as far as we in the profession of Religion and the practice of holy duties; for there are Christians of all sizes and ages, and as well babes as grown men in God's family. But those only are to be ranked in this number of worldly opposites, who are professed enemies of Christian Religion, or only have the name of Christians, but are in truth gross idolaters, or wickedly profane, who in their lives deny the power of that truth, which they outwardly profess; maligning and hating all those who love and fear God, even for their godliness sake, and displaying their banners of impiety against all grace and goodness. Neither do I think that formal Christians, who live civilly amongst us, professing Christianity, and joining with us in the public exercises of Religion, are to be reckoned amongst these worldlings, who oppose us, and whom we oppose, though we cannot observe in them any signs of sound conversion, or of the sincerity and power of godliness; (seeing our Savior himself is said to have loved the young man, who yet had not so far proceeded in the course of Christianity) but profane

persons, lewd livers, notorious blasphemers, professed scorers, and malicious opposers against the Professors and practicers of God's true Religion.

Sect. 4 - Of the false judgment of the world, showed in their bitter censures of the godly.

And thus we may encourage ourselves in the duties of a godly life, against the hatred of the world and wicked men. Let us in the next place consider of the fruits of this hatred, from which diverse impediments do arise, that hinder many in the ways of godliness. And these are either internal in the mind and judgment, or external in the words and actions: of the former sort there are two notable hindrances and discouragements. The first is the false judgment and erroneous opinion of wicked worldlings, showed in their hard and harsh, bitter and uncharitable censures of the godly, whereby they condemn their persons, and all the good graces of God in them, with all the virtuous actions which are done by them, as evil and faulty. Their fervency of devotion in religious exercises, they judge to be gross hypocrisy; their wisdom and Christian prudence, they repute wiliness and subtlety; their simplicity, folly; their zeal, madness; their patience, Stoical apathy and stupidity; their frugality, miserly avarice; their bounty, lavish wastefulness; their Christian forbearance and long-suffering, pusillanimity and base cowardice; their severity, cruelty; their resolute and absolute obedience to God's Law, they condemn as no better than rebellion against Princes and Magistrates; their contempt of the world and earthly vanities, is reputed by them cynical and melancholic sottishness and folly. In a word, if we set ourselves seriously to please God, nothing that we can do will please the world, but all is taken at the worst, and even our best virtues will be branded and blemished by their unjust and uncharitable censures, as blameworthy and vicious. But that this may not discourage us in our Christian courses, let us consider, that this hath been ever the portion of all God's children, to be

condemned by his enemies. Thus the Prophets were censured to be opposites to Princes and States, the Apostles to be seditious persons and broachers of novelties. John the Baptists abstinence and austerity was counted devilish, Mary's love and bounty reputed needless and lavish wastefulness. Yea, our Savior Christ himself escaped not these false and unjust censures, but had his best actions blemished with the malicious censures of wicked men. His miracles done by the virtue of his divine nature, were deemed to be done by the power of Beelzebub the prince of the devils; For his benign sociableness, he was judged a boon-companion and a friend to Publican's and sinners; and all his gracious words, wrested and misconstrued unto the worst sense, which wit and malice could give unto them. And therefore if we will walk in their steps, we must look for the like measure, which both our fellow servants, and our great Lord and Master have found before us. Again, let us remember that we stand or fall to our own Master; and as it will do us little good to be approved of the world, when he condemneth us, so as little hurt, to be condemned of the world, when God and our consciences do approve and justify us. Finally, let us know to our comfort, that the day will come, when all these unjust censures and sentences pronounced by the mouths of malicious men, shall be wholly reversed; and all the sorrow and grief caused by them, swallowed up with ravishing joy, when we shall hear that last sentence of approbation pronounced by our Lord and Savior; Well done, good and faithful servant, &c. applauded by the acclamation of all the Saints and Angels.

Sect. 5 - Of worldly contempt, unto which the godly are liable.

The other impediment, whereby the world laboreth to discourage all that in the sincerity of their hearts fear and serve God, is, to have them above all other men in greatest contempt and basest esteem. For whom God prizeth as his choicest Jewels, the world vilifieth as abjects and the refuse of all things; whom the Lord honoreth with the

glorious titles and privileges of his own children, and heirs apparent to his heavenly Kingdom, the world despiseth as men unworthy to live in any human society. And no sooner are they admitted into that holy and happy communion with God, and fellowship of his Saints, but presently worldly and wicked men shun them as unworthy their company. For as the unjust man is an abomination to the just, so he that is upright in his way, is abomination to the wicked. And this was that stumbling block, which being cast into the way, hindered many of the Rulers from following Christ, and from embracing and professing that truth, of which their consciences were convinced, because they feared, lest hereby they should impeach their reputation, and expose themselves to the contempt of their consorts, loving the praise of men, more than the praise of God. This kept the parents of the blind man from confessing Christ, and justifying his miracle, because the Jews had decreed, that if any man did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of their Synagogue, and banished from their societies and public assemblies. Which impediment if we would remove, we must learn to esteem basely of the worlds estimate, and neither to think better of ourselves, when it honoreth us, nor worse, when it vilifieth and despiseth us. To which purpose let us consider, that when we are for righteousness sake most contemned in the eyes of the world, we are most magnified in the eyes of God; and contrariwise, when we have most the applause of men in our evil courses, we are esteemed of God most vile and abject, according to that of our Savior, That which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abominable in the sight of God. Let us remember, that we cannot immoderately affect the applause of men, and maintain faith and a good conscience. For as our Savior demandeth: How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? That we can never hold out constantly in our course of Christianity, unless we can with the Apostle, esteem it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment; and can be content with him, by honor and dishonor, evil report and good report, to go forward in the duties of a godly life, which if we perform with never so much diligence and zeal, yet if therein we do not aim chiefly to please God more than men, we shall not be the

servants of Christ, but of the world, seeing we will be willing to lay aside our profession and holy practice, when the world censureth and condemneth them. Let us know, that it will little avail us at the day of death or judgment, to have had the approbation and applause of men, when as God and our own consciences shall condemn us; nor be any cause of grief at that day, when we call to mind, that for the pleasing and honoring God in all Christian duties, we have displeased the world, and brought ourselves into contempt with men, when as the Lord and our own consciences shall approve and justify us. Let us consider, that as the praise and applause of men is mutable and momentary, so likewise their contempt, dispraises and false censures; of which we within a while shall be acquitted, and they being repaid according to their own measure, shall be judged and condemned. The which argument the Prophet useth to encourage us in this case: Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my Law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their reviling's; for the Moth shall eat them up, as a garment, and the Worm shall eat them up like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation. Finally, let us remember, that it hath been always the lot of the Righteous, who have truly feared God, and made conscience of all their ways, to be vilified and basely esteemed amongst wicked worldlings. Thus the Israelites, because they served God according to his will, by offering unto him such sacrifices as he required, were so contemned and despised of the idolatrous Egyptians, that they accounted it an abomination to eat with them. Of this, the true Church complaineth, and against this it prayeth: Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. So likewise David complaineth; I am small and despised; yet do I not forget thy precepts. And the Apostle Paul speaking of himself, and of other God's faithful Ministers, saith, that they were made and reputed as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things. Which Saints and servants of God we must be contented to accompany in their contempt and vile esteem, when by the profession and practice of the

truth we fall into it, if ever we mean to accompany them in glory. Yea, our Savior Christ himself was content for our sakes to be contemned and despised amongst men, as it was foretold by the Prophet, and whilst he performed the duties of his calling, to be accounted a friend and companion of Publican's and sinners, yea, to be himself esteemed a notorious sinner; a profaner of the Sabbaths, whilst he healed on them; a Sorcerer, whilst he did miracles; a Wine-bibber, whilst he consorted with sinners after a familiar manner, that he might call them to repentance: and lastly, after a despised life, to die a contemptible and reproachful death, even the death of the Cross, and thereby to be numbered amongst the wicked. And therefore why should the members look for honor and high esteem, where the Head was so scorned and contemned? Why should we not for his sake deny ourselves and our own credit and reputation amongst men, who therefore despise us, because we devote ourselves unto his service? Why should we not think such contempt our chiefest glory, and the base esteem of the world sufficiently recompensed, when we are dignified with the title of God's servants and sons, and with that precious account which he maketh of us? Why should we not with patience and joy, follow our Head in the same way, by which he ascended unto glory, comforting ourselves, according to his example, against all contempt and reproach, by looking upon the joy which is set before us?

CHAPTER V.

Of external impediments whereby the world hindereth us in the duties of a godly life; and first, slanders and derision.

Sect. 1 - How we may be armed against the slanders of the world.

And these are the impediments, which are internal in the minds and judgments of wicked worldlings. Those which are external, arise from their words and actions. Concerning the former, the world seeketh to discourage all those which truly fear God in their profession and holy practice by their contumelies and foul aspersions, slanders and reproaches. For when they have nothing in truth to object against them, in respect of their holy and unblameable conversation; then imitating their father the devil, who is a false accuser of the brethren, they load them with calumnies and slanders, either by laying to their charge the things which they never did, or reporting things materially true after a false and malicious manner, that with these obloquies and reproaches they may discourage them in their Christian courses, and discountenance and disgrace even their best actions. Thus Ahab accused Elias to be a troubler of Israel; and Amazias Amos to have conspired against the King in the midst of the house of Israel, and that the Land was not able to bear his words. Thus they slandered Stephen, that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Paul and Silas, that they were troublers of the City and State, that they did contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying, that there was another King, one Jesus. That they persuaded men to worship God contrary to the Law. That they taught all men everywhere, against the People, Law and Temple, and had polluted that holy place by bringing Greeks into it. And thus by Tertullus they slandered Paul, affirming that he was a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world, &c. Yea, so malignant are these black mouths, that they dared to cast foul and false aspersions upon our Savior Christ himself, and blot and blemish the white and pure robe of his innocence, with their unjust and reproachful calumnies. And such measure his Saints and servants found at the hands of wicked men, in the time of the persecuting Emperors; such have they found since, and shall do unto the end of the world. Against which discouragements, if we would be armed, we must remember, that this needeth not to seem any strange thing unto us, seeing our Savior Christ hath foretold, that this should be the lot of all his servants, to be reviled and slandered for his sake and the Gospels. That our Head and Lord hath born

these reproaches for our sake, and therefore we his members and servants must not think much, if we suffer the like for him and his truth. That there was never any so dear unto God, nor innocent amongst men, who have not been whipped with the scourge of malicious tongues; and therefore we must not think to go alone upon earth, but must here bear them company, if ever we hope to enjoy their society in that heavenly happiness. Secondly, if we would not be discouraged with the obloquies and slanders of wicked men, let us preserve our innocence, and walk unblameably in this evil generation, taking great care so to carry ourselves in all Holiness and Righteousness of conversation, that no man may speak evil of us without a lie; and so the testimony of a good conscience will more comfort and support us in all our Christian courses, then the slanders of wicked men shall be able to daunt and dismay us. And this is the best way to convince them of falsehood, not only unto others, but even to their own consciences, and even to make them like and love (if they belong unto God) the Religion which we profess. Neither can anything more powerfully beat back these poisonous darts of slanderous reports, then the breastplate of righteousness and integrity, so as they shall never wound our heart, though for a time they may blemish the brightness of our fame. No verbal Apologies can so clear and justify us, and convince our adversaries of falls-hood and malice, as this real confutation of an innocent and unblameable life. Finally, let us consider, that they are pronounced blessed by our Savior, who are thus reviled and slandered unjustly and wrongfully; and the more we are thus disgraced and dishonored in this life, the more we shall be advanced and glorified in the life to come; In which regard there is no just cause of mourning, when we are thus falsely traduced for Christ's sake and the Gospel: Yea, rather we should rejoice and be exceeding glad, because our reward is great in heaven, as our Savior hath taught us.

Sect. 2 - Of derision and scoffs, which the world useth to discourage the godly.

The second impediment is the derision, scoffs and scorns of wicked worldlings, whereby they disgrace the persons of the godly, and discountenance and discourage them in all religious and holy duties. The which they do either by their words, as in taunting speeches, making a jest of their profession and holy practice, their hearing; reading, and studying of the Scriptures, praying, godly communication, and such religious exercises; or by branding them with opprobrious names, as Lollards, Huguenots, Puritans, Sectaries, Bible-bearers, Holy brethren and such like; or else by scornful gestures, as nodding, shaking the head, mowing, jeering, laughing at them, and the like. The which is a great impediment that hindereth many (especially such as are of mild, modest and ingenuous natures) from making any outward profession of God's true Religion, and performing of any religious exercises; or at least, to proceed in them with much discouragement and disquietness of mind; as appeareth by those pitiful complaints which they have from time to time made unto God, of these indignities offered unto them by their spiteful adversaries. Thus the Church complaineth, that God's enemies did hiss and gnash their teeth against them; that they were a derision to all the people, and their song all the day. And that in their bitter mourning and day of affliction, they in a taunting manner required of them, that they would be merry and sing one of the songs of Zion. That they were become a reproach to their neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that were round about them. That they were made a by-word among the Heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. Thus Job complaineth; I am as one mocked of his neighbor, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: The just and upright man is laughed to scorn. So David: The proud have had me greatly in derision, with hypocritical mockers at feasts they gnashed upon me with their teeth. They that did sit in the gate, spake against me, and I was the song of the drunkards. And speaking of himself as a type of Christ, he saith; All they that see me, laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip and shake the head. By this, Job's misery was much aggravated, when as wicked men made him their song and by-word. And Jeremiah brought to such impatience, that he resolved to speak

no more in the name of the Lord, because he was in derision daily, and everyone reproached and mocked him.

Sect. 3 - How we may be armed against the derisions, and scorns of worldlings.

But howsoever this is a great and grievous temptation, yet we must take heed that we be not so discouraged thereby, as to desist, or so much as slacken our pace in the ways of godliness; but though we sometime stumble at it and catch a fall, yet we must not lie still and quite give over our profession and holy practice, but rise up again, and go in our course with renewed resolution: According to the example of the Church of God, who though they were somewhat daunted and grieved with the scoffs and derisions of the wicked, yet they did not forget God, nor deal falsely in his covenants; Their heart turned not back, neither did their steps turn from his way. And of holy David, who professeth, that though the proud had him greatly in derision, yet he declined not from God's Law. Unto which resolution that we may attain, let us consider first, that herein no new thing doth betide us, but that which all God's Saints and servants have suffered at the hands of the wicked from time to time. For thus Ishmael derided Isaac, and (as it is probable) the promises of God made unto him, and all the faithful in his seed. Michal scoffed at the zeal of holy David, when she saw him dancing before the Ark. Thus the Israelites scorned God's Prophets and messengers that spake unto them in the Word of the Lord: And made themselves sport with Ezekiel's Sermons, as if he had been some pleasant Musician. Finally, thus Sanballat and Tobiah derided Nehemiah and the Jews, when they set them seriously to do the work of the Lord. And the Jews scoffed at the Apostles, when they spake with strange tongues the wonderful works of God, as though they had been drunk with new wine. Yea, our Savior Christ himself, in whom all gravity and wisdom shined, and in whose actions Might and Majesty, Grace and Goodness clearly appeared, was notwithstanding no whit privileged

and exempted from the derision and scorns of wicked worldlings. For the Pharisees laughed at his divine Sermons. Herod and the soldiers in scorn clothe him in white and purple, crown him with thorns, bow the knee before him, and floutingly salute him as King of the Jews. Yea, in his bitter passion (which he suffering as innocent, should have drawn from all men even tears of blood) they sported themselves, nodded their heads, and made themselves merry with his lamentable cry and pitiful complaint, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Now if they have done these things to a green tree, fruitful in all grace and goodness, what will they do to a dry and barren? If they have thus scoffed and derided our Lord and Master, let us not, who are his poor and unworthy servants, think much to be thus used: If he have suffered all these taunts and scorns for our sakes, why should we think it much, to suffer with patience and joy the like or greater (if it were possible) for his sake and the Gospels? Yea, if he have meekly born our sins and sorrows, and shed his precious blood, and endured the heavy wrath of God due unto us, that he might save and deliver us out of the hands of all our enemies; how ungrateful are we for all his love, if we will not for his sake endure a taunt, a spiteful scorn or reproachful name, but choose rather to neglect the duties of his service, and to run with wicked worldlings unto the same excess of riot? So oft therefore as the scoffs of profane men discourage and dis-hearten us in Christian duties, let us animate and strengthen our resolutions in them, by looking, with the eye of faith, upon our Savior Christ, hanging naked upon the Cross, and dying a shameful death for our sins, contemning this disgrace, and swallowing up this shame with the infiniteness of his love. Let us be content to accompany him in despising these despites, that we may also accompany him in glory and happiness; according to that of the Apostle; Let us run with patience, the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds.

Sect. 4 - Of the necessity of Christian Apology and profession of the truth.

Secondly, let us consider, that this Christian apology in the profession of the truth, and practice of all holy and Christian duties, is a matter of urgent necessity, which as nearly concerneth us, as the everlasting salvation of our souls. For they that will be Christ's Disciples, must take up their cross daily, and follow him; and be contented, for his sake and the Gospels, to forsake kindred and friends, houses, lands, and life itself, if they be called thereunto. Now how shall we with patience and constancy endure for Christ's sake, wounds and stabs, if we shrink for words and scoffs? How shall we ever hope to suffer racks and gibbets, fire and sword, for the profession of the truth, and the practice of Christian duties; if we be daunted with every small disgrace, and discouraged in them with reproachful names, and scornful taunts? Let us think with ourselves, that if we cannot endure causeless shame before men, which is accompanied with true glory, how shall we be able to bear that everlasting shame and confusion of face, when as Christ shall be ashamed to acknowledge us for his, before his Father, his holy Saints, and blessed Angels, because we have been ashamed of him and his truth? Now that we may perform this duty, which is so necessary, with cheerfulness and delight, and contemn the derisions and scorning's of graceless men, when they scoff at us for the performance of Christian duties, blushing for shame that we should be thus ashamed; let us consider, that when we are most derided of the wicked world, for the conscionable performance of any Christian duties, we are then most approved of God; and therefore when they seek to daunt us with their scoffs, and to drive us from our Christian hold with gibes and reproaches; let us oppose this as a shield of strength against them, saying unto our souls, My defense is of God, who saveth the upright in heart. Let us comfort and cheer ourselves with the peaceable testimony of a good conscience, and our inward joy in well-doing; and with the applause of the holy Angels who look

upon us, and the approbation and praise of all that fear God. Let us remember, that they are pronounced blessed by our Savior, who are thus abused for righteousness sake, and that they shall reign with him in his glory, who have suffered with him in these disgraces: that then, for their shame, they shall receive double honor, and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion, and everlasting joy shall be unto them. In which respect, the Apostle Peter exhorteth us to rejoice, in as much as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy. And therefore let no scoffs and scorns discourage us, but let us, with the Apostle, approve ourselves in all things, by honor, and dishonor, evil report, and good report; and accompany our Savior Christ bearing his reproach, that we may accompany him in glory; for we have here no abiding City, but we seek one to come, as the Apostle speaketh.

CHAPTER VI.

Of worldly persecutions, and how we may be strengthened against them.

Sect. 1 - Of the worlds cruelty, in persecuting the godly.

We have showed in the former Chapters, what impediments the world, and wicked men cast in the way, to hinder our profession and practice of the true Religion, which respect their judgment and affections, their words and outward gestures: and now we are to entreat of those which respect their works and actions. And these are their contumelious and malicious handling of them, and the bitter persecutions which they raise against them, that they may either hinder them wholly from proceeding in the course of Christianity, or

at least cause them to go on with much discouragement and discomfort. The which contumelies and persecutions are great and manifold; as the pursuing of them with all malice and extremity, from place to place, apprehending them as malefactors, haling them before their Judgment seats, false accusations, unjust condemnations, imprisonments, and banishments, fire and sword, tortures and punishments, executed and inflicted in the most exquisite manner which wit and malice can devise and impose. And this malicious rage of wicked men, the Prophet Isaiah in lively manner expresseth: The act of violence (saith he) is in their hands; Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings. Neither doth the world use such spite and spleen towards the most outrageous offender that ever lived, as it doth to the Saints and servants of God, for the truth sake. For towards them oftentimes it quite blunteth the point and edge of human laws, and commonly moderateth and mitigateth the extreme rigor of them in their punishments; but against the faithful it sharpeneth the point and edge where none is; yea, deviseth new laws, when the old restrain their malice. And whereas they content themselves with those punishments which the laws determine against the most notorious and heinous offenders, and when they are forced for the safety and preservation of human societies to execute them, they do it as the Law requireth, and oftentimes with some pity and compassion: contrariwise, when they have to do with those, who being God's faithful servants, have made themselves liable to their laws, they sport themselves in their torments, and out of mere malice to them for their Religion and piety, they execute the Laws with all savage cruelty, adding both by their words and actions, many outrages over and above those punishments which the Law requireth; as we see in the example of our Savior Christ, and the thieves crucified with him. For whereas they contented themselves with their simple death, without any additaments of malice, they could never satisfy their spiteful rage, in vexing and tormenting our Savior Christ, but used him with all contumelious reproach, spitting

upon, and buffeting him, scourging and crowning him with thorns, scoffing and deriding him, mocking and mooring at him, giving unto him when he thirsted, gall and vinegar, and insulting over him in mirth and triumph, when they saw the bitter anguish of his soul. The which also is to be observed in the examples of those punishments which have been inflicted upon most heinous malefactors; as murderers, traitors, parricides, and upon the innocent Martyrs of Jesus Christ, if we compare the one with the other. Of which, no other reason can be given, but that the world loveth her own, and hateth those which belong unto God, affecting the persons of wicked men, and setting themselves only against their crimes, not out of any love towards God, or simple hatred of their sins, as being transgressions of his Laws; but out of self-love, because their offenses are against human laws, which if they should not be preserved and maintained, observed and obeyed, societies could not subsist, nor the safety and welfare of their own estates be otherwise upheld. Whereas contrariwise, it maligneth and hateth even the very persons of the godly, as being the members of Jesus Christ, only for their profession of Religion, and practice of holy duties, and in these respects can never sufficiently disgorge its malice against them.

Sect. 2 - That it hath always been the lot of the godly to be persecuted in the world.

Now the means to remove the former impediments, are manifold. The first is, to consider, that it hath always, from the beginning of the world, been the lot of God's children, to be persecuted of the wicked; in which regard it is unto us a notable and comfortable evidence, that we love God, and are beloved of him, when the wicked world maligneth and pursueth us with all rage and cruelty, for righteousness sake. For thus Cain persecuted Abel, because his service was accepted of God. Thus Pharaoh and the Egyptians raged against the Israelites, when they did but make mention of going into the Wilderness to offer sacrifice. Thus the wicked Kings, and more

wicked Priests, persecuted God's true Prophets; the Scribes and Pharisees, the Apostles of Jesus Christ; the idolatrous Emperors, the Christians of the Primitive Church; and the limbs of Antichrist, the holy Martyrs, because they professed God's true Religion, and brought forth the fruits of it in their holy practice. More particularly, David often professeth, that he was maligned by his wicked enemies without cause, only because he did that which was good, and sought in all his courses to be approved of God. And the Apostle Paul in many words setteth down the grievous persecutions which he often suffered at their hands, who were enemies to God's truth. But as these holy Saints of God were not by all these persecutions discouraged in their course of godliness; but the more boisterously the storms of malicious rage blowed against them, the more firmly and constantly they held the cloak of their Christian profession and holy practice; according to that of David; Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies: so must we do in this case, following their good example, if we would have any comfortable assurance that God will think us worthy to be ranked in this number. And this argument, taken from these examples, our Savior useth to arm his Disciples against this discouragement: Rejoice (saith he) and be exceeding glad, seeing your reward is great in heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. Yea, our Savior Christ himself hath begun to us, that we may not fear to pledge him, and hath drunk the deepest draught in this bitter cup of worldly persecutions. For what mischief could hell itself raise up out of her infernal bowels, what cruel rage and exquisite vexations and torments could malicious wit devise, which were not inflicted upon this innocent Lamb, the Lord our righteousness? Now what can be a more effectual reason to move us with all patience and cheerfulness, to endure the greatest extremities for Christ's sake, then to remember what grievous torments he hath suffered for us, who were strangers and enemies unto God, and the children of wrath as well as others? For if our great and glorious General, and Sovereign King, hath thus exposed himself to the extremist dangers, and thrust himself into the thickest crowd of enemies, where he hath received grisly and mortal wounds, that he

might rescue and recover us, who were taken captive by them, and set us at liberty; how valiantly should we fight his battles, even unto blood, against the enemies of our salvation, especially considering, that he looketh upon us, encourageth us to the fight, supporteth and strengtheneth us with his grace and holy Spirit, defendeth and succoreth us when we are over-matched, raiseth us up when we are foiled, and holdeth in his hand the Crown of victory, being ready to set it upon our heads, when we have finished the fight? And this argument our Savior useth to encourage us in all our sufferings and persecutions: Remember (saith he) the word that I said unto you; The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. And so likewise the Apostle Peter; For as much then (saith he) as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, &c. The which our persecutions we may well suffer with greater patience and comfort, if we consider, that they are not punishments for our sins, from all which, Christ hath fully freed us, but the trials of our faith, which being approved, shall be crowned with everlasting joy and happiness. In which regard we have cause greatly to rejoice (as the Apostle Peter speaketh) though now for a season (if need be) we are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than the gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. So the Apostle James, My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; of which he afterwards rendereth this reason, Because blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. And indeed, what a wonderful privilege is this? And what great cause doth it minister unto us of comfort and rejoicing, when we consider that the Lord hath vouchsafed unto us this great honor, to suffer afflictions for his own glory, and the furthering and assuring of our salvation, when as he might have justly inflicted them, and far greater upon us for our sins, and to the burden of our sufferings, have deservedly added the uncomfortable weight of shame and infamy? All which

blessed privileges we shall lose, and run into the contrary mischiefs, and even hellish condemnation, if we shrink from our profession and holy practice, for fear of persecution, and refuse to suffer for his sake, who hath suffered so much for us. For he that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. And again, If any man come to me (saith our Savior) and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and his own life also (namely, when they come in comparison with Christ, and when the love of both cannot stand together) he cannot be my Disciple. And whosoever doth not hear his cross and come unto me, cannot be my Disciple.

Sect. 3 - That our Savior hath foretold these persecutions.

Secondly, let us consider that our Savior Christ hath long ago foretold, that whosoever will be his Disciples, must suffer in this world troubles and persecutions, and that those who will attain unto heavenly happiness, must travail unto it by that afflicted way which himself and all his servants have gone before them. If any man (saith he) will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall save it. Now what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? So the Apostles first offered the Cross unto them, who would afterwards wear the Crown, and have told us beforehand, that by many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. And that whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. And therefore our Savior Christ seriously adviseth us, that before we take upon us the profession of Christianity, we first sit down and cast up our accounts, examining ourselves, whether we can be content to suffer with him, that we may afterwards reign with him; and to endure afflictions and persecutions in this world, that we may eternally triumph with him in glory and happiness in the world to come. Now what more fair dealing could be used, then to tell us

beforehand what we must trust to, and before he entertain us into his service, to acquaint us thoroughly with our work which he requireth of us, before we can receive our wages which we expect from him? If indeed he had allured us to serve him, by promising that we should enjoy pleasures, riches, and honors in the world, and that for his sake we should be well accepted and favored of all men, we should have had great cause of discouragement, when we should come so far short of our hopes, and find nothing in the world but crosses and afflictions, pains for pleasures, poverty for riches, and for glory, shame and disgrace; for then seeing his promises fail in things that concern this life, we had cause to doubt of those that respect the life to come. But now contrariwise, seeing he hath foretold, that we must in this world suffer troubles and persecutions, and be hated of all men for his Name sake, and that afterwards, when by our patient suffering we have approved our saith and love towards him, he will crown these his graces in us with joy and happiness in the life to come; our afflictions and persecutions should not daunt and dismay us; yea, rather we should rejoice in them, as the infallible signs of our future hopes, for having found Christ's Word verified in the first part of his predictions, respecting our afflictions, and persecutions, we may undoubtedly expect, that we shall find it also true in that part which concerneth our crown of victory and heavenly joys, which after our momentary sufferings, we shall everlastingly possess, according to the gracious promises which he hath made unto us.

Sect. 4 - That worldly persecutions cannot greatly hurt us.

Thirdly, let us encourage ourselves against these persecutions, because they cannot greatly hurt us; for first, they are either light and easy, if they be long and tedious; or short and momentary, if they be sharp and grievous. For God hath graciously so composed and framed our natures, that their frailty and weakness cannot hold out to bear any heavy burdens, and hath made them mortal and of such short continuance, that their afflictions and grievances must needs

be short and momentary. Secondly, the greatest persecutions which rage and malice can raise against us, can but reach unto the body, and only extend to the time of this life; but cannot at all hurt the soul, nor hinder our happiness in the life to come. In which respect, our Savior encourageth us against these persecutions; Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Thirdly, these persecutions cannot much hurt us, because our gracious God keepeth and preserveth us, so as we cannot faint and fall, and pulleth out their sting, so as they shall never be able to give unto us any mortal wounds. And therefore as the Apostle Peter exhorteth, Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Fourthly, because in our sharpest persecutions we are so inwardly comforted with the consolation of God's Spirit, that in our greatest sufferings our joy may well exceed our grief. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolation aboundeth by Christ; as the Apostle found in his own experience. And this is that lasting and full joy that our Savior promised to give, and so to continue it unto us, that no man should be able to take it from us. This is that joy which causeth us to rejoice in tribulation, singing unto God with Paul and Silas Psalms of praise, when our backs are torn with stripes, and our feet fastened in the stocks.

Sect. 5 - Of the patience which the Saints have showed in suffering persecutions.

Fourthly, let us encourage and comfort ourselves against all persecutions, by remembering the patience and meekness, the joy and thankfulness which the Saints and holy Martyrs of God have showed, in suffering all crosses and calamities, tortures and grievous pains which the wicked world could inflict upon them. For well may we go forward in this afflicted way with joy and comfort, when as we have the Word of God to be our guide, the holy Martyrs of former

ages, as precedents for our imitation, and the faithful that now live with us, to bear us company. Thus we read that the Apostles rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ. Thus the Saints took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven, a better and more enduring substance. And when they were tortured, accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Others had trial of cruel mocking's and scourging's, bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, sawn in sunder, tempted and slain with the sword, &c. And thus the holy Martyrs of the Primitive Church, and of later days, even tired their tormentors with their patience and constancy, out-faced their most bitter tortures with their cheerful countenances, rejoiced in the scorching flames, and even before they died, triumphed over death. And therefore (as the Apostle exhorteth) seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience unto the race that is set before us, &c.

Sect. 6 - That our persecutions for righteousness sake shall be richly rewarded.

Fifthly, let us consider the great and rich rewards which are given graciously unto all those who suffer for the truth and righteousness sake. For first, in itself it is a high and holy privilege, to suffer anything for the name of Christ, which the Apostle maketh a higher degree of dignity then simply to believe in him to justification, which is common to ordinary Christians; For unto you (saith he) it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; which is a prerogative peculiar to the holy Martyrs. In which regard, the Apostle James would have us to account it not an ordinary matter of common rejoicing, but of exceeding joy, when we are thus tempted and tried. But how much more have we cause of unspeakable joy in our greatest afflictions and persecutions, if we consider the present comfort which we feel in conscience of well-

doing, and the inward peace and joy in the holy Ghost, which always accompany our sufferings, for the profession of the truth, and practice of holy duties; and the future rewards which God hath promised to all that endure them with constancy and patience? For if we lose this life which is mortal and momentary, we shall in lieu thereof find such an one as is immortal and everlasting; If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him. If we be persecuted for righteousness sake, we are by Christ's own mouth pronounced blessed, because the Kingdom of heaven belongeth unto us. So the Apostle Peter; If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled: yea, rather as our Savior exhorteth; Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. And the Apostle Peter likewise willeth us to rejoice, in as much as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, because when his glory shall be revealed, we shall be glad also with exceeding joy. And surely, if we consider well of it, there can be no greater cause of sound rejoicing, seeing there is no comparison between our present sorrows, and future joys; between our smart of afflictions, and solace of heavenly delight, either in their quantity or continuance, according to that of the Apostle, I reckon that the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; for after that we have suffered but a little while, God will call us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and as the Apostle speaketh, These light and momentary afflictions, shall cause unto us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And therefore let us not look to the sorrowful seed-time, but to the joyful harvest; not to our present labors, but to our Sabbath of rest; not to our bleeding wounds in the Christian Warfare, but to our victory and everlasting triumph; not to the fire and faggot, gibbet and sword, but to the glorious Crown, which shall be set upon his head that fighteth unto the death. Let us look to Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Throne of God; that so following his example, we may partake with him in joy and happiness. On the other side, let us set before us, the dreadful estate of those men at the day of

Judgment, who either to please men, or to gain their worldly ends, or finally, for fear of punishment, have denied Christ and his Truth, either verbally with their mouths, or really in their actions. For amongst other desperate sinners, the fearful shall be rejected of Christ, and have their portion in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. And as they have denied him before men, so he will deny them before his Father in heaven; saying, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know ye not. Suppose therefore that we could by neglecting all Christian duties, attain unto the honors, riches, and pleasures of the earth, which men so eagerly hunt after, yet alas, what inestimable loss is in this purchase? For as our Savior speaketh; What will it profit us to gain the whole world, and lose our own souls?

CHAPTER VII.

Of the impediments of a godly life, which arise from scandals and offenses.

Sect. 1 - The first scandal arising from the prosperity of the wicked.

And thus have I showed what are the usual impediments which the world and worldly men use to hinder us in the ways of godliness, both in respect of their judgment and affections, their words and actions. Now we are to entreat of such as arise from scandals and offenses, which they commonly cast in our way, as stumbling blocks, to discourage us in the course of Christianity. The first whereof, is the flourishing estate of wicked worldlings, who prosper in their sinful courses, and abound in riches, honors, and pleasures, as though they were highly in God's favor, and were approved of him in all their courses, seeing they enjoy above all others, so many

testimonies of his love, and exceed all other men in outward blessings. And this the wise Solomon observed in his time: There is (saith he) a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; I said that this also is vanity. This was it which had almost made holy David's foot to slip, to offend against the generation of God's children, and to conclude, that he had cleansed his heart, and washed his hands in innocence in vain, when he observed the great prosperity of the wicked, and how they thrived in all their courses. This brought Jeremiah to a stand, and made him so bold as to reason the matter with God, concerning the administration of his righteous Judgments; Wherefore (saith he) doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them; yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins. But this impediment we shall easily remove, if with David we will go into God's Sanctuary; for there we shall understand their end: namely, that God hath set them in slippery places, from which he casteth them down into destruction. And this truth we may confirm unto ourselves, not only by our own daily observation, but also by the experience of the faithful, who have gone before us, and have raised up their hearts with comfort, after that they had stumbled at this stone of offense. I have seen (saith David) the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green Bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea I sought him, but he could not be found. And contrariwise; Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for (howsoever his beginnings may be embittered with afflictions, yet) the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; and the end of the wicked shall be cut off. So out of his wise experience Solomon thus concludeth, Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are a shadow, because he feareth not before God. Again, let us consider, that the wicked in this

life have with Dives all their good, the which through their abuse turneth to their great evil, fattening them for the day of slaughter, and serving unto them as occasions and instruments of sin, do but increase their fearful condemnation. Let us remember that they have their portion in this life, having their bellies filled with God's hid treasure, and no further joy remaineth unto them, but this which is so mutable and momentary; whereas the Lord hath far better things in store for his own children and servants, even permanent riches and honors, and pleasures at his own right hand forever-more. And therefore we need not to envy the happiness of these slaves, nor to be discouraged in the service of our heavenly Father, though for the present they have more to spend in their riotous courses than we; seeing though in the time of our non-age, he giveth unto us but some short allowance, because through childish folly we are apt to abuse greater plenty, and to accompany them in the same excess; yet he reserveth better things in store for us, even our heavenly inheritance, glory without disgrace, riches and treasures which fade not, and ravishing delights which shall continue for evermore.

Sect. 2 - The second scandal arising from judgment deferred.

The second scandal and offense, is that delay which God seemeth to make in the administration of his Judgments, and dispensation of his benefits and rewards. For first, when wicked men multiply their sins, and yet escape deserved punishment, they begin to doubt whether there be any providence, and so let the reins loose to all manner of wickedness: According to that of the Preacher, Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil. And God's children likewise stumble at this stone of offense, being tempted to think that there is no gain in godliness, and little profit in being more diligent than others in the duties of God's service, when as they observe that there is, in respect of outward things, no assurance of love or hatred, nor any difference between one and

another, seeing all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not. As is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. But this temptation and stumbling block I have before removed; only let us remember, that God's Judgments like himself are eternal, and that he giveth such rewards to the godly, and inflicteth such punishments upon the wicked as are endless and everlasting. In which respect, a thousand years are with God but as one day, as the Apostle speaketh; and the benefits and afflictions of the longest liver, nothing in comparison of future joys and miseries. And therefore the greatest prosperity of wicked men should not encourage any to follow their sinful courses, seeing it shall soon have an end, and bring with it endless punishments. Neither should the longest and greatest afflictions discourage us in the duties of a godly life, seeing they are but light and momentary, in respect of that eternal weight of Glory, which they shall cause unto us. Let us consider, that though the Lord deferreth long to execute his Judgments, yet those that abuse this patience and long-suffering, shall not escape in the end, and the longer that vengeance hath been delayed, the more fearful and intolerable will it be when it is inflicted. For though God cometh slowly, yet he payeth surely, and the longer that he is fetching his stroke, the more heavily will it light upon those who do not prevent it by their repentance. Finally, let us know, that wicked men, when they seem most to flourish in the world, do not, even in this life, escape unpunished. For if they be not haunted with those hellish furies, the terrors and torments of a self-accusing conscience, which giveth them inwardly many a cold pang, when they smile and laugh in the face and outward appearance; they are not free from more dangerous and desperate punishments, though they be less sensible and smarting, even the deadly lethargy of carnal security, and that scarce curable disease of a feared conscience and hardness of heart. Neither ought we to be anymore discouraged, because God seemeth wholly to defer the bestowing of his rewards upon those that serve him, unto another life, and because in the meantime godliness bringeth little gain, and the

service of God small profit in the world. For suppose that this were so, yet the riches and eternity of the reward, will, when it is bestowed, abundantly recompense our short forbearance. And therefore, if the most covetous usurers can with patience forbear the sight and fruition of their gold, which notwithstanding is that dearly-beloved idol, upon which their hearts are fixed; and can satisfy both their eyes and minds with the sight and perusal of their bonds, which assure them, that at the years end, they shall receive it with some advantage, though it be but ten in the hundred; why should not we with joy and comfort perform service unto God, though he should wholly defer the rewards which he hath promised, even unto the end of our lives; seeing we have a most sure Pay-master, who hath covenanted to give, in lieu of our forbearance, an hundred for ten, yea, a thousand for one, and hath committed to our keeping infallible bonds and evidences sealed with the blood of Christ, and ratified with his oath, with the daily reviewing whereof, we may continually revive and refresh our drooping and fainting souls? But if we be so sensual, that we only mind things present, and prefer small possessions, before the greatest possibilities, and richest reversions, let us further know, that even in this life God rewardeth his servants with gifts of incomparable greater value, then those which worldlings can most brag off. For besides that the godly are in respect of outward things, at God's finding, who will never suffer them to want such a convenient competency, as in his infinite Wisdom he knoweth to be fittest for them; and though he giveth not unto them such superfluity and abundance, as many worldlings do possess, because he knoweth, that it would rather be a burden to press them down unto the earth, then a benefit to further them in the way to heavenly happiness, yet he giveth them sufficiency and contentation of mind, which the other want in their greatest plenty: Besides all this (I say) he bestoweth upon them all the Royal privileges, whereof I have already spoken, especially the assurance of his love and their salvation, with all other spiritual graces, peace of Conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, as before I have showed more at large.

Sect. 3 - The third scandal arising from hypocrites.

The last scandal and offense, whereof I will speak, by which men are hindered from entering into, and proceeding in the duties of a godly life, ariseth from those that make profession of Christianity and sincerity, whether they be private persons, or public, as the Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. The first is that which is given by hypocrites, who making profession of the true Religion, do in their lives deny the power thereof, falling into many gross and grievous sins; especially such as are committed against the second Table, as injustice and uncharitableness, fraud and deceit, cruelty and oppression, pride and covetousness, falsifying of their covenants and promises: And also by such as profess the truth in sincerity and uprightness of heart, and yet through human frailty and infirmity, are sometimes over-taken of these and such like sins. Both which cast before the feet of those, who are unregenerate, such stumbling blocks of offense, that they are thereby brought out of love with God's true Religion, presuming that there is little good in it, when as they discern no better fruits of it in their lives: and so hate not only such professors; but also their profession for their sakes, resolving with themselves, that they will never be of their religion, which is so disgraced in the world by the evil conversation of these seeming forward men. Yea, not only those which are without, are wholly hindered from entering into the course of Christianity, but those also that are already entered, are hereby so discountenanced and disheartened, that they proceed in the ways of godliness, with much discomfort and discouragement. For they are not only hindered from making any profession of Religion more than others, when they see it thus infamed, lest hereby they might seem like unto them, and so bring upon themselves the disgrace and reproach of hypocrites, but also out of the same respects shun the practice of all Christian duties, which have at least any appearance of Piety, as hearing the Word with any extraordinary diligence and devotion, Holy communication, Christian admonition, strict observation and sanctification of the Lord's day, prayer in their families and such like, because they would not incur among worldlings, the suspicion of being hypocrites. For

the avoiding of which scandal and impediment, let all those in the fear of the Lord be admonished, which call upon the Name of Christ, to depart from iniquity, and that as they shine more than others in the Light of an holy profession, so also that they approve this Light to be divine and heavenly, by the kindly and lively heat of a charitable conversation, and glorify God, and adorn their profession, by bringing forth the fruits of it, not only in their piety towards him, but in their works of righteousness and charity towards their neighbors. Let them take heed, that they presume not to take God's holy covenant into their mouths, when as they hate to be reformed; nor to wear God's livery of a sincere profession, to dishonor him by their infamous lives: and that they do not, by giving just cause of offense, as much as in them lieth, destroy those for whom Christ hath died, and so cause his precious blood to be shed in vain, lest in that great Day of accounts, the blood of these men, who have perished by their evil example, be required at their hands. Let them remember, that counterfeit piety is double iniquity; that the hypocrite shall be cut off, and his hope perish; that the seeming holy Pharisee is much more odious in God's sight, then Publican's and open sinners, seeing they more dishonor God, and disgrace his holy truth then any other. Finally, that God will be honored in all those that draw near unto him, either by rewarding their sincerity, or punishing their hypocrisy; and that above all others, the hypocrite shall be assuredly plunged into that bottomless Gulf of hellish condemnation, in which regard, when our Savior speaketh of the undoubted punishments of desperate sinners, he usually saith, that they shall have their portion with hypocrites in outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those also, who are not yet called and regenerate, are to be admonished, as they tender the everlasting salvation of their souls, that they do not suffer themselves to be hindered and discouraged by this scandal of the evil lives of hypocrites, and weak Christians, from the profession of God's true Religion, and the practice of holy duties. And to this purpose, that they ascribe these enormities or frailties to anything rather, then unto the profession of the truth, or the outward practice of it in any Christian duties of God's service: As namely, to the malice of the devil, who with his

temptations, assaulteth professors with more hellish policy and fury than other men, because their sins and falls do most dishonor God, and blemish the beauty and brightness of his shining truth; to the wily spite of worldlings, who with all their endeavor entice or compel those that make any show of Religion, to accompany them in their wicked courses, that they may countenance their actions by their examples, or escape their admonitions and reprehensions, when as they are now become alike faulty. Or to their deep and poisonous corruptions, which notwithstanding their outward profession, do still lie secretly lurking in their hearts, which cause them to break out into those sins, which their own consciences, enlightened with God's truth, do utterly condemn. Neither can they with more show, impute their scandalous sins and foul falls, to the just and pure Religion professed by them, than the crookedness of the work to the right and perfect squire, or the foulness of their hands to the pure crystal fountain, which if it were rightly used, would wash and make them clean. For what are all their faults, but crooked aberrations from this straight way of truth? What are they, but such sins as are continually condemned and beaten down in the preaching of the Gospel? For how can they have any encouragement to go on in their wickedness, by their often hearing of God's Word, wherein his fearful Judgments are daily denounced against all those who live in their sins? And therefore accursed be that foul mouth, if it be not washed in the tears of unfeigned repentance, that dare belch out such a blasphemy against God's holy truth, as to say, that if there were less preaching and hearing of the Word, there would be more obedience towards superiors, and more love and charity towards equals and inferiors. And likewise thrice unhappy they, who will so stumble at this stone of offense, cast into their ways by the evil lives of hypocrites, as that they refuse to take upon them this holy profession, or to bring forth better fruits than they in their Christian practice. As if all should refuse physic, because some die that take it; or wholesome food, because some who have their stomachs full of corrupt humors, are not nourished thereby, but becoming more sick, do presently cast it up again without profit. Finally, let no weak Christians be discouraged by the evil lives of hypocrites, from making open and

bold profession of God's truth, and bringing forth the outward fruits of it in the practice of all Christian duties, because they would not be thought like unto them. For what were this, but to deny Christ before men, because we would shun their reproaches? And to be in truth impious in the neglect of Christian duties, because we would shun the suspicion of hypocrisy? What were this, but to esteem more of the vain and false censures of profane worldlings, then of the approbation which our good actions, and holy duties shall have from God and a good conscience? What were this, but to refuse to be God's true treasure and pure gold, because there are in the world many counterfeit slips? To grow in his field, and to lie in his barn, like good wheat, because there are tares in the one, and chaff in the other? What were this, but to give over our lawful callings, and honest labors in them, because there be some of the same trade that discredit themselves and their calling, by their fraudulent and deceitful dealings? But if this prevail with us, let us also be ashamed to eat wholesome food, because some have surfeited on it; or to drink such drinks as others have abused to drunkenness. Yea rather, because others have disgraced the pure and true Religion which we profess, by their wicked lives; let us, who are sincerely minded, make open profession of it, that we may adorn it by our holy conversation; for the more it is blotted and blemished with their fruits of injustice, the more it needeth the hands of innocents, to wash and restore it to its native purity. And thus much of that scandal which ariseth from the evil lives of hypocrites; of that which is caused by the bad example of evil Ministers, I have before spoken, and therefore refer the Reader to that which hath been said.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the impediments of a godly life, arising from the flesh: and first, such as arise from the intellectual faculties.

Sect. 1 - That the most dangerous impediments arise from our own corrupt flesh.

If there were no other, or greater impediments, to hinder us in the ways of godliness, then those which are already handled; yet were there no cause why we should flatter ourselves with a vain conceit, that we may go forward in this course with much ease, as being a thing so slight and ordinary, that the achieving of it needeth little care and small endeavor. But how much more will this fond opinion vanish, and the necessity of uniting all our forces clearly appear, for the attaining unto any perfection in spiritual graces, and the outward practice of them in the duties of a godly life, if we further consider, that there are many more, and far more dangerous impediments which arise from our sinful flesh, and the inbred corruption of our polluted nature, the which is so averse and contrary unto the sincere and spiritual service of God, that nothing in the world seemeth more irksome and tedious unto it? In which regard, we can no sooner set ourselves seriously to serve and please God in those holy duties which he requireth, but presently it opposeth us, discourageth us in all good courses, hangeth (as it were) about our necks as an heavy burden, and tireth us in our journey, hampereth and fettereth us, that we can but slowly, and not without much pains and difficulty, proceed in any Christian duties, and laboreth might and main to shake off the yoke of new obedience, that it may regain wonted liberty, and glut itself in the pleasures of sin, with sensual delight. Neither in truth would it be a hard thing for us to overcome all those difficulties, and remove those impediments which the devil and the world cast in our way, if our corrupt flesh did not betray our Christian resolution, and willingly admit these discouragements, and if it were not as ready to stumble at these blocks, that it may take occasion thereby to stand still, or turn out of the way, as our other enemies to cast them before us. So that above all impediments which hinder us in the course of Christianity, we carry those which are most

dangerous, in our own bosoms, even the rebellious reluctations and oppositions of our own sinful flesh, which hinder us wholly from all holy duties, or so interrupt us in them, that we perform them at the best, with much weakness, and manifold wants and imperfections. And thus the flesh hindereth us, either by its frailty and weakness, whereby it disableth us to perform the duties of God's service; as we see in the example of the Apostles, who through natural drowsiness, could not watch and pray, as their Lord enjoined them; according to that of our Savior, The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak; or else by its maliciousness, which maketh it willfully to oppose and hinder the spiritual part in all good duties; according to that of the Apostle, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so as we cannot do that good we would. Of which impediments caused by the flesh, the Apostle pitifully complaineth; To will, is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do. I delight in the Law of God after the inner man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Which impediments if we would remove, we must daily make war against our sinful flesh, and corruption of nature, from whence they arise, and strike at the root, if we would kill the branches which spring from it. We must labor with God by prayer, for the assistance of his holy Spirit, that thereby we may be enabled to mortify and subdue the flesh, and all its sinful lusts, which fight against our souls, and quickened in the inner man, unto new obedience and holiness of life. And having gotten the mastery over this enemy, we must not content ourselves with our first victories, but we must still keep it under, like a slave, and by daily buffeting and beating of it, hold it in subjection, that it may not rebel against the spiritual part, nor hinder it from performing the duties of a godly and Christian life. But this I will thus briefly pass over, because I have already entreated of it at large, in the fourth part of my Christian Warfare.

Sect. 2 - That ignorance is a great impediment to a godly life.

The special impediments which the flesh useth, to hinder us in the duties of a godly life, arise either from the corruptions of nature, or from those manifold objections, whereby it discourageth us from entering into, or proceeding in it. The impediments of the former kind are internal in the soul, or external in our works and actions. Concerning the first; the soul is so generally corrupted in all the powers and faculties of it, that it wholly disableth us unto all the duties of a godly life. The which corruptions are either in the mind and understanding, or in the heart and affections. The mind and understanding do hinder us in the practice of all Christian duties, both by ignorance, which hindereth and disableth us from knowing those things which are necessary to salvation, and to the practice of all holy duties, and by curiosity, which maketh us to affect the knowledge of such things as are needless and unprofitable. For first, we are hindered in the duties of a godly life, by our natural ignorance of God, who is to be worshipped and served by them, especially when we do not understand and know his saving attributes; as that he is omniscient to take notice of all our thoughts, words and actions; and omnipotent to reward them, if they be good; or to punish them, if they be evil; that he is just, and will call all we do, to account; and merciful, to pardon our infirmities and imperfections, if we labor and endeavor to do unto him the best service we are able; that he is all-sufficient and infinite in all goodness, most bountiful and gracious, and a rich rewarder of all those who seek and serve him. All which being singular motives and encouragements unto all Christian duties, the ignorance of them must needs be a notable impediment to hinder us in them. For who can with cheerfulness serve such a master as he knoweth not? Or be faithful and diligent in his duty, when as he cannot, upon any well-grounded knowledge, be assured that his service is accepted, or shall be rewarded? Who can perform duties agreeable to God's nature, when he understandeth not what it is, or perform any spiritual service, if he know not that he is spiritual

unto whom it is performed? Thus also we are hindered in the duties of a godly life, by being ignorant of God's revealed will; for seeing no service is acceptable, which is not agreeable unto it, all devotion not guided by it, mere superstition, and all will-worship invented by our own brain, though with never so good intention, odious and abominable; who seeth not, that he who is ignorant of God's will, is no more able to walk in the way of his Commandments, then he who wanteth his bodily eyes, to go in a strange and difficult way, without a guide? Yea, suppose that we were set in this way, and led (as it were by the hand) by the directions of others, yet if we do not see with our own eyes, and be not able of ourselves to discern the right way, by the light of God's Word shining unto us; how easily (if our guides do but a little leave us) shall we, through the malice of the devil and our own corruption, err and go astray? And if we be not able to try the spirits of our Teachers, and to examine their doctrines by the Touchstone of God's truth, how apt are we to become a prey unto seducers and false teachers, and to fall into sects, schisms, and damnable heresies? Like blind men, who not seeing their way, do stand wholly at the devotion of their guides, to go with them whithersoever they shall be pleased to lead them. Again, ignorance of God's special providence, is a notable pullback from pious duties, whereby in a gracious and just manner, he doth even in this life administer and dispense his rewards to those that serve him, preserving them from all dangers, and from the malice and fury of all enemies who oppose them in their Christian conversation, and providing for them all things necessary for their souls and bodies, in such a competency and sufficiency, as is most fit for his own glory, and their salvation: and also his judgments and punishments to them who neglect his service, and spend their days in the works of darkness, performing ready service unto sin and Satan. For when we do observe no profit accruing unto them, who are careful to please God by doing his will; nor any discommodity or punishment accompanying those, who walk in the sinful imaginations of their own hearts, we are much hindered thereby in all Christian duties, and ready to take any course which may further our worldly and wicked ends, seeing we are neither restrained from evil by God's fear, nor stirred up unto any

good duty by his love; neither terrified from sin by his affrighting judgments, nor encouraged unto virtuous actions, by the expectation of his gracious rewards. Finally, ignorance is a notable impediment to a godly life, because if we do not know the duties which are required unto it, nor the chief things wherein it consisteth, it is not possible that we should perform them. If we do not know what is pleasing, and what displeasing unto God, what he requireth in our service of him, and what he forbiddeth and condemneth, as odious and abominable, we shall mistake the one for the other, yea, be much more ready to do such things as he hateth, then such as are pleasing unto him, because our corrupt nature is prone to the one, and averse and backward to the other. Besides, if we be ignorant, we cannot see the excellency, profit, and necessity of all Christian duties belonging to a godly life, which as they are singular motives to persuade us unto the embracing and practicing of them; so the ignorance of them doth make us utterly careless and negligent. In all which respects (if we would remove this impediment) it is most necessary, that we labor after the saving knowledge of God and his attributes, his will and providence, and of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he requireth of us; and to this end, carefully and conscionably use all good means whereby we may attain unto it; of which I have spoken in the beginning of this Treatise. For be we well assured, that so long as we continue ignorant of these things, it is not possible to perform any duty acceptable unto God. Neither let us content ourselves with a speculative, idle, and fruitless knowledge swimming in the brain, in which, though we excel all others, we shall not become more godly and religious; but rather more proud and vain-glorious; but let us labor after that saving and experimental knowledge of God and his attributes, his will and works, whereby we find and feel the things we know, effectual for the sanctifying our hearts and affections, and for the renewing of our lives in all holy obedience unto God's will.

Sect. 3 - That vain curiosity is a great impediment to a godly life.

The other impediment, respecting the understanding, is vain curiosity, when as neglecting to know those things concerning God and his will, which he hath revealed unto us in his Word, we pry into his secrets which belong not unto us; spending our wits in spinning such Spiders webs, as are utterly unprofitable for any use. For whilst we delight ourselves in the study of these captious curiosities, we wholly neglect all useful knowledge of the main points of Christian Religion, as being matters too obvious and common for our sublimated and subtle wits; yea, are so wholly intent unto idle speculations, that we can find no leisure for the practice of any Christian duties, like those star-gazing Astrologers, who so fixe their eyes upon them, to observe their magnitudes, motions, and influences, that they cannot discern their way, but are ready to stumble at every stone, and to slip and fall into every ditch. Which impediment if we would avoid, we must labor to mortify our spiritual pride, which is the mother and nurse of this idle curiosity. Secondly, we must be wise unto sobriety, not presuming to understand above that which is meet, knowing that the secret things belong unto God, and only things revealed, unto us. Thirdly, let us in the first place bend our studies unto the attaining of such knowledge as is most profitable and necessary, wherein we shall find such plenty and variety, such high contemplations and divine Mysteries, that we shall have little leisure or pleasure, in looking after idle speculations, and fruitless curiosities. Finally, let us propound use and practice, as the main end of all our knowledge, and condemn as vain and frivolous, that which doth rather hinder then advance it; for the more we spend our time and strength about curious niceties, the less remaineth for the gaining of solid knowledge, and the practice of it in holy duties. Other impediments there are, which arise from the sinful corruption of our intellectual faculties, which respect either our minds, imaginations, and discourse of reason, or our judgments and conclusions which arise from them. In respect of the former, it is a notable hindrance of a godly life, when as all our cogitations are so wholly bent upon worldly things, that we never enter into any consideration of our spiritual estate, whether we and our actions are accepted of God or no, or whether that we do please or displease

him: Nor ever think with ourselves, whether we are in the state of grace and salvation, or of corruption and condemnation; and whether we take that course, and walk in that way that leadeth to life and blessedness, or that which bringeth all that go in it to hell and destruction. And finally, when as we as are so wholly sensual and addicted to the present fruition of earthly vanities, that we never consider, whether the means be good or evil whereby we may compass them, nor take any notice of the manifold evils both spiritual and corporal, temporal and eternal, which our sins will bring upon us, if we continue in them without repentance; nor yet of the manifold and unspeakable comforts and contentment's, blessings and benefits which accompany a godly life, both in this world and the World to come. Which impediment, if we would remove, we must often enter into consideration of these things, and into a serious examination of our estate, according to those directions which I have before given, when I entreated of the means whereby we may be enabled to lead a godly life.

Sect. 4 - Of impediments arising from corrupted and erroneous judgment.

The judgment also corrupted with error and ignorance, is a notable impediment to hinder us from the sincere practice of all Christian duties of a godly life. For hereby men be fool themselves with idle conceits, that have no ground or warrant in God's Word, and thereby rest contented with their present estate, and never labor to attain unto a better. For so are they blinded with natural ignorance, that they cannot discern their blindness, but think themselves as sharp sighted as any other. So poor are they and destitute of the riches of God's saving graces, that they have no sense of their poverty, but please themselves with shadows instead of substance, like men replenished with wind, instead of wholesome nourishment, and those who mistake the swelling of their dropsy humors, for sound and good flesh. So dead they are in sin, that they have no feeling of

their deadness, and though they be never so much cut and launched with the sword of the Spirit, and keen Razor of the Word, they have no sense of it, nor ever complain more than dead men of their wounds and gashes. Finally, lying in their sins, as in their proper element, though they be never so heavy and intolerable, yet like a fish under the water, they do not at all feel the weight of them. As we see in the example of the proud Pharisees, who thought themselves sharp sighted and righteous, when as they were in Christ's estimate stark blind, and wicked above all men, even Publican's and sinners: of the Jews, who thought themselves free-men, and the children of Abraham, when as they were the sons and slaves of sin and Satan; and of the luke-warm Laodiceans, who falsely imagined that they were rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing; when as they were wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The which false and erroneous judgment, is a principal impediment unto a godly life; unto which (as one saith of wisdom) many might have attained, if they had not falsely supposed that they had already attained unto it. For who laboreth to better his estate, that thinketh it is good enough already? Or to attain unto more wealth, that contenteth himself with his portion, as thinking it abundantly sufficient? Who goeth to the Physician, that assureth himself that he is in perfect health? Or to the Lawyer for counsel, that maketh no doubt of the validity of his evidences? Or to the Divine for instruction, who supposeth that he knoweth already as much as he can teach him? And who laboreth to better his spiritual estate, who thinketh it already so good, that it needeth no amendment? Which dangerous impediment if we would remove, let us not measure ourselves by the false ell of carnal reason, and an erroneous judgment, nor compare ourselves with ourselves, or with other men, whom we think worse than we; but let us examine our ways and works by the perfect rule of God's Word, and try thereby how infinitely we come short of that exact obedience which his Law requireth. Let us thereby labor to come to a true sense of our own misery, and to have our blind eyes so opened and enlightened, that we may discern the manifold wants and imperfections of our best actions, and so labor after more perfection. Finally, let us know it for

certain, as an undoubted truth, that we have not yet set forward one foot in the ways of Christianity and true godliness, when we think that we have gone far enough already; for true grace is in continual growth; and he that hath attained unto any measure of it in truth, seeing his wants and imperfections, striveth and laboreth after more perfection; wherein he, who hath made the greatest progress, is most earnest in proceeding, like him that runneth a race, who maketh best speed when he approacheth nearest unto the goal; or like the natural motion, which is slow at the beginning but the longer it continueth, the swifter it groweth; as we see in the descent and fall of a stone, which moveth fastest, when it draweth near unto the center. And this we see in the example of the Pharisees and the Apostle Paul; For they having an opinion of their own perfection, rested in their own righteousness as sufficient for salvation, and never desired to be made partakers of the righteousness of Christ, for their justification; whereas by Christ's testimony it clearly appeareth, that they had not so much as made an entrance into the way of life, and were much farther off from the Kingdom of God then Publican's and sinners. But contrariwise, the Apostle having out-stripped almost all others, when he came nearest the goal of perfection, made his greatest speed; forgetting those things which were behind, and reaching forth to those which were before, and pressing towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

Sect. 5 - Of impediments arising from special errors in judgment.

The special and particular errors in judgment, which hinder men from resolving to lead a godly life, are innumerable; and therefore I will content myself to set down here some few of them, and but slightly to touch them, because the bare naming of them, in respect of their invalidity and weakness, is a sufficient confutation. First then, out of an erroneous judgment concerning God, they falsely conceive, that he is so merciful, that either he will save all men, or at least, them who perform some kind of service unto him, though they

be not like others, strict in their courses, but give liberty to the satisfying of their sensual lusts, and to lead such a life as best pleaseth them. Whereby they make an Idol of God's mercy, in separating it from his justice and truth, which hath denounced death and condemnation against all that neglect his service, and live in their sins without repentance. So they think that God will accept of their good meaning, though being ignorant, they know not how to serve him as he hath required, notwithstanding that the Lord in innumerable places of holy Scriptures, professeth his hatred to superstition and all will-worship. That he will accept of us, if we go to the Church according to the Princes Laws like other men, and offer unto God the outward service of the body, in hearing the Word, and praying with the Congregation, and receiving the Sacrament at Easter, although all be done in mere formality and hypocrisy without any zeal and devotion, or desire to serve and please God, or to profit by these spiritual exercises for the increasing of his graces in us, notwithstanding that God in so many places rejects these heartless sacrifices, lip-labor, and hypocritical formalities, and being a Spirit, doth require of us such a service as is performed in Spirit and truth. Thus they think that God is served in an acceptable manner, when they repeat the Lord's Prayer, though they do not understand any one Petition in it, and when they rehearse the Belief and the ten Commandments, which they also use instead of Prayer, not understanding aright any one article of their faith, nor any precept of the Decalogue; and that they have by this repetition blessed themselves sufficiently for the day following, though a little child, who is destitute of all saving knowledge, is able to perform this task as well as they. That they may live in their sins without repentance unto old age, or the day of sickness and death, and that God is so gracious that he will forgive all their sins, if before they depart this life, they have but leisure to say; Lord, have mercy upon me, though the Scriptures teach us, that he who turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayers are abominable; that God abhorreth even the very sacrifices of the wicked; and that those who stop their ears when God calleth, shall not be heard when they call and cry unto him. Finally, they suppose that they can repent when they list,

though it be a free grace of God, which must be accepted when he offereth it, and cannot be reasonably expected, if it be refused and rejected when he tendereth it unto us. In respect of the Christian life itself, and the graces and duties required unto it, they do all delude themselves with a false and erroneous judgment. For they cannot persuade themselves that the godly life is best and most blessed, nor that there is such necessity of it, as Preachers would bear them in hand; but that they may take here their full swinge in pleasure, and set their hearts upon riches and other worldly vanities, and yet be assured of heavenly happiness, as well as those who are most scrupulous and precise; though the Scriptures tell us that we cannot serve God and Mammon; that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us, because the love of the one, is enmity against the other; that without holiness we cannot see God and that the way to heaven is narrow, and the gate so straight, that without much striving we cannot enter into it. Thus they imagine, that they need not to take such pains in hearing many Sermons, seeing the Preacher can tell them no more than they know already, namely, that they must love God above all things, and their neighbors as themselves; that the best fail in this, and that we are all sinners, and must be saved only by Jesus Christ: Though the Scriptures truly preached, are not only the spiritual seed to beget us, but the food also to nourish us, the strong power of God to salvation to all that believe, and the sword of the Spirit, to defend ourselves, and beat back our enemies: Our heavenly School-master to teach us the way, and the means also whereby we may be enabled to walk in it, and finally, our guide to direct and lead us by the hand, and our comforter to support us when we are ready to faint in our journey. That it is sufficient, if we lead a civil life, and be no heinous malefactors, as murderers, thieves, adulterers and such like; and that we are good Christians, if we do no man harm, if we do no good, though he who hid his talent in the earth, and did not increase it, was cast into outer darkness; Dives tormented in hell, because he relieved not Lazarus; And though our Savior professeth, that he will reject at the day of Judgment, not only oppressors, thieves and murderers, but those also who have not fed the hungry, and clothed the naked. Thus they think that they have

abundantly discharged their duty, if they have, for worldly ends, had some respect to some duties of the second Table, as keeping their word, and dealing justly, and giving now and then an alms, howsoever they have wholly neglected the duties of the first Table, and have made no conscience of God's service and Sabbaths; though piety be the ground and foundation of all obedience, without which, Justice and moral honesty have no true subsistence. That they need not to labor after the knowledge of God and his will, because they are unlettered and unlearned, though without knowledge of the main principles of Religion, there can be no Faith, and without Faith, no Salvation. That they have good hearts towards God, though their speeches be filthy and profane, and their actions wicked and mischievous, notwithstanding that our Savior hath told us, that the tree is known by its fruit, and that such as the fountain is, such also are the streams that flow from it. That we are all sinners, and full of infirmities and human frailties, and therefore they must be excused, when wittingly and willfully they fall into grievous sins; though the Apostle telleth us, that he who thus sinneth, is not born of God, but that he is of the devil, if with full swinge of will, he do him service. That they are in Christ, and therefore have escaped condemnation, though the Apostle saith, that all who are in him, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and that all who have put on Christ, are become new creatures, and being engrafted into this Vine, do bring forth fruits in him. Thus they erroneously allege, that because Christ came to save sinners, therefore though they continue still in sin, they may have their part in this salvation, whereas this comfort only belongeth unto repentant sinners, who labor and groan under their sins, as under an heavy burden, and being weary of it, do flee unto Christ for ease. Thus they abuse God's eternal decree of predestination, concluding, that because he hath decreed and ordained all men, either to life and salvation, or to death and destruction; and his counsel must stand, being immutable and unchangeable; therefore it is no matter how they live, for if they be ordained to life, they shall be saved, live how they list; or if to destruction, they cannot attain to salvation, though they take never so much care and pains in God's service. The which their conceit is

quite contrary to the Scriptures, which teach us, that God hath, in his decree of predestination, included the means with the end, so that it is not possible to be condemned, if we conscionably use the means, of attaining to salvation; or to be saved, if we neglect these means and walk in the ways of wickedness which lead to destruction. For whom he hath predestinated to salvation, those also he calleth, justifieth and sanctifieth. Those whom he hath chosen, he hath also ordained, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, and hath elected them, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling with the blood of Christ. Those whom he hath ordained unto glory, he hath predestinated them to be conformed to the Image of his Son, and hath created them in him to good works. And therefore if we be effectually called, justified and sanctified, we may thereby be assured, that we are elected to salvation; but if none of these can be found in us, we still continue in the state of reprobation, seeing the means and end do inseparably go together. Finally, when as the Scriptures teach us, that Faith alone justifieth, as being the only instrument that applieth unto us Christ our righteousness; loose Libertines do hence conclude, that that Faith which is alone, justifieth; and therefore, so they believe in Christ, they have liberty to live as they list, and need not to take any pains to serve and please God in the duties of a godly life. Whereas the Apostle plainly telleth us, that we shall be judged according to our works, whether they have been good or evil. And our Savior hath taught us, that he will pronounce the last sentence according to the works of mercy, either performed or neglected by us, as being the signs and undoubted evidences of our Faith, whereby it is approved as sound and sincere, or condemned as counterfeit and hypocritical. And the Apostle James expressly affirmeth, that Faith without works is dead, and like a carcass without breath or life. And therefore, though good works are not required as causes to the act of justification, yet they are necessary as effects to the party justified; though they do not merit everlasting happiness, seeing it is a gracious inheritance, and God's free gift, yet they are the way that leadeth unto it, in which we must necessarily walk, if we will be

saved, for without holiness we shall never see the Lord; as the Apostle telleth us.

Sect. 6 - That infidelity is a great impediment to a godly life.

Again, the corruption of our intellectual faculties, doth exceedingly hinder us from serving God in the duties of a godly life, not only as it blindeth them with ignorance, and misleadeth them with error; but also as it poisoneth them with cursed infidelity, which is the root of all other sins, and the chief impediment of all Christian duties, the ground of all which is a lively faith. For as the Apostle speaketh, No man can come unto God, until he first know that God is, nor perform any faithful service unto him, until he be persuaded that he is a rich rewarder of them who diligently seek and serve him. Again, Without faith it is impossible to please God, because whatsoever is not done of Faith, is sin. Without Faith we cannot be engrafted into Christ, seeing it is the bond of this union, nor bring forth in him any fruits of new obedience, for without Christ we can do nothing. Unless by Faith we be assured of God's love towards us, we cannot love him (for as the Apostle John saith, We love him, because he loveth us first) and without love there is no obedience, seeing it is the sum of the whole Law. And therefore if we would lead a godly life, we must with all care and endeavor remove this impediment, then the which, none is more pernicious (for how should we flee from that sin, which we naturally love, or practice those duties, unto which our natures are averse, if we neither believe God's threatening's restraining us from sin, nor his promises alluring us to obedience?) And to this end we must carefully use all those means of which I have before spoken, both of begetting Faith in us, if it be wanting, and of confirming and increasing of it, if it be begun.

CHAPTER IX.

Of those manifold impediments of a godly life, which arise from our sinful and corrupt hearts and affections.

Sect. 1 - The first impediment is an heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

And thus have I showed, how we may remove those impediments of a godly life, which arise from the corruption of the intellectual faculties. Those which respect the heart and affections, are many and dangerous. The first is, when our hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and so habituated and accustomed to evil courses, that it is death to us, if we endeavor to forsake them, and to serve God in the duties of a godly life. Of this we have many warnings in the Scriptures, as being a most dangerous rock, upon which many have suffered shipwreck: Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. And, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Which impediment if we would remove, let us withstand sin in the first motions of it, and if at any time we be overtaken, let us carefully take heed, that we do not lie in sin, but rise again speedily by unfeigned repentance. Let us beware that we do not often fall into the same sins, after we have repented of them; seeing by many acts, we come at last to a habit and custom. Or if this custom hath already prevailed, and is now come to have in it the strength of a Law, and to be (as it were) a second nature, let us not suffer it any longer to continue inviolable, but bend all our power and strength to disannul and break it. Neither let our corrupt nature plead prescription for sin, or the neglect of holy duties, as though because we have long done that which God forbiddeth, or not done that which he hath commanded, therefore we must be born with, if we do so still; seeing this is no excuse at all, but rather the greatest aggravation of our sinfulness and negligence. For though they might

be somewhat excused, if they were done but once or twice, they are altogether intolerable when they grow common and customable. And therefore our long living in sin, and in the neglect of Christian duties, should be so far from excusing our continuing in these courses, that it ought to be a strong motive to double our diligence in redeeming this lost time, as the Apostle exhorteth. And this reason the Apostle Peter also useth to persuade us, that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh, according to the lusts of men, but according to the will of God, because the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banqueting's, and abominable idolatries. Now the means whereby we may be enabled to break off this custom in sinning, and to perform the contrary duties of a godly life, is, to labor to have our hearts possessed and fraughted with God's fear, partly in respect of his Judgments denounced against sin, and partly in respect of his mercies and manifold blessings, promised to all that serve and please him. For nothing doth more powerfully over-master this tyrannical custom, then the true fear of God; even as the want thereof is the chief cause of falling into, and continuing in sin. And secondly, our best course is to set ourselves with a firm resolution to break off, and discontinue our custom in sinning, and to perform the contrary duties of a godly life, seeing many acts of well-doing will at last bring us to a habit and custom, and make them easy and familiar, which at the first entrance seemed difficult and almost impossible. The like impediment unto all Christian duties, ariseth from security and hardness of heart, which taking away all sense and feeling, both of God's mercies and Judgments, and putting away the evil day far from us, doth make us also therewith to put off the day of repentance, to neglect all holy and religious duties, and to go on securely in our former evil courses. Of the removing of which impediment I will not here speak, because I have handled it at large in my Treatise of carnal security, and hardness of heart.

Sect. 2 - Of the second impediment respecting the heart, which is love of the world.

The second impediment of a godly life, respecting the heart, is worldly concupiscence, and immoderate and excessive love of the world and earthly things, and chiefly of honors, riches and pleasures, and that carking care which ariseth from it, for the getting or keeping of them. Concerning the former. As the love of God and the love of the world will not harbor together in the same heart, because the amity and friendship of the one, is enmity against the other, as the Apostles John and James teach us; so neither can we perform faithful service to them both, being Masters which stand in flat opposition one to the other, as our Savior hath told us. In which regard, Demas is said to have forsaken the Apostle Paul, and with him, his Master Christ and his truth, as soon as he begun to love this present world. For when men have once fixed their hearts upon earthly vanities, all their cogitations are so taken up with them, that they have no leisure to think upon any Christian duties; and so wholly are they besotted with the love of this painted strumpet, that they think all time lost, which is not spent in winning and gaining her. So that when Christ inviteth them unto his Marriage Supper, to feast them with spiritual delicacies, that God's graces may be so strengthened in them, as that they may be enabled to serve him in all Christian duties, they presently pretend excuses, and will not come. For the removing of which impediment, we must use all good means to wean our hearts from the love of the world, that we may contemn it as vain and worthless, in comparison of spiritual grace, and heavenly glory. To which purpose we must consider, that the worlds prosperity which we dote so much upon, will, being thus abused, become a notable temptation to draw us into all manner of sin, to our perdition and destruction; according to that of the wise Solomon; The prosperity of fools shall destroy them: And, What will it profit us to gain the whole world, and lose our own souls? As our Savior speaketh. Let us consider, that these worldly things are momentary and mutable, hardly gotten, and soon lost; uncertain in the pursuit, whether after all our labor we shall obtain them or no, and no more

certain in the possession, seeing they may every day be taken from us, or we from them. Let us consider, that they are vain, and satisfy not, but the more we drink, the more we thirst; the more we abound, the more we want; and that they bring not any sound contentment to their owners, but labor in getting, care in keeping, and fear in losing them. That they do not at all profit us for the assuring of those things which are chiefly to be desired, nor at those times when we shall stand in most need of help and comfort; namely, at the hour of death, and day of Judgment. Yea, if we immoderately dote on them, they will become exceeding hurtful and pernicious, being those thorns which will choke in us the seed of God's Word, from which all saving graces do spring; those snares of the devil, which entangle us to our perdition; those heavy burdens, which hinder us in our journey towards our heavenly home, and Camel-like bunches, which will keep us from entering into that straight and narrow gate.

Sect. 3 - The third impediment arising from worldly cares.

The cares also of this world are a great impediment to a godly life. For first, they hinder us from performing religious duties, as we see in the example of those, who being invited to the Marriage Supper of the Kings Son, refused to come; and of those, who being called to be Christ's Disciples, were so taken up with the care of their worldly business, that they could find no present leisure to follow Christ. Yea of Martha herself, who though she were a good woman, yet was so cumbered with care, in providing for Christ's entertainment, that she could find no time to hear his heavenly Sermons, and envied her sister, for performing this high and holy duty. Or if we set ourselves to perform any service unto God, these cares interpose themselves, and distract us with worldly and wandering thoughts, so as we cannot perform it with any fruit and benefit: as we see in the Parable of the Sower, where he that received seed among thorns, is (as our Savior expoundeth it) he that heareth the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and he

becometh unfruitful. In which regard, our Savior giveth unto us a special caveat (whereby we may be fitted for his coming) that we should take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon us at unawares. For as the one surchargeth the stomach, and maketh us unfit for any bodily employment, so the other oppress and intoxicate the mind and heart (as it were) with a kind of spiritual gluttony and drunkenness, that they become altogether unprofitable for any religious exercise. Now the means to remove this impediment are first, to contemn these worldly things, as being of small value, in comparison of saving grace, and heavenly glory: For what we can despise, we will not pursue with over-much care. Secondly, let us learn to live the life of faith, and not resting upon our own provision, cast ourselves upon God's all-sufficient providence, and never-failing promises, who will assuredly provide for us, if we wholly depend upon him. And this means and motive the Scriptures offer unto us, to preserve us from covetousness and carking care, according to that of the Psalmist, Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And that counsel of the Wise man; Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. So the Apostle; Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee. And the Apostle Peter; Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. But most excellently doth our Savior Christ, with many strong arguments, arm us against this carking care: Take no thought (saith he) for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. First, because he that hath given us that which is the greater and better, he will not, if we depend upon him, deny unto us that which is less and worse. Is not the life more then meat? And the body then raiment? Secondly, because he who is so gracious, bountiful, and provident, as to provide for the Fowls of the air, and the Lilies of the field, without their care and pains, will much more provide for his children that rely upon him, and with their reasonable pains and moderate care, do serve his providence. Thirdly, because this carking care is bootless

and unprofitable, seeing God, according as it seemeth best to his infinite wisdom, hath allotted unto everyone a stint and proportion in their estate, as well as in their bodily stature, unto which they shall come, and not exceed it. And therefore as no man can add one cubit to his stature of body, though he take never so much care and pains; so also it is alike impossible hereby to add one mite unto that dimension of our estate, which God by his wise and powerful providence hath allotted unto us. Fourthly, because this immoderate care is more fit for Infidels, who rest wholly upon themselves and their own means, then for Christians, who acknowledge God, most wise, and all-sufficient, to be their Father; seeing he is omniscient, and taketh notice of all our wants, and omnipotent, and most gracious and bountiful, and therefore most able and willing to supply them. Fifthly, because the best means to be assured of all earthly blessings, in such a proportion as is most fit for God's glory, and our salvation, is above, and before all things, to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness, because we have his infallible promise, that if we so do, other things shall be added unto us, as it were small advantages to this main bargain. The which Solomon found verified in his own experience; who being put to his choice, and preferring wisdom, before riches, honor, and long life, did not only obtain it at God's hands, but all these things likewise for which he made no suit. Lastly, because it is extreme folly to anticipate future cares and troubles before they come, no not those of the next day, seeing when they come, they will bring grief and vexation enough, though we do not prevent them before they happen, and so redouble our sorrows. Neither in truth can we tell whether those things whereof we take care, will befall us or no; and therefore what folly is it to undergo certain trouble and care about uncertainties? Or if they shall happen, we may have wit to foresee them, but no power to prevent them; and therefore to vex ourselves before they come, is to be miserable before the time.

CHAPTER X.

Of impediments arising from our corrupt affections, and first, from carnal hope and presumption.

Sect. 1 - That carnal hopes are great impediments to goodness.

In respect of our carnal and corrupt affections, there are also many and strong impediments which hinder us in the duties of a godly life. For whilst they remain unmortified and unsubdued, they lust against the Spirit, powerfully drawing us from the practice and performance of Christian duties, and violently carrying us into sinful courses. In which regard, the affections are called the feet of the soul, because they carry us whither they incline and lead us, either into the ways of godliness, if they be sanctified, or of sin and wickedness, if they continue carnal and corrupt. The first unsanctified affection, is carnal hope of escaping God's heavy judgments and punishments denounced against sin; and of the long continuance of our lives, by benefit whereof we may safely enjoy the pleasures of sin, and need not to trouble ourselves by entering into any strict course of godliness, seeing after we have long enjoyed the world, we shall have time enough afterwards to think of such a course, as may fit and prepare us for the joys of life eternal. The which is a notable hindrance to keep men from leading of a godly life. For whereas if men had learned rightly to number their days, they would apply their hearts unto wisdom; and if they were thoroughly persuaded that our lives are so momentary and uncertain, that death may seize upon them suddenly, today before tomorrow, it were not possible that they should so slightly put off a matter of such great importance, as the everlasting salvation of their souls, unto after and uncertain times, but rather would instantly begin to make their Calling and Election sure, and to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, by furnishing their souls with all saving graces, and expressing them in the duties of a godly life: Now when as they promise unto themselves long life and many days, they put off all these things, as being yet

unseasonable and unnecessary, and with the rich fool in the Gospel, say unto their souls; Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry: which they would not be so desperately mad to do, if that terrible voice of God still sounded in their ears, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? But contrariwise, if with the wise servant, they well weighed the uncertainty of their Lord's coming to call them to an account, they would still be prepared, and be in readiness, that they might enter with him into his heavenly joys. Neither is there any better means to remove this impediment, then to meditate often, not only of the momentary shortness of our lives, but also of the great uncertainty of this short time. For if we would seriously consider, that our life, in respect of eternity, is but as one day, yea an hour, a minute, a moment; that it passeth away as swiftly as a Weavers shuttle, as a tale told, as a Post; and is but a flower, a vapor, a shadow, yea as vanity itself: If we would also remember, that this short time is also uncertain, seeing we may die today, as well as tomorrow, this very hour, as well as the next, having no assurance of anymore time then the present, as being tenants at will, who hold not life by lease, but only at the Lord's pleasure, without so much as a minutes warning; And finally, seeing in this short and uncertain time, everlasting life and salvation is either gotten or lost; what folly and madness is it to go on in our sins, and neglect all Christian duties, in hope of long life, and to hazard our precious souls upon so uncertain and tickle a point? It may be thou shalt live another year, and it may be not another day. The which resteth not only on a possibility, but upon some probability likewise, in respect of those innumerable dangers which outwardly beset us, and the inward infirmities of our frail nature, which being the matter, or (as it were) the harbingers of death, we carry still about, and in us: which is also made more likely by the experience of many others, who have been taken away suddenly, in the prime of their age, and chief of their strength, not having had so much as a days, or hours warning. And shall we venture our chief jewels, our precious souls, which are of much more price unto us then ten thousand worlds, upon may-bees and

uncertain hopes, which being once lost, can never be recovered? Shall we hazard the everlasting joys of heaven, which are unspeakable and inestimable, and endanger ourselves to intolerable and endless torments in hell fire, upon some likelihoods only, which have so often failed? It may be thou shalt live as long as thou expectest. And what then gainest thou in this course of wickedness, but the pleasures of sin, accompanied with the present checks and terrors of an evil conscience, and the fears of imminent and approaching judgments, and attended upon at the best, with continual sorrow and repentance even to the day of death? And it may be thou shalt die before thou art prepared for it, by repenting for thy sins, and devoting thyself to God's service. And then what lovest thou, in lieu of the former gains, which are so vain in true value, and momentary in continuance? Surely those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore, the joys of heaven, the fellowship of the Saints, and the vision and fruition of God and his Christ, who being infinite in all goodness, beauty, glory, and all perfection, do make all those perfectly and eternally happy, who having faithfully served them in this life, shall see and enjoy them in the life to come.

Sect. 2 - That carnal presumption is a great impediment to a godly life.

The second corrupt affection which hindereth us in the duties of a godly life, is carnal presumption, which carrying with it some show and semblance of a strong faith, in the opinion of those who are blinded with ignorance, becometh unto them a notable impediment, hindering them from the profession and practice of true godliness. Yea, it is the devils ordinary prevailing weapon, wherewith he assaulteth secure worldlings, which he findeth by common experience so powerful for his purpose, that for the most part he useth no other, unless they have wounded their consciences, with committing of some horrible and outrageous sins, which will suffer them to entertain no hope of God's favor and mercy in the

forgiveness of them. In which case he possesseth them with terrors and fears, and driveth them into the contrary extreme of desperation. The which he also doth, when he hath to deal with melancholic persons, who being naturally of a timorous and fearful disposition, cannot so easily be persuaded to presume when there is no cause. Otherwise he seldom awakeneth their sleeping consciences, but carrieth them quietly to hell and destruction without noise. For the more sensible we are of our disease, the more we fear the issue of it, and the more earnest and diligent we are to seek all means of help, unless we have no hope of cure. In which regard, it may be truly said, that whereas one perisheth through despair, many hundred are plunged into destruction by security and presumption; so much more dangerous this is then the other, although nothing so horrid and terrible to look upon. Now this presumption may be considered in respect of the object, either generally or more specially. Generally, when as we presume of God's mercy and goodness, of the pardon of all our sins, and of the salvation of our souls, without any sound ground or warrant out of God's Word, when as we are in no sort qualified and fitted to receive them. The fruit and effect of which persuasion, is a purpose and resolution to continue still in our sins, because God is merciful to forgive them, and to neglect the duties of a godly life, because they are not only tedious and irksome unto us, but also of no great necessity, seeing God respecting our frailty and weakness, will receive us to grace and mercy. Whereas contrariwise, a true and lively faith doth always bring forth the fruits of unfeigned repentance, and persuading us of God's love, doth work in our hearts true love towards him again, and a desire and endeavor to express it in all holy obedience to God's will, that we may thereby glorify him who hath been so good and gracious unto us. With like presumption men are hindered from entering into the ways of godliness, and heartened to continue in their sins, whilst they plead that Christ came to save sinners, and that his death and merits, as they are sufficient in themselves to satisfy God's Justice, so they will be effectual unto them for their justification and salvation, though they be not so strict and precise in making conscience of all sins, or in practicing the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 3 - Of the means to remove the former impediment.

Now if we would avoid these impediments, let us know and consider first, that this is a shameful and horrible abuse of God's mercy and goodness, which he will never let go unpunished, to take occasion thereby, the more to offend and displease him by willful continuing in sin, and neglecting the duties of his service. To provoke God to wrath, because he is patient and longsuffering, and to sin against him, because he is good and gracious, and ready to forgive. And finally, to neglect all duties of his service, because he is such a bountiful Master, that he giveth of his free grace and mercy, rich wages and rewards, without all merit and desert. For these should rather be arguments to inflame our love towards him, and to make us so much the more zealous of his glory, and fearful to offend so gracious a God; according to that of the Psalmist; There is mercy or forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Or if through frailty and infirmity, we have, contrary to our purpose and resolution, been overtaken of any sin; this patience and love of God should be a strong motive, to make us to rise out of it by unfeigned repentance; according to that of the Apostle, Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Secondly, let us consider, that as the Lord is infinite in mercy and compassion, so he is no less infinite in justice and truth; that as he is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin: so also he is just in all his ways, and holy in all his works, and will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation: that as he is a merciful Savior, so also a just God, and a righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, and will not let sin go unpunished, but will judge every man according to his works; and that he is a terrible Judge, especially to those who abuse his mercy and longsuffering. And therefore let us not disjoin these things which cannot be

severed, nor imagine such a mercy in God, as will not stand with his Justice, which were to maim the Divine nature, and to pull (as it were) one of his hands from him; which outrageous violence offered unto his holy Majesty, he will never suffer to go unpunished. Let us, with David, so acknowledge that he is good, as that we do not deny that he is also upright, and in our songs so sing of his mercy, as that we do not disjoin his Judgment from it. Let us remember, that in God and in all his works, mercy and truth do meet together, righteousness and peace do kiss each other. Let us not say, His mercy is great, he will be pacified for the multitude of my sins: for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation resteth upon sinners. Neither let us, presuming on God's mercy and patience, make any tarrying to turn unto the Lord, nor put it off from day today; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance. Thus the Apostle telleth us, that if we despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance, which should lead us to repentance, we shall after our hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto ourselves wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render unto every man according to his deeds. And the Lord threateneth, that if any man hearing the words of his curse against sinners, do bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; that he will not spare him, but that his anger and jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in the book of the Law, shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. Let us remember what the Apostle teacheth us, namely, that no outrageous sinners, continuing in their wickedness without repentance, shall inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and therefore exhorteth, that we suffer no man to deceive us with vain words; seeing, because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Finally, let us consider, that though God's mercies be in themselves infinite, and above all his works, and all his gracious promises which are in Christ, yea, and Amen; yet they are limited by his infallible truth, and appropriated unto repentant sinners, and therefore cannot extend to

the presumptuous, who take occasion from his mercies to continue impenitently in their sins, but he will glorify his justice in punishing them, as he glorifieth his mercy, in pardoning the sins of all those who turn unto him by unfeigned repentance. And therefore let us acknowledge with the Psalmist, that the Lord is good and gracious, yet not to all, but only to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart; and that as the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears open to hear their cry: so the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from of the earth. Let us not presume upon God's mercy whilst we continue impenitently in our sins, but let us stand in awe of God's Justice and Judgments, and sin not, and offer first the sacrifice of righteousness, and then put our trust in the Lord. Those likewise, who presuming upon the all-sufficiency of Christ's death, merits, and satisfaction, do take occasion thereby to continue in their sins without repentance, and to neglect the duties of a godly life, may easily remove this dangerous impediment out of their way, if they will but seriously consider, that this is a most fearful abuse of his inestimable love, who hath done so much for us, when as we use his help to uphold us in our sins, and his death and merits, as a pillow whereon we may sleep more securely in our wickedness. Whereas he came not to ratify and confirm, but to dissolve and abolish the works of the devil: And gave himself for us, not only to free us from all sin, in respect of the guilt and punishment, but also to purge us from all iniquity, and that being his peculiar people, we should be zealous of good works. He hath redeemed us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives. He hath bought us with a price, that we should glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, because they are his. He hath given himself for us, not only that he might justify us in the remission of our sins, but also sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of the water by the Word; that he might present us unto himself, as a glorious Spouse and Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that we should be holy and without blame. Finally, he hath redeemed us, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from our vain conversation, by shedding his most precious Blood, as

the Apostle Peter speaketh. And therefore if we do not find and feel the virtue of Christ's death and merits, as effectual for our sanctification as for our justification, and to free us from the corruption of sin, as well as from the guilt and punishment, we have little cause to presume of their efficacy for our salvation, seeing these are always inseparably linked and conjoined. Lastly, let us consider, that as our Savior Christ came to save sinners, so withal to call them to repentance. And that the Redeemer came only to Zion, and to them who turn from transgression in Jacob: and therefore let us not foolishly presume, that we shall be his redeemed, if we continue in our sins without repentance. Let us not post off God to another time, when he offereth unto us mercy and forgiveness: But let us seek the Lord, while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and then he will have mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon, as he hath promised. Let us not presume on God's mercy, whilst we continue in our sins; yea, rather after that we have unfeignedly repented of our sins, let us fear always, considering our own frailty and infirmity, which maketh us apt to relapse into them, and so to provoke God's wrath against us. Let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and whilst we presume of standing, take heed of falling. And if we call God, Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's works, let us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, as the Apostle Peter exhorteth us.

Sect. 4 - Of presumption in neglecting the means of holiness.

And thus we see how carnal presumption generally hindereth us, from entering into, or proceeding in a godly life, and how we may remove this impediment. More especially, we are hindered thereby, when as we presume, that we may perform all duties required unto it, notwithstanding, that we neglect all means of sanctification and holiness, which God hath ordained for the working his graces in us

(as hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, Prayer, and the rest) by the extraordinary operation of his holy Spirit in us. For the removing of which impediment, we are to know, that howsoever God sometimes, to show the infiniteness of his mercy, goodness, and power, which are free, and not tied unto any means, doeth, when we least think of it, and when we have not so much as a desire and endeavor to serve and please him, regenerate and convert us; according to that of the Apostle, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me (As we see in the example of those, who coming to hear the Word only for form and fashion sake, without any desire to profit by it, are notwithstanding effectually called and truly converted by the mighty operation of God's Spirit working with his own holy ordinance. And though also when greater means are wanting, as in the time of persecution, the Lord giveth an extraordinary blessing to such as are mean and small, causing his servants (like Moses and Elias) to go on constantly for many days in the ways of godliness, in the strength of one meal; to the end it may appear that the work of conversion and sanctification, is not effected by any virtue inherent in the means, but that it is a gift of his grace, and conveyed unto us by the powerful working of his holy Spirit: yet this is not God's common course, and ordinary manner of working his graces in us, but ordinarily he will have us to use the means, and sanctify them as his own holy ordinances, that they may be effectual to the ends for which we use them; which if we neglect, we do in a presumptuous manner tempt the Lord; and can have hereby no more hope, that God will work his graces in us, or enable us unto the duties of a godly life, then if we rest upon his immediate providence, and in the meantime neglect our meat, which he hath ordained to nourish us, or our clothes, which he hath appointed us to use for the keeping of us warm.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the third sort of carnal affections, which are impediments to a godly life; as superstitious scrupulosity, dejection of mind, fear and desperation.

Sect. 1 - That scrupulosity is a great impediment to a godly life.

The third sort of carnal affections which are impediments to a godly life, are such as are in the quite contrary extreme to the former, as anxious and superstitious scrupulosity, heaviness and too much dejection of mind, fear and desperation. Superstitious scrupulosity is, when through natural blindness and want of sound knowledge, we doubt of all our actions, whether they be lawful or unlawful, and call everything into question, being ready to yield unto every temptation which abridgeth us of our Christian liberty, when some fearful judgment is suggested and threatened by the devil and our own corruption, if we forbear not the use of things lawful, or do not such things as are unlawful. The which, we mistaking for our own thoughts, and concluding that we have given our full consent unto them (though in truth they are the mere suggestions and temptations of our spiritual enemies) do yield ourselves over unto them, as though we were bound upon some fearful penalty, to obey them, though they have no ground or warrant out of God's Word, yea in truth are expressly contrary unto it. The which is a notable impediment to a godly life; First, because it maketh us to spend our thoughts and time about toys and trifles, as the using or not using such creatures, the doing or not doing of such actions, as are in their own nature indifferent, and of small importance; whilst in the meanwhile, we neglect the main duties of God's service and of a godly life. Secondly, because these scrupulous and superstitious fears, apprehending, upon every vain suggestion and slight occasions, some dreadful judgment threatened, if we do not yield to the temptation, do disturb and disquiet the mind, and take away all inward peace and tranquility which should comfort and encourage us

in well-doing, and so maketh us to neglect altogether all good duties, or to perform them to no purpose and profit, by reason of our doubting and incredulity, our trouble of mind and disquietness. Yea oftentimes the body is so enfeebled, partly by these inward vexations, grief and heaviness, and partly by being restrained from the comfortable use of God's creatures, that they are disabled unto all good duties, and become weak, sick, and unfit instruments to be used by the soul in the service of God. Now the cause of these scrupulous fears and troubles of mind are diverse. For first on God's part, they are either fruits and effects of his justice, hereby punishing our former sins, and especially because we have neglected his holy fear, and to perform unto him the duties of his service which he hath required of us; it being just with God, that because we would not harbor his fear in our hearts, we should have then replenished and vexed with causeless fears of Bug-bears and shadows, and because we would not serve him by yielding obedience unto his will, that therefore we should become slaves to our own superstitious phantasies, sometimes imposing upon us obedience unto them, and when we are ready to perform it, pulling us back with some new suggestion, so that we stand in an astonished manner, neither daring to do it, nor leave it undone, seeing both alike threaten the same danger. Or else it is an effect of God's mercy, when as he converteth these effects of his Justice to their good; using them as means of their contrition and humiliation, whereby they are fitted and prepared for true repentance, and have a resolution and endeavor wrought in them of serving God in all good duties, that so they may either be freed, or at least secured from all those evils, which these scrupulous fears do threaten against them. Secondly, on our part they are caused, first, by our sins, whereby we have justly brought these vexations upon us. Secondly, by our ignorance and want of judgment, which maketh us that we cannot distinguish between the suggestions and temptations of Satan and our own thoughts; between the bare imaginations of our minds, unto which we give no entertainment, and the consent of our wills unto them. By reason whereof, we either condemn ourselves of such sins as we never committed, seeing we have at the first entrance of such thoughts and

suggestions resisted, and like Wilde-fire have cast them out of our minds and hearts, or that our sins in this kind are much more grievous then they are, as though we had given full consent unto them, because we have a while harbored them in our minds, by revolving and thinking too long on them, before we have beaten them back, and quenched them by the shield of faith. Thirdly, such scrupulosity's and superstitious fears, arise commonly from the natural humor of melancholy abounding in us, which maketh fearful impressions in our imaginations, and disquieteth our minds and hearts with terrible apprehensions, which have no true ground in themselves, especially when as this humor is (as it were) leavened and set a working and boiling with the guilt of sin, tormenting the conscience, or with the sense and smart of some great and extraordinary crosses and afflictions. Lastly the devil laboreth to hinder us in the duties of a godly life, by making us scrupulous and superstitious. For when he can keep us no longer in carnal security, by reason that we are naturally timorous, and have some fear of God, through the sight of our sins, and apprehension of his judgments begun in us, then he endeavoreth to turn our fear to false objects, that so fearing those things which are not to be feared, he may keep out of our hearts the true fear of God, which should be in us the fountain of true obedience. And when he can no longer continue us in open profaneness, being now resolved to perform some service unto God, he will move us, all he may, to spend all our time and strength about trifles and things of no worth, that in the meanwhile, we may neglect main and substantial duties, which are necessary for the setting forth of God's glory, and the furthering and assuring of our salvation. Secondly, by these scrupulous fears he distracteth our minds, turmoileth our hearts, and disturbeth and disquieteth our consciences, so as we cannot at all perform any duties of God's service, or if we do, yet so uncomfortably, and with such anxiety and distraction, with such doubting and infidelity, that they can neither be acceptable to God, nor profitable for our own salvation. Lastly, when our hearts are possessed with these scrupulous fears, he easily withholdeth us thereby from performing those holy duties which God requireth, whilst he suggesteth that some fearful judgment shall be

fall us, if we do them, because we are unworthy or unprepared; or else presseth us to do them out of these fears, that we may escape that which he threateneth to impose: And so to perform Christian duties not out of true grounds, and to right ends, as love, filial fear, and obedience to God, to the end we may glorify him, but out of slavish terror, that we may escape that violence which he threateneth upon our neglect. Whereof it will come to pass, that the best duties thus performed, are not any true service of God, but rather of the devil, seeing fear of him, and not the love of God; his terrible threatening's, and not faith in God's promises moveth us unto them.

Sect. 2 - Of the means whereby we may be freed from superstitious scrupulosity.

Now the means to be freed from this impediment, are, First, that we forsake our sins, and turn unto God by unfeigned repentance, and so apply his gracious promises unto us by a lively faith, that being reconciled unto us, he may keep us safe under his providence and protection, and not justly for our sins give us over to the Tempter, to be terrified with his fears, and turmoiled with his false suggestions. Secondly, we must labor to have our minds illuminated with saving knowledge, the light whereof will easily discover the falsehood and vanities of these superstitious scruples and fears, and to attain unto spiritual wisdom and sound judgment, that thereby we may be enabled to discern between our own thoughts, which we entertain with consent of will, and the temptations of the devil which we have resisted; the good motions of God's Spirit which are always agreeable to his Word, and the suggestions of the devil, which have no ground or warrant from it. Thirdly, we must take heed, that we do not take anything upon the devils bare suggestion, seeing he is a liar from the beginning, who by his falsehood laboreth to deceive and destroy us (for what were this, but to believe in him by an absolute faith, when there is no reason for it?) but we must examine his temptations by the rule of God's Word, which will easily discover the fraud,

weakness, and maliciousness of them. For nothing giveth Satan more advantage against weak Christians, then their readiness to give credit to his temptations, without bringing them to the touchstone of God's Truth. Fourthly, if Satan taketh advantage from the humor of melancholy abounding in us, to fill and fraught our hearts with these scruples and fears, we must use the help of the skillful Physician for the removing of this cause, that so the effects may cease: And withal ask the counsel of some judicious and faithful Divine, who may direct us in our ways, and resolve our doubts; upon whose judgment, grounded upon God's Word, we must more rest, then upon our own weak conceit and opinions, especially being thus blinded with those black and foggy mists, which false fear and melancholy have cast before them. Fifthly, we must labor to have our hearts possessed and replenished with the true and filial fear of God, springing from Faith and Love, whereby we shall be made zealous in God's service; and then there will be no room for these Panic and superstitious fears, nor any advantage given to Satan of seizing upon us with his suggestions. Lastly, we must carefully take heed, that we do not yield ourselves over to be ruled by these scruples and fears, either to do, or not to do anything, because of some evil threatened; but in things indifferent, it is our best course to resist the temptation, by doing the contrary to that which is suggested, if Christian prudence tell us, that it is convenient, all circumstances considered. And in things lawful or unlawful, we are to perform or omit them, not out of scrupulous fear of any evils threatened by the tempter, from which God is all-sufficient to shield us, but in obedience to God, because he in his Word hath commanded or forbidden them.

Sect. 3 - That carnal fear is a great hindrance unto godliness, and the means to be freed from it.

Secondly, we are hindered by carnal fear in the duties of a godly life, whilst thereby we are moved to think, that we shall never be able to perform them, though we use all our endeavor; or if we have begun

well, yet we shall never hold out unto the end, by reason of our own frailties and infirmities, the afflictions and troubles which cross us in these courses, and the manifold and malicious temptations and persecutions, which are raised against us by the enemies of our salvation. By which fears our minds are troubled, our hearts vexed and turmoiled, our courage quailed, our resolutions weakened, and we utterly disabled and discouraged from entering into this course of Christianity, when as we have little or no hope of proceeding and continuing in it unto the end, that we may be saved. The which temptation is much strengthened, when we see the many fainting's and failings of others that have gone before us, who professing Christianity, have either neglected the duties belonging to it, or performed them to little purpose in a cold, formal and careless manner; and in the end have wholly desisted and returned back to their old profaneness. Which impediment if we would remove, we must know that never any did seriously and sincerely seek God in the ways of his commandments, but they have assuredly found him. And therefore we must not be discouraged with the failings and relapses of hypocrites and temporaries, if our own consciences testify unto us, that we labor to serve and please God in the uprightness of our hearts. Secondly, our faintness and weakness must not discourage us from entering into, and proceeding in the ways of godliness, seeing we walk not in our own strength, but by the power of God assisting us, nor by virtue of our own resolutions and endeavors, but of God's gracious and free promises made unto us in Christ, that he will not only justify, but also sanctify us, and free us as well from the corruption of sin, as the guilt and punishment. The which if we apprehend by a true and lively Faith, we shall be able to overcome all difficulties, and to serve God in some good and acceptable manner; as I have more fully showed in the beginning of this Treatise. Finally, we need not to fear our perseverance in the duties of godliness unto the end, if disclaiming our own strength, we rest and rely wholly upon God's power and promises, seeing he is able and all-sufficient to perfect that good work which he hath begun, to enable us likewise, who are impotent in ourselves, to do all things necessary for his glory and our salvation, through the power of Christ which strengtheneth

us. To arm us against all the temptations of the devil, the world and our own flesh, so that all the power of hell, the prosperity or persecutions of the world, nor anything else whatsoever, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, or to put out and extinguish our love of him in our hearts; or to hinder our proceeding in the ways of godliness, until by walking in them, we attain unto everlasting joy and happiness.

Sect. 4 - That carnal sorrow is an impediment to a godly life.

Again, we are much hindered in the duties of a godly life, by carnal sorrow and lumpish heaviness. For if (as the Apostle saith) worldly sorrow causeth death, both in respect of the life of grace and glory, then must it needs also disable us unto all actions of life, being made as unfit for them hereby, as a man in the state of death, to perform any works of the living. Now this heaviness and excessive sorrow ariseth from diverse causes, as first, from the sight and sense of our innumerable and grievous sins, when as it is not mixed with faith and the love of God, but merely ariseth out of servile fear and self-love, apprehending God's terrible Judgments against us for our sins. Secondly, from the imperfection in our sanctification, whereof it is, that our unmortified corruptions do rage and sway in us, disabling us unto God's service, and making us prone unto sin. That the duties which we perform, are so full of wants and weaknesses, that we can with no comfort look upon them. That the graces of God's Spirit are imperfect, and continually assaulted with our contrary corruptions; our faith with doubting; our affiance with diffidence; our humility with pride; our repentance with security and hardness of heart, and so in the rest. Thirdly, from our weakness in faith, persuading us of the remission of our sins, and of our reconciliation and peace with God. Fourthly, from spiritual desertions, whereby God estrangeth himself from us, and seemeth to have left and forsaken us. Fifthly, from our fainting and failing in the ways of godliness, and often relapses into sin. Sixthly, from our manifold and sharp afflictions,

which are so bitter and unpleasant to the flesh, that they make us immoderately sorrowful, and to break out into some impatency, as though they were signs of God's wrath and displeasure, and not of his fatherly love correcting us for our amendment. Seventhly and lastly, this sorrow ariseth in the hearts of weak Christians, when as they compare themselves with others that have made a better and greater progress in the graces of God's Spirit, and in the duties of a godly life; being hereby moved to think, that the graces which they see in others, are wholly wanting in themselves, because their lesser light is obscured by a greater, and seemeth nothing, because it is not of equal brightness. Or if they have any at all, yet that it is false and hypocritical, because it is but of slender growth, and much inferior to those which we observe in many others, whom notwithstanding we have as much exceeded in means, as they us, in the fruits of them. By which sorrows and heaviness, arising from these and such like causes, the poor Christian doth more and more weaken the operation of God's graces in him in the duties of a godly life, because he doth too much already apprehend their weakness, and more disableth himself, because he seeth his inability. For having with immoderate grief weakened his body, and spent his spirits; oppressed his heart, and terrified his conscience, he is made lumpish and dull, uncheerful and uncomfortable in all the duties of God's service. For the removing of which impediment, we must carefully take heed that we do not disjoin faith from our repentance; but as we have one eye upon our sins, that we may sorrow for them, so the other eye upon our Savior Christ, who hath fully satisfied for them. Secondly, we must not dream upon any perfection of sanctification in this life, though we labor after it, and then we shall not be too much dejected, and mourn immoderately for our imperfection; whereas if we fancy unto ourselves a far greater measure of grace and holiness than it is possible for us to attain, it will be a cause of excessive sorrow, when we find how far we come short of our hopes. Thirdly, we must look upon God's graces, and the fruits of them in holy obedience, as testimonies of God's love, and evidences of our sanctification, and not as being any meritorious causes of his favor, and our salvation. For then we need not to stand so much upon the quantity and degree

of them, as upon their sincerity and truth, which when we find, we may rejoice in the assurance of God's free grace and love through Jesus Christ. Whereas if we look upon them in their worth and worthiness, the sight of their imperfections will bereave our hearts of all sound comfort. Fourthly, we must consider, that the first and least degrees of true grace are accepted of God, and will make us also acceptable unto him. For he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He respecteth and tendereth his young lings and weaklings, as well as those who have attained to greater strength; and he hath pronounced them blessed, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, as well as those which are perfectly righteous. Finally, as we must take notice of that we have not, that we may labor after it, so also we must not neglect what we have, that we may be truly thankful unto God, from whose free grace we have received it; among which we may number spiritual life, whereby only we can be sensible of our wounds and weakness, the sight and sense of our sins, by which we are moved to deny ourselves, and to fly unto Christ, hungering desires of grace and holiness, seeing we have God's promise that they shall be satisfied. And so we shall join faith with our repentance, joy with our mourning, love and thankfulness with our meekness and humility.

Sect. 5 - Of desperation, and that it is a great impediment to godliness.

Finally, these scrupulous fears, and carnal sorrow, if they be not removed or moderated, will bring us by degrees, into that fearful gulf of deep despair, whereby we shall cast off all hope of God's mercy, and reject the all-sufficient merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, through our incredulity, as though the multitude and heinousness of our sins, did far exceed them. And this is the very cut-throat of all piety, and the devils strongest and most horrid chain, to enslave men in his service, and to hinder them from entertaining so much as a thought or desire of serving God in the duties of a godly life. For it

wholly discourageth a man from proceeding in such a way, as offereth no hope of bringing him to his journeys end. It maketh a servant wholly to neglect his duty, when as he is quite cut off from all expectation of reward. It causeth men to give themselves to all sensuality, voluptuousness, and profaneness, when they have no other hopes, but what this present life offereth unto them; and the rather, that they may hereby put off, for a little while, their terrors of conscience, and griefs of mind; as it were by drinking of cold water in the fit of a fever. And wanting faith, by which we are united unto Christ, in whom alone we can bring forth fruits of holiness and righteousness, how can we otherwise choose but be utterly barren in all true obedience, and like wild Olive trees, bring forth only fruits of impiety and wickedness? Which impediment if we would remove, we must remember, that the Lord is infinite in grace and mercy, as he describeth himself in his Word, so that though our sins be many and grievous, yet they are infinitely exceeded by them, for his mercies are above all his works. That he taketh delight in showing mercy toward repentant sinners, seeing hereby he exerciseth his nature, and magnifieth his holy name in the manifestation of his grace and goodness. That he loved us when we were his enemies; yea so loved us, that he sent his only begotten and dearly beloved Son to die for us, and therefore will not now reject us, when as through Christ we sue and seek to be reconciled unto him. That he hath made his free covenant of grace with us, wherein he hath promised the remission of all our sins, upon the alone condition of faith, bringing forth the fruits thereof in unfeigned repentance, and that his promises are indefinite, without exception of any sinners, and therefore shall assuredly belong unto us, if we do not reject them through unbelief. That the merits and satisfaction of Christ are of infinite value, and an all-sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, if they were applied by faith; and that he hath given unto us his covenant in writing, and ratified it by his Sacraments, which he hath annexed as seals to the great Charter of our peace, that there might no place be left to doubting. Finally, that our Savior Christ continually maketh intercession for us, pleading the all-sufficiency of his merits and satisfaction for our justification and salvation. So that though we sin,

yet this is our comfort, that we have an Advocate with the Father to plead our cause, even Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.

Sect. 6 - That pride is a singular impediment to a godly life.

Besides these, there are diverse other carnal corruptions, which are notable impediments unto a godly life. The first whereof is natural pride, whereby we have a high conceit of ourselves, and of every shadow and show of grace in us, and imagine that we have so much already, that we need not to labor after more, nor to use any means for enriching of ourselves with those graces whereof we stand in need. An example whereof we have in the Pharisees, who thought they saw, when as they were blind, and therefore neglected the light of truth, when as the Sun of righteousness did shine unto them. In the Laodiceans, who thought that they were rich, and had need of nothing, when as they were poor and miserable, blind and naked. In the young Justiciary, who thought he had done all that God required of him, and attained unto perfection, when as yet he had done nothing, but still remained the slave of sin, loaded with corruptions and imperfections. And in the Corinthians, who proudly conceited that they were rich, and reigned as Kings, not needing any help from the blessed Apostle, when as still their lusts reigned in them. The which, above all other corrupt affections, hindereth us from proceeding in the ways of godliness. First, because God denieth to give his graces to such as being proudly conceited of themselves, do not acknowledge that they stand in need of them, and consequently would never be thankful for them. For he exalteth the humble, and pulleth down the proud, he filleth the hungry with good things, and sendeth the full empty away. Secondly, because they, thinking that they have enough already, never labor after more, but neglect all good means which God hath ordained for the begetting and increasing of all his graces in us; and having scarce set one foot forward in the course of Christianity, yet conceiting that they have

almost attained unto the Goal of perfection, and that they have far outstripped all others, they stand still, as though there were no need of further proceeding. Now if we would remove this impediment, we must mortify our carnal pride, and labor after true humility, that having a sight of our sin and misery, we may not content ourselves, but labor to come out of this wretched estate. We must strive to see and feel our wants and weaknesses, that so we may use all good means whereby they may be supplied, and we strengthened; and the imperfections of our best actions, that so we may labor after more perfection. We must acknowledge ourselves wounded and sick with sin, that Christ may heal and cure us; weak in grace, that he may strengthen us; naked, that he may clothe us; poor, that he may enrich us; blind, that he may give us sight, and lost in ourselves, that he may save us. The second, is unjust anger, frowardness, and peevishness, which for the time take away the use of reason, and much more the power of Religion, making us unfit to pray, read, or hear the Word of God, or to perform any other Christian duty, either unto God, our neighbor, or our own person; and for the time so stiflenth and hindereth the operations of God's Spirit, and the holy motions of his Divine graces dwelling in us, that scarce any semblance or show of them will appear, either to others or ourselves; as we see in the example of holy David, who in his cooler thoughts and well tempered affections, made some scruple of cutting Saul's garment, but being enraged with fury, resolveth on the death not only of Nabal who had offended him, but of his whole family, who were innocent, and rather on his side then against him. For the removing of which impediment, it is necessary that we do not give way unto this unruly passion, according to the Apostles admonition, but that we subdue and keep it under, not suffering the Sun to go down on our wrath; using all good means to mortify these carnal passions, and to attain unto the contrary grace of meekness and gentleness, of which I have written at large in my Treatise of Anger.

Sect. 7 - That sloth and laziness is a great impediment to a godly life.

The third corrupt affection, is sloth and laziness, which maketh men loath to take pains in performing the duties of God's service, as watchfulness, Prayer, hearing the Word, Meditation, and the rest. For many having proceeded thus far, as to approve these things in their judgments, and have some desires and faint resolutions to put them in practice, yet when they find that they cannot be done without some pains, being of an idle and sluggish disposition, they are presently discouraged, and having found the treasure which is sufficient to make them rich, choose rather to remain in their spiritual beggary, then they will spend any sweat in digging for it. Needs then must this be a great impediment to the duties of a godly life, when as men are so luskish and lazy, that they fly that labor which is required unto them. Needs must such sluggards live in poverty, seeing it is only the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. And far off are they from achieving any excellent work, who sit idly still, pretending excuses of danger and difficulty, and that there is a Lyon without, ready to slay them, if they go out into the street; which impediment if we would remove, let us consider, that howsoever such men please themselves with idle desires, yet they will nothing profit them, unless they shake off their sluggishness, and use all diligence in their spiritual business. So Solomon saith, that the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Yea, such desires, if we rest in them, do hurt, rather than help us, according to that of Solomon; The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor. Secondly, let us consider, that by this sloth we do not only not get any spiritual riches, but also that we consume that we already seem to have. For as our Savior speaketh in another case, He that gathereth not, scattereth abroad; in which respect, Solomon maketh that man which is slothful in his work, a brother to him that is a great waster. Thirdly, let us consider, that the Lord hath appointed this world to be a place of pains and labor, and reserveth his Sabbath of rest for the world to come, after we have finished our work. Here we must work in his Vineyard, and the night of death must come, before we shall be called to receive our wages. Here we must keep our marks, and there enjoy the riches which we have gotten by our spiritual trading. Here

we must fight the Lord's battles, being covered with sweat and blood, and there we shall obtain the Crown of victory. Finally, here we must travail like poor Pilgrims, and then take our ease when we have finished our journey, and are come safe to our heavenly home. Fourthly, let us call to mind the labors of the Saints which have gone in this way before us, and especially of our Savior Christ himself, who travailed for our sakes, not only unto weariness and sweat, but even unto blood, and not foolishly imagine that we may take our ease, and yet come timely and safely to the end of our hopes; seeing our Savior hath told us, that the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, and that we must strive to enter into the straight gate with all earnestness and constancy, because many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. Lastly, let us consider the punishments denounced against those who idly sit still, and refuse to travel in the ways of godliness. For it casteth them into a deep sleep, whereby all the operations of God's graces are hindered, yea, it emptieth the sluggard of them all, like him, who wanting meat, is famished with hunger: According to that of Solomon; Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and the idle soul shall suffer hunger. And as it depriveth him of all grace in this life, so also of glory and happiness in the life to come; for he only must have the wages, who hath labored in Christ's Vineyard. And contrariwise, plungeth him into everlasting death and destruction. For the slothful and unprofitable servant must be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And therefore, if nothing else will move us, yet at least, let us take some pains in God's service, which being small and momentary, shall be everlastingly rewarded, that we may escape the endless pains of hell. For if we cannot for a little while endure the kindly heat of the Sun, how shall we be able to suffer the scorching and tormenting flames of hell fire? If we are impatient of a little sweat and labor in the duties of Christianity, and of our callings, let us think with ourselves how much more intolerable the endless torments of the damned will be unto us.

Sect. 8 - Of weariness in well doing, and how it hindereth us in all Christian duties. And first, that which proceedeth from an ill disposition of the body.

The last impediment which hindereth us in the duties of a godly life, is weariness in well-doing, which proceedeth from a twofold cause. The first outward, which is the ill disposition of the body to the performance of Christian duties; proceeding either from external causes, as hunger, thirst, heat, cold, excessive labor in worldly employments, and such like, or from inward infirmities and diseases, which make the body faint and feeble, weak, and unable to take any pains in the duties of a godly life. For seeing the soul useth the body as its organ and instrument, for the performing of all outward actions, and seeing there is such sympathy and familiarity between them, that they mourn and rejoice together; hereof it must needs follow, that when the body is indisposed to the duties of God's service, the soul is thereby unfitted for them; when the body is feeble and faint, the faculties of the soul cannot be strong and vigorous in their actions and operations. When the body is weary and full of pain, it must needs affect the mind, and much distract it in all good duties. And finally, when the tool and instrument is blunt and dull, unfit and untoward, the most cunning Artificer must needs be hindered, and much fail in his curious workmanship. For the removing of which impediment, we must use our best endeavor, that we may have a sound mind in a sound body, and to use all good means of diet and Physic for the preserving or recovering of our health, and to avoid intemperance, insobriety, and excessive labor about worldly employments. Yea, we must avoid immoderation and excess, even in the exercises of mortification, as fasting, watching, and the rest; For as luxuriousness, delicacy, and sloth, do weaken the body for want of exercise, and intemperance and insobriety do make it feeble and unfit for any employment: so likewise the contrary extremes, and over-rough and rigorous handling of it, do exhaust and consume the spirits, and make it so weak and faint, that it is ready to sink under every burden. And therefore we must carefully observe the mean, and avoid both extremes, especially that unto

which our corrupt nature inclineth and carrieth us, whether it be to sensuality, which pampereth the body with excess, or will-worship and superstition, in not sparing of it; which is not much less dangerous then the other, although it be nothing so common and ordinary. For as if we would make speedy journeys, our Horse must neither be pampered nor starved, seeing by the one he is made either resty or out of breath, and by the other so enfeebled, that he will not be able to bear us: so is it with our bodies which carry our souls, and therefore they must be used with like prudence and providence.

Sect. 9 - Of weariness in well-doing, arising from the averseness of our wills unto good duties.

The second cause is internal, which is the ill disposition of the mind and will, being averse unto all good duties and virtuous actions, and prone unto all evil; delighting in worldly vanities, and pleasures of sin, and dis-affecting and loathing spiritual exercises, as being wearisome and tedious, difficult and troublesome to our corrupted nature. The which is a notable impediment to our well proceeding in the ways of godliness; for either this unwillingness causeth such weariness, that it will make us either not to enter into the Christian course, or soon desist and return again into our former ways of wickedness and sensual delights, or else it will make us unsettled and unconstant in all good duties, doing them only by fits and flashes, when the good mood of devotion cometh upon us, and neglecting them, when other things which better please us come in the way; or finally, it quencheth our zeal and fervor of love unto the duties of God's service, so that we perform them weakly and wearily, coldly and formally, with much dullness and spiritual deadness. The which impediments, if we would avoid, we must labor and strive against this weariness and faintness in well-doing, and endeavor all we may, to take away both these causes and effects of it. And first we must rouse up our spirits, and stir up God's graces in us, as the Apostle exhorteth, that we may not be weary of well-doing, by considering

the weight and worth, the profit and necessity of Christian and religious duties, in comparison whereof, all worldly things ought to be neglected as vain and of no value. Let us remember, that all the promises of grace, life and salvation shall be assured unto us, if we faint not; whereas we shall have no part or interest in them, though we have made never so good beginnings or proceedings, if we do not still go forward and hold out unto the end. For if we endure to the end, we shall be saved: if we fight unto the death, we shall receive the Crown of Life. But if we lay our hand upon the Plough, and look back, we shall not be though worthy of the Kingdom of heaven. Finally, let us daily renew the means of Spiritual life and strength, that so they also may be renewed and repaired, as hearing, reading, meditation, prayer, watchfulness, holy conferences and the rest, without which the soul will grow faint and languish, like the body which is deprived of corporal food; but especially when we feel our faintness, and languishing weariness, let us unite all the powers of our souls in prayer unto Almighty God, desiring him by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, to quicken our deadness, and strengthen our weakness, that we may not wax weary of well doing, but continue constant unto the end. Now concerning the effects of this slothful weariness, which are also great impediments to a godly life, as hindering us from entering into it, or proceeding in it; inconstancy and unsettledness in performing Christian duties, and want of fervency in our love and zeal in doing of them; I shall not need to add anything here for the removing of them, seeing I have spoken before of perseverance, and constancy in the daily performance of all Christian duties, and of that fervor of love and zeal, which ought to be used in doing of them. And therefore thus much shall suffice to have spoken of those impediments which arise from the flesh and corruption of our nature, and also of the helps and means whereby we may remove them.

CHAPTER XII.

Objections against a godly life made by the flesh, answered, and first, such as pretend impossibility and difficulty.

Sect. 1 - That a godly life is possible unto us.

But the flesh doth not only hinder us in the duties of a godly life, by those real impediments, which it casteth in our way, of which I have before spoken; but also by suggesting into our minds, many strong objections, which tend to this main end, that we may be discouraged from entering into the course of Christianity. And first, the flesh is ready to object, that in this state of frailty and corruption, it is utterly impossible to lead a godly life, in that manner as it hath been before described. For who can bring that which is clean, out of that which is unclean? Who can lead such a life as is pleasing and acceptable unto God, whose pure eyes can endure nothing which is impure and imperfect, seeing the Prophet telleth us, that our best righteousness is as a polluted cloth; and the Apostle, who so far exceeded us that now live in piety and righteousness, notwithstanding complaineth, that he could not do the good he would, but contrariwise did the evil he would not. And therefore it is in vain to weary ourselves about impossibilities, and so to lose both the pleasures of this life, and that which is to come. And thus the flesh persuadeth us to play the bankrupts, and to resolve, that because we cannot pay all our whole debt, that therefore we will pay nothing at all. To which I answer with our Savior Christ, that those things which are impossible to us, are both possible and easy unto God, who hath promised to assist us, if we desire and endeavor to serve and please him. Secondly, I answer, that though nothing will please God, but that which is pure and perfect, and all our best actions are full of corruption and imperfection; yet this need not to discourage us from doing the best we can, seeing Christ, who hath perfectly fulfilled the Law for us, covereth our imperfections, with his most perfect righteousness, and

washeth away our corruptions, in his most precious blood, so that we may do the best we can, and then what is wanting on our part, shall be supplied on his. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, as the Apostle speaketh. Thirdly, though that perfect obedience which the Law requireth, be impossible unto us in respect of our frailty and corruption, yet that Evangelical obedience, required in the covenant of grace, (namely, that believing in Christ, we desire, resolve and endeavor to please God in all things) is not so. Though we have no ability to perform service unto God, in that exact perfection which the Law requireth; yet if we do that which we are able, in sincerity and truth, with upright hearts and good consciences, we shall through Christ be accepted of God. For he rejecteth not the least endeavors of his faithful servants, who desire to fear his name. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he bring forth judgment unto victory. He spareth us as a father spareth his son that serveth him, and if we have a willing mind, we shall be accepted according to that we have, and not according to that we have not. He pitieth our frailties and infirmities, like as a father pitieth his children that fear him, and out of this pity pardoneth them; For he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust. And though he hath most pure eyes, which can endure no pollution, yet he beholdeth not iniquity in Jacob, neither doth he see perverseness in Israel. Nor is he any acceptor of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness (not according to the rigor of the law, from which Christ hath freed us, but in the truth and uprightness of his heart) is accepted of him. And thus was David accepted as a man according to God's own heart, because he applied himself to observe his precepts always and to the end, notwithstanding his grievous sins and fearful falls. Thus Zacharias and Elizabeth were reputed righteous and perfect, because in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts, they did labor and strive after righteousness and perfection. And thus Asa is said to have done

that which was right in the sight of the Lord, notwithstanding his manifold slips and great infirmities; because his heart was perfect or upright before him. So that the impossibility of leading a godly life need not to discourage us, seeing the Lord is all-sufficient to make it possible unto us, for he that could create us pure and holy, according to his own Image, is as able to restore us to this purity and perfection. Unto which, though it be not his pleasure, that we should attain in this life, because he would train us up in humility, and move us to ascribe unto him the whole glory of our salvation; yet will he enable us unto such a measure and degree as himself will accept of, as it it were in full perfection; and daily add unto his own gifts of grace, until we come to a full age in Christ; for unto everyone that hath, shall be given, until he have abundance, as our Savior speaketh.

Sect. 2 - To whom a godly life is difficult, and the causes of it.

Secondly, the flesh is ready to object, that though the duties of a godly life are not absolutely impossible, yet at least they are so full of difficulty, and unpleasant, so tedious and troublesome to our feeble and frail natures, and so uncomfortable and painful, that there is no likelihood, that ever we shall hold out in the doing of them; and therefore it is as good for us to neglect them altogether, as to take upon us such an insupportable burden, as we shall be forced to cast off, before we come half way to our journeys end. The which objection our corrupt flesh doth much strengthen against us, to hinder our Christian resolution, and both our ingress and progress in the ways of godliness, by setting before us the manifold examples of those, that have lived in former times, and in our own days, who having made some good beginnings, have fallen back and relapsed into their former courses; and having begun well with a purpose to proceed, have through weariness desisted, before they could attain to their journeys end. And thus, like the sluggard, the flesh persuadeth us to sit still in the house, because there is a Lyon in the streets. And like the murmuring spies, though it confesseth that the spiritual and

heavenly Canaan be worth the desiring, as abounding with all God's blessings, yet it bringeth up an evil report of it, in respect of the manifold difficulties whereby we must pass unto it, and the sons of Anachim, the mighty enemies of our salvation, which must be overcome by us, who are so far inferior unto them in strength, before we can attain unto that place of rest and joy. The which temptation is exceeding dangerous, and a notable impediment to hinder many from once entering into the course of Christianity, because they imagine it to be so irksome and painful, that they shall quickly be tired, and never be able to hold out unto the end. For the answering whereof, that it may be no impediment unto us in the ways of godliness, we are first to know and acknowledge, that it is true in part; namely, that the course of Christianity is full of difficulties, hard and tedious, unpleasant, and even intolerable and impossible in some respects. For the Devil, which is that strong man, who holdeth all that he possesseth in peace, will not easily leave his hold, nor be cast out without many combats and conflicts. And howsoever he seemeth deaf and dumb, whilst he is in quiet possession, and lulleth us asleep in the cradle of carnal delights, yet when our Savior Christ by the Ministry of the Word and Gospel, seeketh to dispossess and cast him out, then he both heareth and crieth out, rageth and renteth us, with the violence of his temptations, making us to seem both to ourselves and others, as if we were quite deprived of all spiritual life. And though this infernal Pharaoh suffereth us, whilst we do him service, to sit quietly by the fleshpots of worldly and sensual delights, and even to glut ourselves, and take our fill of the pleasures of sin, without any great disturbance; yet no sooner do we inwardly resolve, and outwardly make mention of departing out of his bondage, that we may serve the Lord, but presently he rageth against us, and pursueth us with hellish fury, that he may hinder us in our Spiritual journey towards the heavenly Canaan, and again recover us into his captivity. Again, the practice of Christianity becometh unto us tedious and difficult by reason of our sloth, which maketh us unwilling to take any pains in the duties of a godly life; and everything seemeth tedious and wearisome to a mind that is indisposed and averse unto it. And also because of our carnal

sensuality, which maketh us think that we are not at liberty, if we may not run with full career into all manner of licentiousness. And like unto those Heathen Rulers, to fret and fume, when we are restrained from going on in our wicked courses by God's Law; saying, Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from us. And hereof it is, that the godly life is in the Scriptures compared to a wearisome pilgrimage, which cannot be finished without much pains and travail; to a dangerous Warfare, in which we must have many a sore and dangerous conflict, before we get the victory; to a narrow and afflicted way and strait gate, thorough which we cannot pass without much striving. So likewise to the mortification and cutting off our bodily members, which cannot be without much grief; To a circumcision, yea, the circumcision of the heart: and how can the heartstrings be cut, without much sense of pain? And finally, to the birth of a child, which cannot be without sore travail going before. Now if the infant which hath continued but nine months in the mothers womb, cannot in the ordinary course of nature be born without much pain and many sharp throws; then how much less can we be spiritually born again without great grief and labor, who have lain for the space of many years in our sins, and strengthened our natural corruptions with long and continual custom; seeing this is a work contrary unto and above nature?

Sect. 3 - The causes why the duties of a godly life seem difficult and tedious even to the regenerate. Rom. 7.22

Again, the duties of a godly life are somewhat tedious and troublesome, even unto the regenerate, who have made some entrance into them, because this work of regeneration is not perfected at once, but only inchoate and begun. And therefore, as they are delighted with the Law of God in the inner man, so they find another law in their members, warring against the Law of their minds, and leading them captive to the law of sin. The which spiritual bondage affecteth them with such grief and sorrow, that it

forceth them to cry out with the Apostle; O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? We are not wholly and perfectly sanctified, but remain partly flesh, and partly spirit, like a city which is at civil wars within itself. And these do continually lust the one against the other; So that no sooner do we set ourselves to perform any Christian duties of a godly life, in the spiritual part; but presently the flesh opposeth and interrupteth us in it. No sooner do we resolve to go forward in the ways of godliness, but forthwith the corruption of our nature, like a heavy burden, incompasseth us, and (as it were) clingeth about our necks, so as we cannot proceed without much labor and weariness. All which and many other the like impediments, as they do much disturb and distract all in the duties of a godly life, so especially young beginners at their first entrance into it. For then the flesh is strongest to oppose, and the Spirit weakest to make resistance. Then the world and worldly wicked men, do use most endeavor to regain us into their wonted society in the works of darkness, when we have newly left their company; and the pleasures of sin, and the baits of worldly profits, alluring us to continue in our wonted courses, are freshest in our memories, when as we have lately renounced and forsaken them, so as they are still scarce out of our sight. Then the devil bendeth all his might and malice, his stratagems and engines of battery against us (as Sennacherib against Hezekiah) when we do disclaim his service, and refuse to pay him tribute. Then we meet with greatest difficulties, and have least strength to overcome them. Then we go in the ways of Christianity, like little children, when they first learn to go alone, who at every step are ready to stagger and fall, through weakness and want of practice; whereas when we have accustomed ourselves to these courses, for some months or years, we go both more steadily and with much greater safety and delight. Finally, then we are like unto sluggards, who leave their down-beds with much irksomeness and discontent, but when they have once risen and shaken off their sloth, they are sorry that they have slept so long, and go cheerfully about their business. Neither did ever man repent of his repentance, though at the first entrance it seemed unpleasant and difficult, but rather feeleth such joy and comfort in it, that he much

grieveth in his soul, that he was no sooner grieved for his sins. Now this difficulty is much increased unto young beginners by diverse means. First, because they are apt to trust too much unto their own strength, which most faileth those that most rest upon it, and do not walk in the life and strength of faith, relying themselves wholly upon God's power and promises. For so naturally are we, through pride and self-love, addicted to ourselves, that we will not easily seek for help abroad, so long as any hope remaineth that we shall find it at home. Secondly, because in our first beginnings we are more fickle, unconstant, and unsettled in our Christian courses. For how can he make any good proceedings in his way, who sometimes goeth forward, and sometimes backward? How can he dispatch his business, who undoeth one day that which he did in another? Or how should a man preserve his health and strength, who one day carefully useth good diet or physic, and the next day neglecteth both, and impaireth and hindereth them by the quite contrary courses? Finally, because we look more unto ourselves then unto God, and so seeing the difficulty of the work, and comparing it with our own weakness, we begin to despair of ever achieving it; but in the meantime seldom or never look unto God, who is all-sufficient to strengthen us, and to make us perfect unto every good work. We apprehend our weakness to go alone, and are thereby discouraged, because we consider not that we are led and supported by the hand of our heavenly Father. We see our wounds and weaknesses, but not the salves and remedies. We behold with Elias servant, who are against us, but through our spiritual blindness cannot discern the more numerous and potent aids that are on our side. And finally, we are ready with the Apostle to take notice of the Law of our members, warring against the law of our minds, and leading us captive to the law of sin; but not with him to acknowledge with thankfulness our deliverance by Jesus Christ: And to be discouraged with the sight and sense of our infirmities; but not to consider, that God's grace is sufficient for us.

Sect. 4 - That the difficulty of a godly life must not discourage us from it.

In all which respects it cannot be denied, but that there is some difficulty in leading of a godly life, and much pains and labor required for the right performance of the duties which belong unto it. Notwithstanding this must be no impediment to hinder us from entering into, and proceeding in the course of Christianity. Yea rather, because this above all things is most excellent, profitable and necessary, as concerning us, no less than the everlasting salvation or condemnation both of our bodies and souls, the difficulties which we find in this way, should be so far from discouraging and making us sit still, or turn back again to enjoy our sinful pleasures; that they should rather inflame our desires, whet and confirm our resolutions, and make us much more painful and diligent in our endeavors, that we may attain unto it, seeing though the difficulty were much greater, yet the excellency, profit, and necessity of leading such a life do far exceed it. And this use our Savior Christ maketh of it; For from the consideration of the small number which shall be saved, and the difficulty of attaining unto heavenly happiness, he enforceth this exhortation; Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. So he telleth us else-where, that the Kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. And the Apostle Peter having said, that the righteous shall scarcely be saved, that is, not without much difficulty and laborious diligence, taketh thereupon occasion to persuade all, both to patient suffering what God imposeth, and diligent doing that which he enjoineth. And surely if we had hereby no other benefit, but the escaping of the everlasting torments of hell fire, which are easeless and endless, it were me thinks a motive strong enough to make us arm our resolution against all difficulties, and to spare for no labor, that we may secure ourselves from this dreadful condemnation. He that is in danger of drowning, doth not dispute of the great pains which he must take before he can come to land, but thinking that his strength

can be no ways better spent, then in saving his life, he useth all diligence, and laboreth even to extreme weariness, to secure his safety, yea even then when he is doubtful of the success. And shall we think all labor little, to preserve a momentary and miserable life, from a natural death: and can we think any too much for the escaping of those everlasting torments of hell fire? O that our fore-wit were as good as our after-wit! And that we could be as wise by instruction and discourse of reason, as we are by feeling and experience! O that we could consider with ourselves, when we stumble at small difficulties, and are discouraged from performing the duties of a godly life with a little labor; how much less we shall be able to endure those intolerable and endless torments, which are prepared for those who neglect God's service, and are slaves to Satan, and their own sinful flesh, to obey it in the lusts thereof! If the easy pains of a godly life be not to be endured of these nice and worldly wantons, which are also of such short continuance, how intolerable will those torments be unto them which shall never have end? If the damned spirits might have liberty to resume their bodies, and live upon the earth again for a further trial, that amending their lives, they might be saved, or returning unto their former sinful courses, they might be cast back again into hell fire: O how would they melt, and be even resolved into tears of hearty repentance for those sins which have made them obnoxious to such fearful condemnation! How would they labor and spend their strength in the exercises of mortification, and make their throats hoarse with prayers and strong cries, that they might obtain mercy and forgiveness? How diligent would they be in hearing, reading, and meditating in the Word, that they might attain unto a lively faith, and thereby apply unto themselves Christ Jesus and his righteousness, for their justification and salvation? How fruitful would they be in good works; and how liberal and bountiful in alms-deeds, and in relieving the poor members of Jesus Christ? And yet most certain it is, that their case shall be ours, if we run on in the same courses which they have gone before us, seeing God is no respecter of persons, but is alike just and true to all. Our punishments shall be as great, if we neglect God's service, and live in our sins; our too late repentance as desperate and

comfortless, if we abuse God's patience and longsuffering, and let pass the acceptable time and day of salvation.

Sect. 5 - That the recompense of reward must make us to overcome all difficulties.

And yet there is a far stronger motive to make us overcome all difficulties, and to use all painful diligence in the duties of a godly life, namely, the riches of reward promised to all those who spend their time and strength in God's service, even the everlasting joys of his Kingdom, unto which, both all the sufferings and doings of this life are not to worthy to be compared. In which regard, God's precepts are more to be desired then gold, yea then much fine gold, and to be esteemed sweeter than the honey, and the honey comb; because by them we are warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward. For who would not serve such a Master, as is so bountiful in requiting his pains? Who would not undertake any labor (seeing the greatest is light, and the longest momentary) to be assured of that super-exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Who would not patiently endure a sorrowful seed-time, for so joyful a harvest? Or refuse to work in God's Vineyard with all painful diligence, and comfortable cheerfulness, who is assured of such liberal wages when he hath ended his work? And therefore though there were never so much difficulty in the duties of a godly life, and never so much pains required unto the service of God, this should not discourage us from entering into the course of Christianity, seeing our wages and reward will infinitely exceed our work and labor. Especially considering that these holy and religious duties are only unpleasant and tedious to the flesh and corrupted nature, unto which (as the Apostle speaketh) we are no debtors that we should live according to the lusts thereof; and so by pleasing of it, to displease God, and purchase unto ourselves eternal death and hellish condemnation.

Sect. 6 - That a godly life, in its own nature is not difficult and tedious, but sweet and delightful.

Neither in truth are the duties of a godly life unpleasant and burthensome, tedious and troublesome unto the spiritual and regenerate part, but sweet and delightful, easy and full of comfort. For God's Commandments are not grievous, as the Apostle John speaketh; and our Savior telleth us, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light; and that they who will take them upon them, shall find rest to their souls. Upon which words Chrysostom speaketh excellently to our present purpose. If (saith he) hearing of a yoke and a burden, thou art afraid and shrinkest back, thou must attribute this fear, not to the nature of the things themselves, but to thine own sloth; for if thou art prepared, and not sluggishly effeminate, all shall seem unto thee easy and light. And therefore Christ, that he might teach us with what care we ought to watch, hath neither concealed the burden, nor the sweetness; but joining both together, he hath said, that it is a yoke, and also that it is sweet. He calleth it a burden; but addeth, that it is light; that thou shouldest not shun it, as being too laborious, nor contemn it, as being too easy. But if after all this, virtue seemeth unto thee hard and difficult, consider how much more vice and sin, which Christ intimateth, in that before he said anything of his yoke, he crieth out, Come unto me all, ye that labor and are heavy laden. Thereby showing, how great labor, and what an intolerable burden sin imposeth: for he saith, not only all ye that labor, but also, who are heavy laden. The which the Psalmist expresseth more plainly, and describeth the nature of sin, saying, Mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. And Zacharias likewise, where he calleth it a talent of lead. For experience will teach us, that the soul is oppressed with no heavier burden, then the conscience of an ill spent life, and the remembrance of our sins; even as contrariwise nothing more exalteth and cheereth the mind, then the possession of justice and virtue. Yea, that Evangelical obedience which Christ here calleth his

yoke and burden, is not only light and easy, but also commodious and exceeding profitable. Which made David, out of good experience, to profess, that the Law of God's mouth was better unto him, then thousands of gold and silver: and that it was more to be desired then gold, yea then much fine gold. And Solomon likewise affirmeth, that wisdom (that is, the saving knowledge and practice of true godliness) is better than Rubies, and all things that may be desired, are not to be compared unto it: that riches and honor are with it, yea, durable riches and righteousness; and that the fruit thereof is better than gold, yea then fine gold, and its revenue then choice silver. Yea, the duties of a godly life are not only easy and profitable, but also sweet and pleasant. In which respect David saith, that God's Commandments were sweeter to his mouth then the honey, and the honey comb; that they were the rejoicing of his heart, and that he rejoiced in God's testimonies, above all riches. So Solomon saith, that wisdom is pleasant unto the soul, and that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are peace. And our Savior Christ found so much pleasure and comfort in doing his Fathers will, that he neglected his food, even when he was hungry, in comparison of it. Now if the way of God's Commandments was esteemed of the Saints so easy, profitable and pleasant in the time of the Law; how much more have we cause so to judge of it in the time of the Gospel? Seeing God hath revealed his will much more clearly, and afforded us far greater helps; and encouraged us to serve him with much sweeter and more gracious promises, not now veiled with types and shadows, but clearly expressed to the understanding of the most simple, and certainly assured unto us by the seals, the Sacraments, to take away from us all doubting and wavering. By all which, and many other means, our Savior Christ (as it was prophesied of him) maketh all crooked ways straight, and all rough places plain; that all difficulties being taken away and removed, we may travel in the ways of godliness with much ease and comfort, joy and delight. But above all other encouragements against all pretended difficulties, this is one of the greatest, in that the Lord, in the time of the Gospel, doth not exact of us the rigorous and strict performances of servants, who must not have their wages, unless they do the will of their Lord, in

that manner and measure as he requireth; but the duty and obedience of sons, passing by our infirmities, and accepting the will for the deed; the purpose and endeavor, for the act and performance. And that there may be no manner of discouragement, hath also promised to assist us with his grace and holy Spirit, that we may be the better enabled to do that which he requireth; so as we may say with the Apostle, I am able to do all things through the power of Christ which strengtheneth me.

CHAPTER XIII.

That a godly life is not tedious and troublesome to the regenerate man, but easy and familiar.

Sect. 1 - That the regenerate have a new nature, unto which a godly life is easy and pleasant.

And thus it appeareth, that the godly life is easy and pleasant in itself and its own nature. Now if we can further prove, that it is also unto us nothing hard or impossible, tedious or troublesome, but contrariwise easy and familiar, then the objection of difficulties being sufficiently answered and removed, need not to be any impediment to hinder us from entering into the ways of godliness. To which purpose we are first to know, that howsoever the leading of a godly life be as hard and difficult, as grievous and even impossible for a natural man, as for Lead to swim, or for the earth to leave its center, and to mount up unto the skies; yet unto those who are regenerate, it is not so, seeing their corrupt nature is changed and sanctified, and they have a new nature wrought in them, unto which a godly life is easy and familiar, by reason of that similitude which is between them. And thus the Lord, when he would have his people to serve

him in the duties of holiness and righteousness, doth promise to work this change in them: And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and all thy soul, &c. For this commandment which I command thee, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, &c. But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it. And again, I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances and do them. So in the new covenant of grace the Lord promiseth, that he would write his Law, not in Tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of their hearts, and put it into their inward parts; thereby enabling them to yield unto it cheerful obedience, seeing they have an internal cause of this spiritual motion in themselves, even an heart sanctified and replenished with the love and fear of God, which maketh them to desire above all things to serve and please him. In respect of which change (so far forth as they are changed and regenerate) it is no more tedious and wearisome unto them to perform the duties of a godly life, then for the living fountain to spring, or the river to flow, or for gross vapors and slimy exhalations to mount aloft into the middle and highest region of the air, when as they are rarified by the Sun, and have their nature changed from an earthly grossness, to an airy or fiery subtlety and lightness; although the relics of sin and corruption of nature remaining still in the unregenerate part, do hang upon us, and pull us back, hindering us in our spiritual motion (like an exhalation enclosed with the vapors of the middle region, so as it cannot mount up unto his own proper place) whereof arise some tedious conflicts and sharp encounters, which make the duties of a godly life to seem unto us by fits more difficult and wearisome. Yea, if we rest upon our own strength and abilities, the infirmities and corruptions which we shall discover, will be notable discouragements to hinder us in the ways of godliness, and like children which presume to go alone, when they have only strength to walk as they are led in their fathers hand, we shall, by receiving many falls and knocks, be so daunted and dismayed, that we shall be afraid to set a

foot forward in the duties of Christianity, as far exceeding our abilities of performance. Whereas, if seeing our frailties and infirmities, we take occasion thereby to deny ourselves and our own strength, and wholly distrust the weak reed of our own free wills, as being utterly insufficient to stay and uphold us in our Christian course: And contrariwise, altogether rely upon God's power and promises, and acknowledge that his grace is sufficient, when we most see and bewail our own weakness and impotency; we shall hereby receive no discouragement, but go on cheerfully in all holy duties of his service. For when we are most blind and ignorant, this grace of God will be all-sufficient to enlighten us; when we are most weak and feeble, it will confirm and strengthen us; when we most distaste the duties of Christianity, as being bitter and unpleasant to our corrupted nature, it will, by changing and renewing it, make them to become easy and pleasant, and (as we see in the example of David) sweeter unto our mouths than the honey and the honey comb. When we feel the flesh rebelling and lusting against the Spirit, it will mortify and subdue it; And when our tumultuous passions and inordinate affections do rage in us, striving to carry us with headlong fury, from the service of God, to the service of Satan, the world, and our own unruly lusts, it will powerfully purge away their corruption, rectify their disorder, and make them become serviceable to the spiritual part; like wild beasts, which being in their own nature fierce and cruel, and ready to devour or tear us in pieces, when they are mastered and tamed, become helpful and commodious for diverse uses. And thus the grace of God sanctifieth our love, and weaning it from worldly vanities, fixeth it upon spiritual and heavenly things. Thus it changeth our choler into zeal; our hatred of good things into the hatred of that which is evil; our worldly sorrow, into repentant grief for sin; our carnal joy into spiritual rejoicing in the assurance of God's favor; and our desperate boldness and audaciousness, into Christian courage, and magnanimous resolution, which will enable us valiantly to oppose and overcome all difficulties, which would discourage and hinder us in the profession and practice of true godliness. So that the difficulty of Christian duties, compared with our own frailties and infirmities, will not discourage us, if we do not

sever the Law from the Gospel, looking only upon that obedience which it requireth, and not unto that grace of God which the Gospel promiseth, and which he purposely bestoweth upon us, that thereby we may be enabled to perform that which he commandeth. But rather the sight and sense of our own weakness, will but make us cling the faster to the firm pillar of our strength, and to flee unto him in our earnest and effectual prayers, desiring him to command what he will, if withal he will give unto us grace and strength to perform those duties which he commandeth.

Sect. 2 - That a godly life is made easy, through the power of God the Father assisting us.

Secondly, the duties of a godly life, which are so difficult, in respect of our frailty and corruption, become easy and familiar unto us, not only in respect of this grace, whereby our natures are changed and renewed; but also in respect of those fresh supplies which we daily have from God himself, even the Father, Son, and holy Spirit. For first, God the Father doeth not content himself to have regenerated us, and renewed our nature, and so to leave us, but he daily repaireth our decayed strength; he doeth not only infuse some spiritual graces into us, and so leave us to be upheld by their inherent strength, but he still standeth by us, and continually assisteth us by his power and providence, out of his rich Treasury supplying what is wanting, strengthening us when we are ready to faint; raising us, when we slip and fall; repairing his graces with new supplies, when they are spent and wasted, and (as it were) re-enforcing his spiritual Bands and Troupes, when as they are enfeebled and wearied in the conflict of temptations. He not only commandeth the duties of his service, but also that we may be both encouraged and enabled to do them; he promiseth his assistance, and that he will join with us, supplying by his all-sufficient power, what is wanting through our weakness. Thus he willeth us to repent and turn unto him, and worketh also this conversion and repentance, exhorteth us to circumcise our hearts,

and withal, promiseth that he will circumcise them, enjoineth us to love and fear him, and sheadeth abroad his love in our hearts by his holy Spirit, whereby he inflameth them with love towards him, and putteth his fear into them, that we dare not depart from him, by doing willfully anything that is displeasing in his sight. Though then we be naturally barren in the fruits of new obedience, yet this must not discourage us, seeing the Lord hath promised, that he will make us trees of righteousness planted by his own right hand, which shall bring forth fruit in due season, like trees planted by the rivers of waters, and that he will pour the sweet dew of his grace upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. If we be feeble and weak in our own strength; yet the Lord himself will strengthen and encourage us in every good work by his gracious presence; saying, Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. When we find and feel our faintness and feebleness in holy duties, let not this make us to desist and give them over, as impossible to be achieved; but let us remember, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; who giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, increaseth strength. So that though those who are in their youth and prime age, be weary, faint, and utterly fall, yet if being humbled in the sense of our own weakness, we do deny ourselves, and wait upon the Lord, he will renew our strength, and we shall mount up with wings as Eagles; we shall run, and not be weary; and walk, and not be faint. This work of regeneration is not our own, but the Lord's, who is as able and willing to perfect a work, as to begin it; for not to finish what he hath undertaken and begun, were a sign either of inconstancy, or want of power, whereas he is immutable and omnipotent; according to that of the Prophet, Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord? Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God? Though then the duties of a godly life seem unto us hard, difficult, and even impossible; yet let not this discourage us, seeing nothing is impossible with God; though they be so far above our

abilities, that they also exceed our hopes, so as we scarce dare sue and seek after that power of performance which God requireth, and we desire; let us remember, that the Lord is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. And though we are ready to stumble at every stone of offense, and to sink in every temptation, let us go on cheerfully for all this, seeing our God is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Yea, he is ready to prevent us with his grace, and not only to work in us (as in the Prodigal son) some good desires of returning unto our heavenly Father, that we may serve him; but even when he seeth us afar off, he will run to meet us, give us kind entertainment, and feast us so with a banquet of his graces, that we shall be enabled with cheerfulness to do his work. And therefore, though we find never so mighty opposition, as soon as we are entered into the course of Christianity, yet being assured of God's presence and assistance, let not this dismay us; For if God be with us, who can be against us? Pharaoh may well frown and storm against us, but his ruin shall be our safety. The devil may rage, and (as it were) rend us with his temptations, but out he must come and leave his hold, when God commandeth him. Though we apprehend the greatness and difficulty of the work, and our own weakness and insufficiency to go through with it; let not this discourage us from undertaking it: for the Lord is with us, his grace is all-sufficient, and his power is manifested and glorified in our infirmities. Though we are weak in our own strength, and able to do nothing, yet we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and (with the Apostle) able to do all things, through the power of Christ, which strengtheneth us. Though we through our corruption, are prone to fall into any sin; the Lord shall deliver us from every evil work, and preserve us unto his heavenly Kingdom: and finally, though we are so fettered and gauled with our natural corruptions, that we can scarce creep in the ways of God's Commandments, yet we may resolve to run in them with great agility and swiftness, when he shall be pleased to enlarge our hearts. They (saith an ancient Father) who resolve to pass from the love of worldly pleasure, unto an honest and virtuous life, find it at the first

a rough and uncouth way, which is hardly passable. For the sweetness of a long settled and confirmed custom, opposeth and hindereth them, and loathness to break it, doth much intoxicate and disturb their minds. Neither can our carnal affections be easily shunned or subdued, nor is the way of virtue plain and easy to everyone who offereth to run in it. But yet, God prospering and helping us forward, and smoothing and leveling these rough and unpassable ways, a man may easily escape, or overcome the assaults of his own carnal affections, and courageously mount unto the top of the hill of virtue.

Sect. 3 - That God the Son joining with us, taketh away all difficulty.

Secondly, God the Son joining with us in the duties of a godly life, will take away all difficulty, and enable us to perform them with all cheerfulness and delight. For being united unto him by a true and a lively faith, and engrafted into this blessed and fruitful Vine, as living branches, we shall receive such spiritual life and sap of grace from him, that we shall bring forth the ripe grapes and pleasant fruits of holiness and righteousness. Being knit unto him in this blessed union, and becoming lively members of his body, we shall have communion with him, and receive such virtue and vigor, as shall be effectual, not only for our justification, but also for our sanctification. From his death we shall receive virtue and strength for the mortifying of the flesh and the sinful lusts thereof, so as it shall no longer reign and rule in us as in former times, and from his Resurrection such a quickening power, as will enable us to rise out of the grave of sin, and to walk in the ways of holiness and righteousness, bringing forth the plentiful fruits of new and true obedience. Besides, our Savior, who exhorteth us to take his yoke upon us, offereth himself to join with us, and to be our yoke-fellow; and as the taller and stronger Ox, drawing together with one that is less and weaker, easeth him of the chiefest part of the burden; so our Savior so far exceeding us in greatness and strength, doth free us

from all irksomeness and cumbersome tediousness of that burden which he layeth upon us, by bearing it up upon his own blessed neck and shoulders. Neither doth he call us unto him to trouble and vex us, but to ease and comfort us. Not to oppress us with a burden above our strength, but to lighten us of the intolerable load of sin, by taking it upon himself, instead whereof, he layeth upon us his sweet and easy yoke of Evangelical obedience; according to that his gracious call and invitation, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will ease you; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden light. So that though it be a yoke and burden, yet it needs not dismay us, seeing it is but light and easy, in comparison of that unsupportable weight of sin, the wrath of God, and curse of the Law, from which he hath freed us; and not such an one as will toil and turmoil us; but a burden that bringeth ease, and a labor which causeth rest. It is not Christ's purpose to surcharge and oppress us, by imposing a burden above our strength; for he that hath taught us that a good man is merciful unto his beast, will not be hard-hearted and cruel to his yoke, fellows, yea to his own body and bowels; but only he desireth that we would bear him company, promising that if our weight be overburthensome, he will ease us, if it be irksome and tedious, he will make it sweet and pleasant, and if there be any defects and wants in us, he will supply them by virtue of that communion which we have with him. If we be dead, and cannot move in the actions of piety and righteousness, by touching his dead body, he will give us spiritual life and motion. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. He is the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live. So if being raised, we want spiritual illumination, that we may walk in those ways which God hath prescribed, our Savior will supply it, according to that of the Apostle; Awake, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. If we be weak and feeble, he will strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man. If we feel the exercises of a godly life so difficult and unpleasant to our corrupt nature, that we

have little hope of proceeding in them, that which is defective through natural corruption, he will supply by grace above all that we can expect; for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. If we be faint, he will support us; if weary, he will refresh us; if we fall, he will lift us up. If we be discomfited and discouraged with afflictions and tribulations which we meet with in the way, he will strengthen us with faith and patience, that we may be able to bear them; so as we may say with the Apostle; We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

Sect. 4 - That the duties of a godly life are made easy by the assistance of the holy Spirit.

Finally, the holy Spirit so assisteth us with his grace, that the duties of a godly life, which are to the flesh difficult and unpleasant, become sweet and easy. For when we feel ourselves most dull and dead, and utterly unable to move in the ways of godliness; this Spirit of life and power will quicken and revive us; according to that of the Apostle; If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. If our flesh rebel and labor to hinder us in all good duties, the Spirit of God will mortify and subdue it. If carnal corruption be so strong in us, that it withdraweth our hearts and affections from God and his service; This Spirit of God as a sharp razor will circumcise our hearts, and purging us from our natural corruption, will inflame them with God's love, and with fervent desires to please him in all things. If we be so straightened in our zeal and devotion, that we can neither read, hear, nor pray, yet our comfort is, that the Spirit of God is not straightened, but can like fire thaw our frozen hearts, open our ears and hearts, that we shall be able with Lydia to attend unto those things which concern our salvation, and helping our infirmities, will make intercession for us

with groanings which cannot be uttered. If we be destitute of all saving graces in our own sense and feeling, and do thirst after them like the dry lands, God's Spirit will quench our thirst, and be in us as a fountain of living water springing up into everlasting life. Finally, if we be stiff and unactive unto every good work, so as we cannot perform any duty of God's service, or if we do, yet with much difficulty, and with murmuring and complaining of the flesh; this oil and holy unction of the Spirit will supple and soften our hearts and stiff joints, making us to go with ease and agility in the ways of godliness, like the wheels of a cart, which being dry, go hardly and with a creaking noise, but when they are oiled, run with much ease and swiftness. And therefore when we find ourselves indisposed to God's service, prayer or any other duty, and see some difficulty in them to our sinful flesh; let us not hereby be discouraged, but feeling our own weakness, let us crave the help and assistance of this holy Spirit, that we may be strengthened thereby in the inner man, with all might, according to his glorious power, and so walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. Let us go boldly unto the Throne of grace, craving the Spirit to support us, seeing we have God's promise that he will give it to those that ask him. Let us beg the Spirit of Grace and supplication, seeing the Lord hath promised to bestow it upon all the faithful; and finding ourselves so dry and empty of all goodness, that we thirst after God's grace which enricheth us with it; let us by faith go unto Christ, inviting us to come unto him, and to drink plentifully of these waters of the Spirit, that we may be nourished thereby unto everlasting life.

Sect. 5 - That the saving graces of the Spirit wrought in us, make the godly life easy and familiar.

And as the Spirit itself, so the gifts and graces which it bringeth with it, and worketh in us, are notable helps enabling us to overcome all difficulties which we find in the way: As first, a true and lively Faith, which not only overcometh the world and all the enemies of our

salvation, and uniting us unto Christ, doth cause us to bring forth fruits in him, but also persuadeth and assureth us, that notwithstanding all lets and difficulties, we shall attain unto that sanctification and holiness of life which we labor after. The which as a singular encouragement hearteneth us to take pains, and to use all diligence in all Christian duties, when as we are sure that we shall not lose our labor, but shall receive the fruit and benefit of it in the end. Secondly, a lively hope enableth us to overcome all difficulties, when as we do assuredly expect, not only help and assistance from God, for the performing of those duties, unto which in ourselves we are altogether insufficient; but also do wait for that bountiful wages and rich reward, which God hath promised to all those who serve and please him; namely, all the testimonies of his love and favor in this life, and that eternal crown of glory and happiness, which he reserveth for us in the life to come. For this is that helmet of salvation, which defendeth us against all encounters of our spiritual enemies; this is that sure anchor -hold which keeps us immovable in all the tempestuous storms of temptations, and from making shipwreck of our souls against the rocks of despair. Neither is it possible, that we should be tired with any labor, or daunted and dismayed with any difficulty or danger, if we have an eye to the recompense of reward, and expect after our short and small labors, such an inestimable and everlasting weight of glory. Thirdly, fervent charity enableth us to overcome all difficulties. For love maketh every burden light, and if our necks be anointed with this oil, the yoke of Christ will seem easy and sweet. For as Augustine saith, The labors of lovers are not burthensome, but bring rather delight, as we see in the example of those who love those painful sports of hunting, hawking, fishing and such like, seeing the pains which are taken about the things we love, are either counted no labor, or else the labor is loved and bringeth no tediousness. In which regard, love is compared to the pieces of a clock, which setteth all the wheels a-going. Or to the wheels of a chariot, which make it easily drawn, and to go with much ease, which otherwise are hardly to be moved. True love (saith one) is of great force. And he that is loved in a high degree, challengeth unto himself the whole will and heart of him that

loveth him. Nothing so imperiously commandeth as charity. And if we truly love Christ, remembering that he hath redeemed with his blood, we shall then know, that we can then neither will nor do any other thing, then that which he willeth and commandeth; according to that, He who loveth me, keepeth my commandments. He that loveth, saith August. laboreth not; and it is only love which blusheth at the name of difficulty. So the Apostle, Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. An example whereof we have in David, who because he loved God's Commandments, therefore they were not tedious unto him, but sweet and pleasant. Fourthly, ardent zeal and fervent devotion, will arm us greatly against all difficulties. For this serveth to the soul, as the spirits to the body, making it, which in itself is heavy and lumpish, quick and vigorous, active, and never wearied in well-doing. And whereas sloth, coldness and averseness of will doth make things easy, hard and difficult, a huge mountain of every little mole-hill, and every straw a great block; contrariwise the heat of fervent zeal and devotion, causeth us to contemn and scorn all oppositions, and maketh our greatest labors in the service of God, light and delightful. Fifthly, the inward peace of conscience and joy in the holy Ghost, which followeth our justification by faith, and reconciliation with God, is a notable help enabling us to overcome all difficulties. For the mind and conscience being inwardly quiet, are nothing or but little troubled with outward storms, but go on quietly in all holy duties acceptable to God, without any disturbance, even in the midst of worldly garboils and tumultuous troubles. And whereas the wicked which want this peace, are never at quiet in the greatest calm of worldly prosperity, being like unto a troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; those who have this inward peace, are quiet in the greatest storms of trouble, and rejoice not only in temporal blessings, but even in their tribulations and persecutions for righteousness sake.

Sect. 6 - That Christian fortitude overcometh all difficulties, and maketh a godly life easy.

Sixthly, Christian fortitude and magnanimous resolution will exceedingly help us to overcome all oppositions, the which is not to be grounded upon our own strength, nor upon the virtues and graces which are inherent in us, but upon the power and promises of almighty God, the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ, and our union and communion with him, and finally upon the help and assistance of the holy Spirit, which in our greatest weakness are all-sufficient to strengthen us against all impediments that hinder us in Christian duties. For if we be armed with this fortitude and Christian courage, we shall be the better able to withstand the temptations of Satan and the world, and subdue our own corrupt lusts and violent passions, which will not easily be mastered and overcome, if we weakly and fearfully set upon them. For as Nettles lightly and gently touched, retain their venom and vigor, and sting the hand, but hurt not at all, if we roughly grasp and gripe them in fast hold; And as the fire, if we resolutely rush upon it and trample it under foot, is easily extinguished, but if it be gently handled, burneth that which toucheth it; and if there be plenty of combustible matter, increaseth to a great flame: so our corrupt flesh and tumultuous passions, if they be handled gently, and (as it were) with a fearful touch, will but the more sting and burn us, but if they be assaulted with undaunted courage, and naught-dreading valor, they will soon be subdued, and give us the comfort of an easy victory. Besides, howsoever we have many helps from God, and sweet comforts of his Spirit, which may sufficiently encourage us in our Christian courses, against all oppositions, yet it cannot be denied, but that we shall meet with so many difficulties, in respect of the corruption of our nature, and encounters of our spiritual enemies, that we had great need of courage and resolution for the overcoming of them. The palace of virtue is not seated upon the plain, but upon a rock and steep hill, which we cannot mount without some pains, nor continue this pains without resolved courage. We must travail, like painful pilgrims, before we can take our rest in our own country. We must laboriously

work, before we can receive our wages, mourn and weep, before we can laugh and rejoice, bedewing our cheeks with tears, before we can have them clean wiped away; and both fight and overcome our spiritual enemies, before we can obtain full victory, or triumph in glory. All which, as on the one side they must not daunt and dismay us, because our joys exceed our grief; our comforts, our crosses; and they which are on our part, those that are against us: so on the other side, they should keep us, when we enter into the course of Christianity, from dreaming of ease, or pleasing ourselves with a vain conceit, that we shall find pleasures without pains, and undertake such a work as is so easy, that we may go about it between sleeping and waking, and easily overcome it, though we be never so negligent: And contrariwise make it appear how necessary it is, that before we go about this building, we cast up our accounts, and when we have resolved upon it, that we arm ourselves with courage and fortitude, that overcoming all difficulties and oppositions, we may be able to perfect and finish it.

Sect. 7 - Of the means whereby we may attain unto Christian fortitude.

Now the means of attaining unto this Christian fortitude, whereby we are made ready to do whatsoever God commandeth, and to suffer whatsoever he imposeth, are first to consider what our Savior Christ hath done and suffered for our sakes; what poverty and contempt, shame and disgrace, slanders and reviling's, blindfolding and buffeting, scourging and crucifying; what inward sorrows and bitter agonies in the sight and sense of God's wrath due unto our sins, he hath meekly and patiently endured for us. And this argument the Apostle Peter useth to strengthen our resolution against all difficulties: For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: seeing as Apostle speaketh, He therefore endured these things, lest we should be weary and faint in our minds. And then also let us think with ourselves,

who it was that suffered all this, namely, Jesus Christ the innocent and righteous, who never sinned, and in whose mouth there was no guile; the glorious and eternal Son of God, equal unto his Father in might and Majesty: And for whom he suffered all these great evils, even for us and for our sins, which were strangers and enemies unto him, dead in our sins, and the children of wrath as well as others; and the motives and manner of these sufferings, not upon our entreaty, and much less desert, not by any compulsion or constraint, but upon his own accord, and out of his mere grace and good will, meekly, and cheerfully. To consider likewise what our Savior hath done for us, namely, forgiven the infinite debt of our sins, overcome all the enemies of our salvation, reconciled us unto God, united us unto himself, whereby we have communion with him in all his benefits, imparted unto us some portion of his saving graces, and innumerable pledges of his love and favor, which are also earnest-pennies of our salvation. For who can thoroughly ponder these things, and not be thereby armed with a magnanimous resolution of doing and suffering anything for Christ's sake? For did our Lord and Master suffer all this for us; and shall we not be ready and willing to suffer much lesser things for him? Shall our Captain and General lie in the field, and endure much hardness, and many sharp and dangerous conflicts; and shall we take our ease at home, and solace ourselves in worldly delights? Did he endure many afflictions, and grievous persecutions for our sakes, that he might purchase for us everlasting life and happiness, and himself lead us the way under his Cross; and will we dream of going to that place of joy, without pain or difficulty, as it were lying in a Horse-litter, and sleeping in a bed of Down? Was his love towards us so great and inestimable, that nothing could hinder him from emptying himself of glory and coming to us, that he might work that great work of our Redemption; and shall we not be willing and resolute to go unto him, thorough thick and thin, fire and water, evil report, and good report, affliction and persecution, that he may make us partakers of his glory, and crown us with his happiness? Could no difficulty daunt and discourage him from showing the infiniteness of his love, in doing all things necessary for our salvation; and shall we think any task too

hard to be undertaken, which may express our love, our desire to glorify him, and care to please him? Secondly, we may strengthen ourselves in this magnanimous fortitude and resolution, by observing the courage and constancy of God's Saints and servants of former ages, and in our own times, whom no difficulties could discourage, either from doing that which God requireth, or suffering that which he inflicteth. Of both which, we have for our imitation, the examples of the Patriarchs, Enoch, Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David and the rest, of the Prophets and holy men of God, the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and the devout and godly Martyrs which succeeded them, who were not only content to spend their sweat and labor in God's service, but were also prodigal of their blood, and patiently endured the most cruel and exquisite torments which wit and malice could devise, rather than they would leave their holy profession and practice of God's truth. And therefore if these Saints, of the same nature with us, and bearing about with them the like infirmities, did, upon the same grounds which we likewise have in common with them, courageously withstand all oppositions, and valiantly rush thorough all difficulties which stood in their way, and hindered them from following their Lord and Master Jesus Christ; why should every small danger daunt us, and a little labor and short pains dismay and discourage us from going on in the duties of a godly life? If they thought it too little to express their love towards their Savior, to endure with patience and joy, death itself, and exquisite torments; shall we think it too much to take a little pains in mortifying our sinful flesh, and the lusts thereof? Were they content to suffer the rending's and tearing's of wild beasts, racks, gibbets, fire and sword; and will not we, to show our love to God and his Christ, our blessed Savior, who hath done and suffered so much for us, take a little pains in the duties of a godly life; as fasting, praying, watching, and the rest, that we may glorify them by our holy conversation? Finally, if we would attain unto this magnanimous fortitude, which easily overcometh all difficulties, we must continually have in our eye the eternal recompense of reward, according to the example of our Savior Christ, the Author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured

the Cross, and despised the shame. For if hope of a little gain make Merchants so resolute and valiant, that they dare expose themselves to the dangers both of sea and land: if soldiers are so full of courage and fortitude, that they dare rush into all desperate perils, and fight at the push of pike, yea even at the Canons mouth, for a little pay or booty, or for the applause of their Captain and fellow soldiers, or vain fame and momentary glory in the world; what difficulty should be so great, that should be able to discourage us from resolving to lead a godly life, which shall be rewarded with the infinite and everlasting riches, and inestimable glory and happiness of God's Kingdom?

Sect. 8 - That by daily and constant practice we may easily overcome all difficulties.

The last means whereby we may be enabled to overcome all difficulties, is the daily and constant practice of all Christian duties; seeing howsoever they may seem at the first, harsh and unpleasant to our corrupt nature, yet continual use will make them easy and familiar, and bring us at length to such a custom and settled habit, that we shall perform them with much comfort and delight. For as the mind is more and more darkened by the often acts of sin, and so loseth the light of truth, that no saving knowledge remaineth in it, but malignity only and pollution; so by the many and often acts of piety and righteousness, the mind is more enlightened, and aspireth unto a greater measure of true wisdom, this righteousness and holiness offering themselves as clear glasses, unto the eyes of the understanding, as Chrysostom hath well observed. Besides, the more often that we perform these Christian and religious duties, and the longer and more constantly that we continue in them, the more we shall relish and taste their sweetness; so that though at first they seemed to our carnal appetite as bitter and unpleasant, as the infusion of gall or wormwood, yet continual use and daily practice, will make them sweeter to our mouths than the honey and honey comb, as we see in David's example; by reason that we shall find in

our own good experience, the manifold comforts which accompany the diligent performance of these Christian duties; as peace with God, and the beams of his love and favor shed abroad in our hearts, and shining upon us, the peace of a good conscience, and inward joy of the holy Ghost, sweet communion with God, access and increase of all spiritual graces, contentation in all estates, and assurance of our salvation, and that in the meantime, all things whatsoever, and even afflictions themselves, shall turn to our good. These, and many such like benefits, accompanying our constant walking in the ways of godliness, will make them not only easy, but sweet and delightful. And whereas at first we came to the performing of Christian duties, as a Bear to the stake, and found nothing in them, but vexation and irksome weariness; by use and custom coming to know and relish their profit and excellency, we find such spiritual sweetness, that it is our meat and drink to be exercised in them. So that now we esteem God's Sabbaths our delight; hear, read, pray, meditate, confer, and do the works of mercy with much joy and cheerfulness. Now the means to attain unto this daily and constant practice, which taketh away all difficulty and distaste, is to inure ourselves thereunto by degrees, and with a firm resolution, to break off all excuses, and set apart some short time, as a day, week, or month, for the strict leading of a godly life, in the performance of all Christian duties, as they have been before set down. Which when we have done, let us look back and examine ourselves, if we can in our consciences find any cause of repenting this course, in leaving worldly and wicked delights and the pleasures of sin, and betaking and consecrating ourselves to serve God in the duties of holiness and righteousness: yea, if we do not find in this short time, more sound comfort and true joy, then in many years before, when we neglected them.

Sect. 9 - That worldlings take more pains about earthly vanities, and in the service of sin and Satan, then is required to a godly life.

Now if any, notwithstanding of all these helps and comforts, still complain of the difficulties which he findeth in the course of Christianity, and use it as an excuse for his neglect of all the duties of a godly life; let such a man know, that the fault is not in the hardness and crookedness of the way, but in his own negligence, who will not use the means which God offereth unto him for the overcoming of these difficulties, and neither take any pains to be truly informed, nor to travel in it after he knoweth it. For because they are lazy, and have no list to work; therefore they sit in the house and complain, that there is a Lion in the way, a Lion in the streets. Because they would sit still by the flesh-pots of Egypt, and glut themselves with carnal pleasures, therefore they cavil against their entering into, and proceeding in that way which leadeth to the holy Land, as though the difficulties were so many and great which affront us in it, that it is unpassable and impossible to be traveled by them. Their affections are so strong, that they cannot master and mortify them; their bodies tender and delicate, and not inured to take that pains which is required to the well performing of Christian duties, and their natures are so easy and flexible, that they cannot withstand the allurements and importunity of their old companions, drawing and persuading them to accompany them in their sinful courses. All which excuses, what do they argue but their sloth and negligence; yea rather, their want of love, and contempt of spiritual grace and heavenly glory? Seeing the same men who pretend these difficulties, are ready to undertake far greater pains, for the obtaining of those worldly vanities, whereupon they have fixed their hearts (and even delight themselves in these toilsome labors) then is required for the attaining of heavenly happiness; and go willingly thorough many more and greater difficulties in those ways that lead to hell and destruction, then they should ever find in the way that would bring them to life and salvation? For first, consider the pains which worldly men are content to endure for the compassing of honors, riches and pleasures, how they cark and care, toil and moil, watch and labor, travel by sea and land, and run into many desperate dangers, for the getting of these worthless vanities, which are alike uncertain in the possession, as in the pursuit and acquisition. How they tire their

thoughts in the restless night, about plots and policies, for the preventing or circumventing one another. How their hearts are continually upon the rack of their own passions, being diversely distracted between hopes and fears; false joys, and true griefs; love, and dislike; longing desires, and loathing aversation. Consider also what pains and care they take about their frail and mortal bodies, and for the preserving of their flitting and fading health and strength, and the prolonging of their uncertain and momentary life. What pains they take in tricking and trimming, decking and adorning, clothing and beautifying, nourishing and feeding, pampering and pleasing, physicking and dieting their corruptible carcasses, though they are assured, that by all their care and cost they can but for a short time adiourne diseases and infirmities, and for a small and uncertain while procure a reprival from approaching death. Finally, consider that there is much more toil and difficulty in the ways of vice and sin, then in the way of virtue and godliness, although carnal love so sweeteneth it to a corrupt appetite, that it is either not discerned, or not much abhorred. For example, what racks and torments are in covetousness and ambition, and what comfort and sweetness in contentation, and submission of our estates to the will of God? What pangs and pulls of an evil conscience accompany vice and sin, and what peace and quietness, joy and delight have we in the conscience of our innocence and well-doing? Unto what storms and tempests doth pride expose us, from all which we are secured by lowliness and humility? What vexation and grief is there in malice, envy, anger, and desire of revenge; and what joy and sweet delight to be found in brotherly love, rejoicing in one another's good, peaceableness, passing by and pardoning of offenses, and making friends of enemies, by our kind usage and sweet conversation? What trouble and discontent in discord, contention and wrangling suits of Law; and what sweetness and contentment in amity, friendship, mutual agreement, and even in departing from some part of our right, that we may thereby purchase Jewels of far greater price, peace and love? Finally, what anxiety and vexation is there in carking care about worldly things, and what joy and pleasure in the life of faith, whereby we securely rely upon God's promises and providence, and

go boldly unto him, as unto our gracious Father, when we are in any want, with confidence that it shall be supplied in that manner and measure, as will best stand with his glory and our own good. In all which respects, and innumerable others, as wicked worldlings, after all their labors about worldly vanities, and the vain and unfruitful works of darkness, have just cause to complain with those in the Book of Wisdom; We have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction, yea, we have gone thorough deserts, where there lay no way; but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it; what hath pride profited us? Or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away as a shadow, and as a Poast that hasted by: So on the other side, the faithful, who have spent their time and strength in the duties of a godly life, have just cause to comfort themselves in their happy choice, when leaving the world, and the pleasures of sin, and embracing the love and fear of God, they have devoted themselves wholly to God's service, seeing they may with Augustine rejoice in God and praise him, saying, Let my heart praise thee, and let my tongue and all my bones say, O Lord, who is like unto thee, &c? How sweet and pleasant is it now become, to want the sweetness of worldly vanities? That which I feared to lose, what joy is it to have lost? For thou, O most true and supreme sweetness, didst cast them out of me; thou didst cast them out, and didst enter in their stead, who art sweeter than pleasure, but not to flesh and blood; clearer and brighter than all light, but to the inner man only; and then all honor, much more high and honorable, but not to those who are exalted in themselves. Now was my mind free from the biting and eating cares of ambition, covetousness, voluptuousness, and from scratching the itching scab of lust, and did freely talk with thee, my beauty, riches, salvation, and my Lord and God. And after a painful warfare, they may with the Apostle make that comfortable conclusion, when death approacheth; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give unto me at that day. And therefore let not those seeming difficulties any longer discourage us from resolving to

serve God in the duties of a godly life, seeing thereby we shun and escape much greater difficulties in the ways of sin, then we shall ever find in the way of a Christian and holy conversation.

CHAPTER XIV.

That a godly life is not harsh and unpleasant, mopish and melancholic, but above all others, most cheerful and pleasant, sweet and delightful.

Sect. 1 - That though a godly life were sad and sorrowful, yet this should not discourage from it.

A Third objection which the flesh maketh against a godly life, to discourage and hinder us from entering into, or proceeding in it, is, that it is harsh and unpleasant, mopish and melancholic, depriving us of all joy and delight, which is the very life of our life, and which being taken from us, it becometh irksome and tedious. The which objection of the flesh, the devil and the world labor all they may, with their utmost policy and skill, to confirm and strengthen; and knowing that men naturally are affected with nothing more than with pleasure and joy, and do shun above all things sorrow and sadness, they use all their Art to blind and delude us; by offering to our view all the pleasures of carnal and corrupt courses, and hiding from us the griefs and mischiefs which always attend upon them, and like a bitter tang or loathsome after-taste, do utterly spoil these sinful and fleshly delicacies. And contrariwise, they offer to our consideration all the sorrow and smart, losses and worldly inconveniences, which they must undergo who resolve to please God, in the strict and constant performance of the duties belonging to a godly life, concealing in the mean while the manifold comforts which do

accompany them, and the inestimable joys, and everlasting happiness, unto which they attain that continue in them unto the end. For the answering of which objection, we are first to know, that though there were as much sadness, and as little joy for the present time in the godly life, as is pretended by our spiritual enemies, yet this should not discourage us from choosing and embracing it; seeing both the pleasures and pains, solace and sorrows of this life are but short and momentary, whereas both the joys and griefs which shall immediately succeed them, are endless and everlasting. In which regard, we are to account that mirth miserable, which ends in perpetual mourning, and that sorrow and sadness sweet and comfortable, which is attended with eternal and heavenly joys. So our Savior, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. And again; Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh; and woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Now if we worthily abhor unwholesome meats and drinks, though they be never so sweet and pleasant to our taste, because we lose that delight which we take in them, by the bitter pains of sickness, endangering our lives, which soon after followeth it; and if we love that wholesome, though bitter medicine, which freeth us from tedious sickness, and preserveth our health: why should we not be alike wise in spiritual things, which concern our souls, hating those carnal and sinful pleasures, which endanger them to sickness and everlasting death, and loving those Christian and holy duties, though they be bitter and unpleasant to our fleshly and corrupt appetite, which preserve our spiritual health, and certainly assure us of eternal life and happiness? Neither are the religious exercises of a godly life harsh and unpleasant, either in their own nature, or to us in the spiritual part, and so far forth as we are regenerate and sanctified: yea, rather they are of incomparable sweetness, above the honey and honey comb, and affect us in the inner man with unspeakable joy and delight, as we see in the example of David, the Apostle Paul, and our Savior Christ himself: but to our carnal appetite and sinful flesh, which (like a sick and aguish stomach, full of corrupt and noisome humors) doth bring our palate quite out of taste, judging those spiritual duties which are sweet and pleasant, bitter and loathsome,

and our sinful vices and works of darkness, that are sour and harsh to a right judging taste, delightful and well-relishing. And therefore, seeing we are not (as the Apostle speaketh) debtors unto the flesh, that we should fulfill the lusts thereof, let not this distaste which it feeleth in religious exercises withdraw us from them, or discourage us in them; yea, let us so much the rather be diligent and constant in these duties, that we may mortify this carnal concupiscence, that fighteth against our souls, and by displeasing it, please our God and our own consciences, and nourish and preserve our spiritual life and health.

Sect. 2 - That sanctification taketh not away our joy and delight, but only changeth and improveth it.

But this objection which the flesh maketh against the leading of a godly life, it further presseth and confirmeth by the experience which we may have in others, and the examples of many Christians, who spend a great part of their time in sighing and sorrowing, mourning and lamenting, as though they were deprived of all inward joy, and outward pleasures, and do live in such a melancholic and mopish manner, as though they thought all delights unlawful, being ready to condemn themselves, and censure others, if they laugh or smile, or show any other signs of gladness and rejoicing, as not savoring of sanctification, and the mortification of our fleshly lusts; not beseeming the season, which is a time of mourning, nor befitting the place, which is a valley of tears, nor yet well suiting with the example of our Savior Christ, of whom it is written, that he mourned and wept, but never anything said of his mirth and laughter. For the answering whereof, we are first to know, that sanctification and mortification do not annihilate or change the essence and being of nature, or the substance of our faculties, passions, and affections, but only reneweth and purgeth them from their corruption, that becoming holy, they may be serviceable to God, and the spiritual and inner man. It doeth not abolish and take them away, but moderateth

them in their degree, and keepeth them from extremity and excess, when as they are exercised about worldly things; and both rectifieth their disorder, and correcteth their viciousity and faultiness. And finally, it causeth our passions and affections to change their objects, making us to bewail our sins, in which formerly we rejoiced, and to rejoice in those spiritual exercises, which in the days of our ignorance we loathed and neglected. It taketh away the lightness, vanity, and madness of mirth, and causeth it to become more grave and sober: It changeth our rejoicing in evil, for rejoicing in that which is good: It moderateth the excess of our earthly joy, which is more in the creature, then in the Creator: It maketh us to rejoice but a little, in things that are but a little worth, and to abound, and even triumph with joy in things of greatest excellency, as the assurance of God's love and our own salvation, and the manifold and undoubted testimonies of his grace and favor towards us. And if Christians do not find in them this change of joy, from worse to better, from carnal to spiritual, from that which is vain and worthless, unto that, which (as the Apostle Peter calleth it) is unspeakable and glorious; it is their own fault, and not of their Christian profession. Neither in truth can the carriage of diverse Christians be in this regard excused, who as though they thought joy and a godly life incompatible, and not to be reconciled or conjoined, or supposed that when they did forsake the world, their sins, and carnal pleasures, they were presently bound to part with mirth and gladness, joy and delight, do purposely affect a sad countenance and carriage, a demure and dejected look, inwardly sighing and groaning upon every slight occasion, drooping and hanging down the head, as though all joy were in the pleasures of sin which they have forsaken, and no cause at all of rejoicing in their present estate. Whereby they not only make their own lives tedious and wearisome, and so over-strait and strict, unpleasant and uncomfortable, that being tired with it, they are not able to hold out, but change this rigorous severity for licentious liberty; or else go forward without life and spirit, courage or comfort: but also by their example discourage others that are without, from taking upon them the profession of Christianity, or resolving to lead a godly life, as fearing that it is so austere and destitute of all joy and delight, that it

is altogether intolerable and not to be endured. Whereas contrariwise, if as they have greater cause, they could also perceive, that they have above all other the greatest, most solid, and lasting joy, it would be a notable inducement to move them to take upon them their holy profession, and to resolve that they will follow and join with them in the practice of those duties, in which they discern such pleasure and comfort.

Sect. 3 - That no joy of worldlings is comparable to that which is in Christians.

But that those who affect such melancholic heaviness, and purposely banish both out of their hearts and countenances all joy and mirth, may be reclaimed from going on still in this erroneous and tedious course, and that others may not be discouraged by their example, from resolving to lead a godly life; let us know, that there is no joy comparable unto that which is, or ought to be in Christians, that desire to serve and please God in their holy conversation. For if, as Bernard hath excellently observed, we can be content with Abraham, in faith and obedience towards God, to offer and sacrifice our Isaac: First, our laughter and joy, it shall only be sanctified, but not slaughtered and killed. Thy Isaac shall not die, nor thy mirth perish, but the Ram only, that is, the perverseness and profaneness of thy pleasure and joy, which endeth always in grief and anxiety. Isaac thy joy shall not die, as thou supposest, but shall surely live; only it shall be lifted aloft upon the Altar and upon the wood, that thy joy may be holy and heavenly, sublime and lofty, not in the flesh and things beneath, but in spiritual things, in the cross of Christ, and those high and holy privileges which we have through him. For howsoever Christians in their first conversion and humiliation, chiefly act the part of sorrow and heaviness in the sight and sense of their manifold and heinous sins, and shed tears of bitter grief, looking upon him whom they have pierced, yet being justified by faith, and having peace with God, in assurance of his mercy, and remission of their

sins, they triumph with joy, even in their afflictions and tribulations, and though they sow in tears, yet they reap in joy; though they have a dropping and sorrowful seed-time, yet their harvest, which yieldeth unto them a fruitful crop of saving graces, (which yet are but the first fruits of their succeeding joy and heavenly happiness) is full of mirth and gladness. So that with David they rejoice more in the bright beams of God's gracious countenance shining upon them, then worldlings do or can do, when their corn and wine is increased. And though they be, in respect of their afflicted estate, As sorrowful, yet they are always rejoicing (as the Apostle speaketh) because they know that all things, even crosses and calamities themselves work together for their good. The which will more manifestly appear, if we a little further consider the testimonies and examples of holy Scripture. For the Psalmist telleth us, that the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the Tabernacles of the righteous; And Solomon speaking of Wisdom, which consisteth in the saving knowledge of God and his truth, and the practice of it in all holy and religious duties, saith that her ways, are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. So David saith of the Church and children of God, the lively members of it, That they should be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and that he would make them drink of the rivers of his pleasure. Our Savior also promiseth unto the Disciples, and in them to all the faithful, that he would give them such a permanent joy, as no man should be able to take it from them. And finally, the Apostle setteth it down, not as a common gift, but as a special fruit of the Spirit (not drooping sorrow, and disconsolate heaviness, but) joy and peace. And this also appeareth by the examples of the holy men of God recorded in the Scriptures: Thus David saith; My soul shall be joyful in the Lord, it shall rejoice in his salvation. Neither did he only thus rejoice in the testimonies of God's favor, and conquest of his enemies, but also in his obedience and keeping of God's Law: I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. I will delight myself in thy Statutes: I will not forget thy Word. And again; I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy Law is within mine heart. Thus the Apostles rejoiced even in their persecutions, because they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ's

sake; and Paul and Silas, when as their backs were torn with sore stripes, and their feet locked in the Stocks. Thus the Apostle found matter enough to glory in through Jesus Christ, in things pertaining to God: And tasted such unspeakable joy in the knowledge of Christ and him crucified, that he disclaimeth all other joy. And else-where he professeth, that he had no scant measure of this sweet delight, but that he was filled with comfort, and was exceeding joyful, even in all his tribulations. Neither is this joy whereof I speak, in which the Christian exceedeth all other men, sensual and carnal, in the pleasures of sin, and the fruition of earthly vanities, not in rioting and reveling, in swilling and drinking, dicing and carding, vain dalliance and good fellowship, chambering and wantonness: for such pleasure he accounteth vanity, and such mirth madness; and chooseth rather to go into the house of mourning, then into the house of such feasting and rejoicing, because such joy and laughter is but short and momentary, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and always endeth in sorrow and anxiety. It is not in mad mirth, and in sinful and unlawful delights: for Christian charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; and this joy is always joined with righteousness, and the peace of a good conscience, in which the Kingdom of God consisteth. For being subjects of Christ's Kingdom, such as it is, such also is their joy; but his Kingdom is not of this world, but spiritual and heavenly: and therefore their joy and rejoicing is likewise of the same nature. And howsoever God's children may and ought to rejoice even in his temporary blessings, as they are testimonies of their heavenly Fathers love, and also in honest sports and recreations, of which I have before spoken, whereby they are fitted for higher duties, as music, shooting, hunting, hawking, and such like, those cautions before set down being duly observed; yea, howsoever in these respects they have greater and more just cause of joy and rejoicing than any worldling, because these are but usurpers, who have a fearful account to make of their intrusion, whereas the other have their right restored unto them by Jesus Christ; yet, these are not the chief joys which they rest upon, as being in comparison, dull and heartless, cold and comfortless; only they use them for the necessity of their body and

natural life, as some small refreshing's in their Inn, that they may afterwards with more strength and cheerfulness, proceed in their journey. But the prime and principal joys which ravish their souls with inward delight, are secret and unknown to all, saving those who have tasted of them. So that they may say to worldlings of their joys, when they object unto them their sadness and want of mirth, as our Savior of his meat, We have joys which you know not of, seeing our joy is to do the will of our heavenly Father. For it is that hidden Manna which our Savior giveth them to eat, and like that new name written in the white stone, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. It is a beauty which cannot be beheld with carnal eyes, and a sweetness which is not relished by a common and profane taste, seeing it is of a holy and spiritual nature: so that when Christians are so afflicted in their outward estate, that they seem unto natural men to have no cause at all of rejoicing, they may notwithstanding say with the Apostle, We have whereof we may glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.

Sect. 4 - Of the diverse objects of our spiritual joy.

Now the objects of this Spiritual joy are diverse, the chief and principal is God himself, his Christ and holy Spirit, for he being the summum bonum, the supreme joy and chief blessedness, the fruition of him and his grace, and the bright beams of his face and favor shining upon us, must needs be the matter and cause of supreme and unspeakable joy. And this is that joy, and rejoicing in the Lord, which is in the Scriptures not only permitted to the faithful, and restrained unto them alone as their peculiar and proper right, but enjoined and required as being a duty which we owe unto God, the performance whereof maketh them happy and blessed. Let not (saith the Lord) the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches; But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, &c. So the Psalmist exhorteth to this joy; Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for

the upright. Of which he propoundeth himself for an example; My soul shall be joyful in the Lord, it shall rejoice in his salvation. And the Apostle likewise; Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. And again; Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. In which himself took such abundant comfort and contentment, that he resteth in it alone, and renounceth all other joys; God forbid that I should glory in anything, saving in the Cross of Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. And if we thus rejoice in the Lord, we shall not only be blessed and happy in our work, but also in our wages and reward, which is promised unto all those who make him their chiefest joy; according to that of the Psalmist, Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. So the Lord promiseth to the faithful, that they should delight themselves in him, and he would cause them to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed them with the heritage of Jacob, &c. And as the Faithful do thus rejoice in God himself, so also in his Word and works. For when they find sweetness and comfort in the spiritual Manna and food of their souls, then they feed upon it with joy and delight. So David, I have rejoiced in the way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all riches. Thy Testimonies are my delight and my counselors. Thy Testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of mine heart. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth! I rejoice at thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil. So also they rejoice in God's works of creation and government, admiring God's infinite wisdom, power and goodness that shineth in them: Especially in that great work of our Redemption by Jesus Christ, and in the application thereof unto themselves, by the inward and effectual working of God's Word and holy Spirit. Thus also do they rejoice in the life of faith, and in the fruits thereof, their sanctification and new obedience, and in the testimony of a good conscience, according to that of the Apostle, Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom; but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Yea, the faithful with holy and heavenly minds do rejoice in earthly and temporary blessings, in their houses

and lands, wives and children, meats and drinks, pastimes and recreations. For to this end God hath given them; neither is there (as the Wise man speaketh) in them any other good, but for a man to rejoyce in their fruition, and to do good in his life; and that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the fruit of his labor, it is the gift of God. And again; Behold that which I have seen. It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the Sun, all the days of his life which God giveth him; for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoyce in his labor, this is the gift of God.

Sect. 5 - That the Christians chiefest joy is Spiritual, and wherein it exceedeth all other joys.

So that no lawful joy, either spiritual, or temporal, inward or outward, is wanting unto the righteous who desire to please God. But yet their chief and principal joy in which they exceed all others, is spiritual, in the assurance of God's love and their own salvation, and that both in respect of the excellency, perpetuity and propriety of it. For first, it excelleth all other joys, being of a spiritual and divine nature, and (as it were) a short prelude to that heavenly and harmonious joy, of which we shall have the full and everlasting fruition in the life to come. For so the Apostle teacheth us, that the Kingdom of God (that is, the first beginnings of it in this world) consisteth not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; and they who have here tasted these first beginnings of this heavenly joy, shall have the perfect fruition of that fullness of joy, and of those eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. So that when righteous men rejoyce, there is great glory, (as the Wise man speaketh) seeing their joy far exceedeth the joy of them who rejoyce in their corn and wine, as being not only much more excellent both in respect of the nature and object, but also an earnest-penny of a greater bargain, the first beginnings and

prime taste of those full rivers of divine pleasures, whereof they shall drink their fill in God's Kingdom; and the first fruits of that heavenly and happy harvest of joy, which is reserved for them in the life to come. And therefore no marvel, seeing this spiritual joy is above all others most excellent, that David (when having wounded his conscience with grievous sins, he was deprived of the sense and feeling of it for a time) did so earnestly desire to have it again restored: Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit: Seeing herein he had much more contentment, sound comfort and delight, then in all the earthly pleasures, which a Kingdom could yield unto him? For they all were but slight and childish, this, solid and substantial; they, vain and worthless, this, excellent and of incomparable value; they, short and fickle, momentary and mutable, this, durable and permanent. And this is the second reason to commend unto us this spiritual Joy, in that it is not like worldly joys, only by fits and flashes, but settled and constant in all estates and conditions, as well in adversity and affliction, as in prosperity and all earthly abundance. For if our hearts be once replenished with this Joy, no man shall be able to take it from us; and being of a spiritual and divine nature, no earthly thing can quell or quench it. No prison can lock it from us, no banishment can divide and sever us, no losses and crosses, confiscations of goods, Racks or Gibbets, fire or sword, can take it away and deprive us of it. For in all extremities we have an inward Comforter, even the Spirit of God dwelling in us, which filleth our hearts with joy, and turneth our mourning into mirth and gladness, and as our afflictions do abound, so also he causeth our consolations to abound much more. We live the life of faith, and not of sense, which looketh not so much upon things present, as unto our future hopes and certainties, and hereby we apply unto us God's Word and gracious promises, which supplieth comfort sufficient to support us in all our sorrows. For it assureth us, that those are blessed which mourn now, because they shall be comforted, and which weep now, for they shall laugh. That all things, even afflictions themselves shall work together for the best, and our momentary and light sufferings shall cause unto us a far most excellent and eternal weight of glory,

that by these many tribulations we shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven: and if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him. And this was that Word of God applied by faith, which was David's comfort in his afflictions, without which he should have perished. This was it which made the Church of Macedonia in a great trial of affliction, and in their deep poverty, to have withal abundance of joy. This made the godly Hebrews to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance. Finally, by this the Apostle himself was filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all his tribulations. But contrariwise, the carnal joy of worldlings in the pleasures of sin, is fickle and false, mutable and momentary, like the short blaze and crackling of thorns under a pot, or laughter in a fit of frenzy, or of a man tickled, which laugheth in the face and countenance, when he is grieved at the heart; because in the midst of their mirth they have many a cold qualm and check of conscience, being not able to forget, that after all their youthful rejoicing, they must come unto Judgment. The which even in laughter maketh the heart sorrowful, because the end of their mirth is heaviness; and when they glory in outward appearance, to have no joy at all in the heart. For who but fools can rejoice in their full barns, and abundant provisions, that remembereth, This night his soul shall be taken from him? Who can have any sound joy and comfort in such pleasures and delights, which within a while shall end in endless woe and misery; according to that of our Savior, Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep?

Sect. 6 - That this spiritual joy is proper to the godly, and belongeth to no other.

Finally, the faithful, who resolve and endeavor to serve and please God in the duties of a godly life, have propriety in this spiritual and heavenly joy, seeing it belongeth to them all, and to them alone, none other having any part and share in this high and holy privilege. For first, this joy in the Scriptures is appropriated unto them only, and

no other. So the Psalmist; Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright. And again, Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the Tabernacles of the righteous. In which regard, he desireth to see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his Nation, that he might glory with his inheritance. And the Prophet Isaiah joineth these together; Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness. Secondly, the faithful can only thus rejoice, because all the causes of this spiritual joy belong peculiarly unto them alone. For they only are elected to salvation, in which respect, our Savior exhorteth his Disciples to rejoice in this, because their names were written in the Book of life. They alone are the redeemed of the Lord, who being freed out of the captivity of all their spiritual enemies, have exceeding great and just cause to rejoice in this gracious deliverance. And when by the glad tidings of the Gospel, the Lord proclaimeth liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, then doth he also thereby comfort them that mourn, giving unto them beauty for ashes, and for mourning, the oil of joy. So the Prophet saith, that the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness, and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. They are called to the Marriage of the Kings Son, and feasted with a delicious banquet of his special favors; and none but they have communion with Christ, that they may rejoice and solace themselves in the fruition of his love. They, and none besides, are justified of God's free grace, through the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ, and therefore have cause to be of good comfort, seeing their sins are forgiven them. So the faithful profess, that they would greatly rejoice in the Lord, and that their souls should be joyful in their God, because he had clothed them with the garment of salvation, and covered them with the robe of righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth herself with her Jewels. They also have cause, above all others, of joy and rejoicing, in that they are reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ, and are at peace with him, and with their own

consciences, in which respect they have just cause of glorying in their tribulations: for this peace with God, passeth all understanding, and his love is better than wine, refreshing and cheering our hearts more, then all the cold qualms of worldly crosses can daunt and dismay them; seeing by God's love towards us, and our love towards him, we have this privilege, that all things shall work together for our good. They alone have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, which worketh in their hearts this spiritual joy, and by uniting them unto Christ, and through him unto God his Father, the Author and Fountain of all goodness, blessedness and joy, doth give unto them cause sufficient of triumphing with joy unspeakable and glorious, in the fruition of all happiness through this sweet and happy communion. Finally, the faithful only who serve and please God, have hope and assurance of eternal blessedness in the Kingdom of heaven, when all tears being wiped away from their eyes, they shall be comforted after their mourning, and after their weeping, laugh and rejoice. For the Lord will show them the path of life, and cause them to enjoy in his presence fullness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore. In which regard, the godly, in this assurance of faith, have as much greater, and better cause of rejoicing above all worldlings, who abound in their present possessions of earthly wealth, and wallow themselves in voluptuous pleasures, as a young heir in his nonage, who expecteth the inheritance of some goodly Lordship, or if you will, some great and glorious Monarchy, hath more cause of rejoicing, then a poor cottager in a silly tenement, in which for the present he dwelleth, but yet only holdeth it at the Landlords pleasure. For there we shall have riches and treasures which cannot rust with canker, nor we be robbed of them by thieves; there are honors subject to no blemish of disgrace, and pleasures for evermore. In all which respects, let the righteous be glad, as the Psalmist exhorteth, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. And that not by fits and flashes, but at all times, and upon all occasions, according to that of the Apostle; Rejoice evermore. Neither is there any time unseasonable for the spiritual joy of the righteous, so long as they have the face and favor of God shining upon them, which is all-sufficient in itself to turn all their

mourning into mirth, and their sorrow into gladness; even when they are sore pinched and pressed with the weight of their afflictions; and cause them to rejoice inwardly in their hearts, when their cheeks are bedewed with their tears. Herein, quite contrary to the wicked, who rejoice in the face, but not in the heart, whereas the faithful do inwardly glory, even in their tribulations, which notwithstanding being bitter and unpleasant to the flesh, do make them to discover nothing but grief in their outward countenance. Yea, sorrow for sin itself, when as we mourn as a man mourneth for the death of his only son and first born, doth not abate our spiritual joy, yea in truth it doth much increase it; for this godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, and causeth the true Christian exceedingly to rejoice, in that he can heartily grieve, because by his sins he hath displeased his God. And this trembling in the sight and sense of our sins, and the Judgments of God due unto them, may, through faith assuring us, that by Christ we are freed from them, be joined with inward gladness, according to that of the Psalmist; Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Sect. 7 - An admonition to the faithful, to lay hold on this joyful privilege, and to shake off sorrow and sadness.

By all which it appeareth, that godliness doth not deprive any of joy and gladness; yea rather, the more godly we are, the better right and title we have unto it, and may justly exceed all others as much in mirth and cheerfulness, as we have in us more then they, the causes of all sound and solid rejoicing. The which as it should persuade all who are yet unresolved, to enter without delay, into this Christian course, that they may attain unto this high and excellent privilege, and not suffer themselves to be any longer discouraged with this vain and false conceit, that they must leave all their chiefest joys, when they leave and forsake the pleasures of sin: so should it move those who have a desire and purpose to serve and please God, to lay hold of this joyful privilege, seeing God freely offereth it unto them, and not

any longer to please themselves with their melancholic dumps, and affected sadness, as though they were greatest proficiencie in mortification, when they most exceed in lumpish heaviness, which needs to be mortified as well as any other carnal affection, that instead thereof our hearts may be replenished with spiritual joy. For hereby they do not only exceedingly discredit and disgrace a godly life, and by casting upon it this false aspersion of sorrow and sadness, discourage others from entering into it; but also make it to become so tedious and troublesome, harsh and unpleasant, that they cannot proceed in it without much uncomfortableness; nor perform the duties of God's service with any cheerfulness and delight, when as their spirits are dulled and deadened with this mournful and dejected heaviness. For as the Wise man hath observed; Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, needing no other burden to overwhelm it, seeing it is pressed down with its own weight. And again; A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he that is of a merry heart, hath a continual feast. And in another place; A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones. Now that they may shake off this sadness, and raise their drooping hearts with spiritual joy, let them consider, that sorrow and heaviness in themselves are evil, and the fruits of sin; and therefore are not simply acceptable unto God, who delighteth not in the grief and vexation of his servants, but only when they are sanctified, moderate in their measure, seasonable in their time, placed upon a right subject, which can be nothing else but sin and punishment, and directed to a right end. Secondly, that sanctified joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and pleasing unto God, as being a part of that service which he requireth of us in the first Table, seeing this is one way of having God in our hearts, when we rejoyce in him; besides that, it is a means of all other parts of God's worship, which cannot be well performed without joy and cheerfulness. Thirdly, let them consider, that the Lord promiseth this joy and gladness, as a singular privilege, and a special benefit unto the faithful; and therefore that it is great folly to refuse it when he offereth it. Thus the Prophet saith, that in the Church shall be heard the voice of joy, and the voice of

gladness; the voice of the Bridegroom, and the voice of the Bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts. For the Lord is good, and his mercy endureth forever. And our Savior hath promised, that he will give unto the faithful such constant and permanent joy, as no man shall be able to take from them. Fourthly, that the privation of this joy is threatened as a punishment for sin: Thou shalt not go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and drink: For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the Bridegroom, and the voice of the Bride. And again; I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new Moons and Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And therefore who can please himself in affecting sorrow and heaviness, which the Lord threateneth as a punishment of sin? Fifthly, let them consider, that as mourning is a preparation to faith, and (as it were) a sorrowful seed-time; so joy and rejoicing is the effect and fruit, the crop and harvest of it, whereby we may try it, both in respect of the truth, and also the degree of it; for whereas there is no rejoicing, there is no faith; little joy, weak faith; and fullness of joy, fullness also of persuasion. Neither is it possible that a man can have assurance of God's love, the remission of his sins, and of that inestimable happiness which is reserved in our heavenly inheritance, but that his heart must needs be filled with joy and rejoicing. Although it cannot be denied, but that in the time of our first conversion and humiliation, and in the case of spiritual desertions, when God hideth his face, and seemeth to withdraw from us the testimonies of his love and favor; this joy is so eclipsed, that the warmth and comfort of it is hardly to be discerned, even as faith itself, from which it springeth, is like a fire raked under the ashes, and not to be perceived by sense and feeling. Finally, consider that this spiritual joy maketh us blessed, as not only being itself full of sweetness and comfort, but also the first beginning, and the very entrance into the eternal joys of God's Kingdom; wherewith our drooping hearts are so cheered and refreshed, that all difficulties become easy, all tediousness in God's service is taken away, and the time that is spent therein seemeth

short and pleasant. In which respect the Psalmist pronounceth that people blessed, that know the joyful sound, because they shall walk cheerfully in the light of God's countenance; rejoicing in his name all the day, and being exalted in his righteousness. And therefore let all those who desire to go forward in the duties of a godly life with comfort and cheerfulness, labor to have their hearts replenished with this spiritual joy, and to scatter and dispel, as much as in them lieth, the foggy mists of sad, melancholy, and lumpish heaviness, which maketh us either to stand still in the ways of godliness for want of this joyful light, or to go forward in them slowly, and with much discomfort and weariness. And to this end, let them labor earnestly to live the life of faith, which draweth from Christ all the cordials of comfort, and to be thereby more and more assured of the remission of their sins, their reconciliation with God, and of the eternal salvation of their souls, which will lift up their hearts with unspeakable joy, even when they are most dejected with worldly afflictions; and make them to go on cheerfully in the duties of God's service, when they are fully ascertained of such liberal wages, and such an inestimable recompense of heavenly rewards.

CHAPTER XV.

Three other objections of the flesh against a godly life, propounded, and answered.

Sect. 1 - That a godly life taketh away no lawful liberty, but rather establisheth it.

The fourth objection which the flesh maketh against a godly life, is, that it taketh away all our liberty, and so checketh and curbeth us in all our thoughts, words, and works, within the strict limits of God's

Law, that we have no freedom like other men, to think, speak, or do such things as are most pleasing unto us. To which I answer, that it doth not deprive us of any lawful liberty, but only restraineth us from lawless licentiousness, and curbeth in the flesh, that it may not run on in exorbitant courses, and glut itself with sinful pleasures, which always end in grief and bitterness. Wherein it doth not take away any true liberty, but rather freeth us from the most miserable and grievous bondage, and basest servitude and thralldom unto Satan, sin, and our own lusts. Yea, rather by leading of a godly life, we are restored unto that ancient and true liberty in which we were created, even the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, resembling herein our heavenly Father, who, though he be most free to do whatsoever pleaseth him, yet in respect of his holy and pure nature, cannot sin, or do any evil which is contrary unto it. And as well may we say that the glorified Saints, who are crowned with joy and happiness, have lost all their liberty, because they are so confirmed by supernatural grace, that they cannot sin, as that we are deprived of it, because we are restrained by God's Word and holy Spirit from all manner of wickedness; or that a son hath lost his liberty, when he liveth according to his Fathers will that dearly loveth him, and is freed from the government of some base slave, who egged and thrust him on in all wicked courses, which in the end would deprive him of his fathers love, and justly disinherit him of his desired patrimony. Yea, let us know, that as sin is the greatest bondage, so the service of God is the greatest and best liberty; when as we are stablished in all grace and goodness by his free Spirit, and submit ourselves to be guided and directed by it in all our ways, as the body by the soul. For as the Apostle speaketh, Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Let us know, that as our Savior Christ came amongst us to take away the sins of the world, both in respect of the guilt, punishment, and corruption: so also, as our Redeemer, to free us out of bondage, and to purchase for us perfect liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, we should worship and serve him in holiness and righteousness before him without fear, all the days of our lives. Of which liberty himself speaketh; If the Son shall make ye free, ye shall be free indeed. And therefore let us not

hearken to the flesh, which abuseth and deludeth us, by giving unto things false names, gracing the bondage of sin and thralldom unto our own lusts, with the glorious title of liberty, and disgracing our Christian liberty and freedom from sin, with the name of bondage; but knowing that this was one special end of Christ's coming and dying for us, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and free us out of the bondage of sin; let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. And seeing he hath called us unto liberty, let us not abuse it for an occasion to the flesh, as the Apostle exhorteth.

Sect. 2 - That a godly life doth not take away friendship and good society, but rather increaseth it.

The fifth objection against a godly life is, that it taketh away all familiar friendship and good fellowship, all merry meetings and civil conversation from amongst men, estranging their minds one from another, and making them to delight more in solitariness than in company. To which I answer, that if by these glorious names of friendship, good fellowship, and civil conversation, be meant the common commerce which worldly wicked men have one with another, in the works of darkness and pleasures of sin, in gluttony and drunkenness, in May-games, misrule, and mad merriments, in carnal revelings, Stage-plays, Wakes, and Morrice-dances, in swaggering, swearing, backbiting, and corrupt and filthy communication; in dicing, carding, and spending both their time and states in unlawful gaming; then is it no blemish or aspersion unto a godly life, but rather an high praise and commendation, that it breaketh off such wicked and dangerous societies, and reformeth such pernicious disorders as always end in grief and vexation. But if hereby be understood true friendship, and Christian familiarity and acquaintance, lawful meetings, and joyful feasting with one another in the true fear of God; then doth not a godly life abolish them, but rather confirm and increase them among all true Christians. For

purging away the corruptions, and rectifying the disorders of societies and conversation, and making them truly civil and religious, it causeth them to be much more comfortable and profitable, and consequently more frequently to be affected by all those who taste the sweetness and benefit which cometh of them, without any sting of sin, or after-tang of bitter grief. As we see in the example of those Christians, which lived in the first age of the Primitive Church, who took exceeding joy in the Communion of Saints, in mutual conversing one with another, and in their frequent meetings, to eat and drink and rejoice together. And therefore unless any will presuppose, that sin is the only bond of all good fellowship, and that we cannot take pleasure in one another's company, unless we join together to displease and dishonor God, and that we can never be merry so long as he is with us; And unless we account that only to be civility, when as we show no dislike of sin, but soothe and bolster, yea, encourage and thrust on all that bear us company in the ways of wickedness; let us not falsely affirm, that a godly life is any hindrance to civil conversation, or that it depriveth us of the mutual joy and comfort, which we might otherwise take in friendship and fellowship one with another.

Sect. 3 - That a godly life doth not bring with it want and poverty.

The sixth objection is, that godliness bringeth with it want and poverty, as appeareth first by common experience, and innumerable examples of those, who being most religious and conscionable in all their courses, come as far short of other men in worldly wealth, as they exceed and go before them in piety and honest dealing, in so much as it is grown into a common, yet wicked Proverb, that plain dealing is a Jewel, but he that useth it, shall die a beggar. And secondly, it standeth with reason that it should be so, seeing piety letteth pass, and refuseth many advantages, by which, those that want it, do increase their wealth, and improve their worldly estate. For their thoughts less run upon earthly things, being taken up with

heavenly; their endeavors are more faint and weak in pursuing them, then theirs who have set their hearts upon them; their time and strength is not so wholly employed in getting and keeping riches. They lose much which they might get, because they will not use unlawful means, as fraud and deceit, extortion and oppression; because they will not lie, and confirm it with an oath for their advantage; nor profane the Sabbath by selling and buying, and laboring in their callings; nor keep servants under them, who make no conscience of these things, though they be never so profitable, nor follow the bent of the times, and soothe everyone in their humor, of whom they may make any advantage. And finally, because they will not stoop to every bait of profit which is cast before them, until by due examination in the Court of Conscience it may appear to be honest and lawful. To which I answer, first, that though all this were true, that godliness should give a Supersedeas to worldly thrift, so that it were not possible to embrace piety, and escape poverty, or to be rich and religious both at once; yet this should not weaken our resolution to serve God in the duties of a godly life, seeing our spiritual gains do far exceed our worldly loss. For godliness itself is the chiefest gain, as bringing with it that contentation which all worldly wealth cannot purchase. Secondly, though being godly, we have but a poor estate, yet it is more to be esteemed then the greatest abundance of the ungodly, according to that of the Psalmist; A little that a righteous man hath, is better then the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. The little wealth they have, is accompanied with God's blessing, by which it is made more sufficient and durable for their use and comfort, then the rich Treasuries, and full store-houses of worldlings; their little pittance, being like the Widows cruse of oil and handful of meal, which as it was daily spent, so by the blessing of God it was daily renewed and replenished, that there might be no want, when the full barns were emptied, and the storehouses of the rich without food; like Daniel's pulse, which made him and his fellows fatter and in better liking, then the provision which was brought to others from the Kings Table. Finally, like the small streams of a living fountain, which continue running in the greatest

drought, when great standing waters, and huge torrents arising from land waters are dried up. Again, though the godly have but little, yet that which they have, they have received from God's own hand, as a testimony of his love and favor, as Jacob acknowledged to his brother Esau, Take, I pray thee, my blessing which is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough. Yea, they receive it from him as his free gift, and shall never be called with wicked men to account for intrusion and usurpation. Neither is it a gift to be esteemed only in its own value, but as an earnest-penny, which bindeth a greater bargain, and giveth them assurance of their heavenly inheritance, and everlasting happiness in God's Kingdom. Finally, though they have but little, yet they have with it a good conscience, seeing they have gotten it by lawful means, the which will be instead of a continual feast, and make a dinner of cold herbs, or simple roots, better than a stalled Ox, or the greatest dainties to them that want it. Whereas contrariwise, the greater plenty of wicked men bringeth no such comfort with it; because it is mutable and momentary in itself, and giveth no assurance of better and more durable riches which shall succeed it. Because their worldly abundance is often joined with many and great discontents, which depriveth the owners of all their joy, as we see in the example of Saul, Ahab, Haman, and many others. Because their prosperity slayeth them, whilst it serveth as a snare, to entangle them in all manner of sins; as a pasture, to fit and prepare them for destruction; as an intoxicating cup, to bewitch and enamor them with worldly love, and to make them neglect spiritual and heavenly things; because after their great cheer, they shall have such an heavy reckoning as will quite damp all their music and delight. And finally, because they are no gifts of God's love and favor, but rather of his clemency and forbearance; like the liberal allowance which Princes make to great and noble Traitors, until they be brought forth to trial and execution, according to course and extremity of the Law.

Sect. 4 - That though many godly men are poor, yet godliness is no cause of their poverty.

In the second place I answer, that though many are poor who are godly, yet their godliness is not the cause of their poverty; seeing it only findeth, but not maketh them to be in this penurious estate. For when the Gospel is preached, the poor rather receive it than the rich, seeing the little comfort which they have in earthly things, doeth make them to seek for it in spiritual and heavenly; whereas the abundance of the rich entangleth their hearts in the snares of worldly love, choketh in them the seed of God's Word, and maketh them to neglect the means of their salvation. Thirdly, I answer, that godliness is a cause and means of riches, and not of poverty, seeking it hath the promises of this life, and that which is to come; and God hath undertaken (who is able and all-sufficient) seeing the earth is his, and all that therein is, and most true and infallible in his Word) that nothing which is good, shall be wanting unto those that fear and serve him; that if we will first seek his Kingdom and righteousness, all other things shall be cast upon us; that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. That if we will cease to do evil, and learn to do well, if we consent and obey, we shall eat the good things of the Land. If indeed riches were simply our own earnings, and could be gotten by our own policies, care and labor, then those who exceed others in all these, might promise unto themselves the greatest plenty, though they utterly neglect God's service; but seeing it is only God's blessing that maketh rich, it is not to be imagined, that the Lord, infinite in bounty and goodness, will be less liberal in paying our wages, because we are more faithful and diligent in doing his work. And therefore if we fear want and poverty, it must not discourage us from the service of God, but rather be a strong motive to make us serve him with more earnest endeavor, seeing he will preserve those who serve him from poverty, so far forth as it is evil and a punishment of sin, and will give unto them all temporal blessings, so far forth as they are good and profitable. And if he scant them of these earthly trifles, it is but to fit them for the receiving of his greater and better gifts, even the rich treasures of his spiritual

graces, faith, hope, patience and the rest, and for the everlasting riches and glory of his heavenly Kingdom. For he that rewarded Solomon with peace, wealth and honor, because in the first place he desired civil wisdom to govern the people, will not deny them unto those, who affect above all things spiritual Wisdom, consisting in true godliness; if in his divine Wisdom, he doth see that it is better for them to have them, then to want and be scanted of them.

CHAPTER XVI.

Their objection answered, who allege that their poverty presseth them to such continual labor, that they have no leisure for the duties of a godly life.

Sect. 1 - That God's Commandments bind unto obedience both poor and rich.

The seventh objection is made by those who are afflicted with poverty, and cannot, without much labor and great pains, procure necessaries for the sustaining of their own lives and those that depend upon them. O, say they, we are so miserably poor, that unless we spend our whole time in the works of our callings, we cannot get such a small competency as is sufficient to hold life and soul together, nor food and clothing for ourselves, wives, children and families, which we must provide for, unless we would be worse then Infidels, being bound so to do both by the Law of God and nature. And therefore having no spare time to spend in Religious duties, we hope that God will have us excused, and not impute the fault unto us, but to our poverty, which necessarily constraineth us to neglect the duties of his service, which if we had time and leisure, like other men, we would willingly perform. To which I answer first, that the

Law and commandments of God are given indefinitely and generally unto all men, the poor as well as the rich, and tie all sorts of men equally and indifferently unto obedience, without any exemption or toleration granted to any state and condition. Otherwise, if such excuses might pass for current pay, none would want pretenses to slip their necks out of the yoke of obedience, seeing prosperity and plenty, as well as adversity and penury, do not want their several employments, and distractions enow to hinder us from the duties of God's service, if at least we will yield and give way unto them. Secondly I answer, that the state of poverty being sanctified unto us, is much more fit for the duties of God's service, then that which floweth with plenty and abundance, as being less subject to many potent vices and corruptions which hinder us in them, as pride and self-love, wrath and insolency, sloth and idleness, intemperance, insobriety and many others.

Sect. 2 - That poverty hindereth not God's graces in us, but rather furthereth them.

Thirdly, poverty doth not hinder any of God's graces in us: Yea, through God's blessing, doth much further and increase them; as meekness, humility, patience, temperance, sobriety, watchfulness in prayer. Yea, it doth not make us less fit for any, either in respect of the graces themselves or the practice and exercise of them; for saving graces are not bought for money, nor lost for want of coin to purchase them, but are the gifts of God, which he giveth freely without respect of persons, to poor and rich, if they hunger and thirst after them; according to that gracious call: Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. So our Savior Christ; If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; that is, the saving graces of his sanctifying Spirit, as he expoundeth it in the

words following. Neither doth poverty hinder the Spiritual exercise of any grace in our outward practice, no, not Christian bounty and beneficence, which God measureth not by the greatness of the gift; but the obedience and liberality of the giver; For if a man hath a willing mind, he is accepted according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not, as in this particular case the Apostle speaketh. The which our Savior evidently showeth in the example of the poor, yet liberal widow, whose two mites being all her wealth, was esteemed the greatest gift that was cast into the Treasury. Much less doth poverty hinder us in the duties of God's service, which seeing they are to be performed, not with outward pomp, but in Spirit and Truth, need not the help of money and riches to further us in them. And this the examples of all God's Saints, who have lived in former ages, do evidently show, unto whom poverty was no impediment to hinder them from performing unto God any duty of his service. For the poor Fishermen were no less diligent in all religious duties, then the wealthy Patriarchs; poor Lazarus, then rich Abraham; Amos an heard-man, then Esaias of the Kings stock; Paul a poor Tent-maker, then David a rich King; yea, our Savior Christ himself, as he exceeded all others in poverty, living upon alms, and not having a place of his own where to lay his head; so he exceeded all men that ever lived in piety, and in the practice of all Religious duties belonging to a godly life.

Sect. 3 - That the more poor we are, the more earnest we should be in God's service.

Fourthly, I answer, that the more poor we are in our outward estate, the more intentive and diligent should we be in the service of God, and all religious exercises; that being defective in earthly blessings, we may be made rich in all spiritual and saving graces, and that wanting with Peter and John, silver and gold, we may with them exceed in Godliness, which is the chiefest Gain, and bringeth with it the greatest contentment. Finally, that having no other patrimony in

lands and houses, wherein we might delight ourselves, we do make God's testimonies to be our heritage forever, and the very rejoicing of our hearts. Fifthly, seeing the whole earth and all therein is, is the Lord's, and at his disposing, to whom he pleaseth, and it is his blessing alone which maketh rich, therefore the more poor we are, the more painful and diligent should we be in all duties of his service, that he may so bless our labors, and prosper our handy-work, as that it may be an effectual means, serving his providence, for procuring some sufficiency of these temporal benefits. Thus David acknowledged, that it was the Lord whom he served, that had furnished his table. That it is he who giveth unto all, their meat in due season, and by opening his hand, doth satisfy the desire of every living thing. That except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain; And that it is in vain for us to rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows, unless the Lord do bless our labors, as the experience of many in all times plainly showeth, whose carking care, and restless labors will not afford them such necessaries, as are cast upon others with little pains. It is the Lord, as Hanna professeth, who maketh poor, and maketh rich, bringeth low, and lifteth up; He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and to make them inherit the Crown of glory. It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it, as the Wise man speaketh; and it is his powerful Word, by which we live, and not by bread only, as himself teacheth us. And therefore let us not think, that by neglecting God's service we shall thrive the better, or that we shall have the more liberal wages, because we are slothful in doing his work, and spend our whole time and strength about our own.

Sect. 4 - That if being poor, we carefully serve God, we may securely cast ourselves upon his gracious providence, and expect him to be our reward.

Sixthly, though we be poor, and have nothing to sustain us and our charge, but what we earn with our daily and painful labor, yet if we do not wholly addict ourselves to the world, but allot seasonable times to God's worship and service, we shall not be the nearer to want and penury; yea rather, laying aside all carking care, we may securely cast ourselves with full affiance upon his providence and promises, and expect such a blessing upon the labors of our hands performed in due place and time, as that neither we, nor those that belong unto us, shall want food convenient, nor any other thing that is good. For if the Lord be so gracious and bountiful, that he provideth for strangers, who serve Satan and their own lusts, how can we imagine that he will suffer those of his own family, who spare time from their necessary employments, that they may do him faithful service, to want and pine for hunger? If his providence extendeth to the Fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field, to feed them without their care, and if he clotheth the Lilies of the field without their labor, how will he not take greater care for us that are his household servants, and adopted children, who moderately use our best study and endeavor to serve his providence, in providing things necessary, but so in the meantime, as that we will, by borrowing some time from the works of our callings, rather endanger ourselves to want, then we will be wanting unto him in spiritual duties of his service? Let us then, as the Apostle exhorteth, be careful for nothing, but resting upon his care and providence with firm affiance, let us in all our necessities, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make our requests known unto God. For the Lord hath bound himself freely by many gracious promises, that if casting off all carking care, we trust in him, and serve him in the duties of piety and righteousness, he will provide for us what we stand in need of, and will not suffer us to want anything that is good. So the Psalmist, Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good things. So the Wise man telleth us, that the Lord will not suffer the

soul of the righteous to famish, but he casteth away the substance of the wicked. The which David saw confirmed in his own experience, having not observed in all his time from his youth to old age, that the righteous had been at any time forsaken, or their seed begging their bread. And thus the Apostle Peter exhorteth us to cast all our care upon the Lord, for he careth for us. The which promises the Apostle to the Hebrews layeth as a ground of his dissuasion from covetousness and discontent; Let your conversation (saith he) be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will not leave thee nor forsake thee. Seventhly, if we devote ourselves unto God's service and love, as it beseemeth his children, in holy obedience, allotting time convenient to religious duties, the Lord himself will be our wages and exceeding great reward, and he that is God all-sufficient, in the absence of all earthly helps and means, will be our portion and inheritance, which whoso enjoy, can want nothing. And this argument the Lord useth to encourage Abraham to serve him; Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward. And again, I am the almighty, or all-sufficient God, walk before me, and be thou upright. And therefore let us say with one of the Ancients; God alone sufficeth me, although who so will take all things else besides him; for he is too covetous whom God cannot satisfy. Eighthly, if we be diligent in God's service, though we have not so much as others, yet that little we have (as before I showed) is much better than their great riches and revenues who neglect it. According to that of the Wise man, Better is a little with righteousness, then great revenues without right. Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, then he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. And, Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, then great treasures and trouble therewith. For as the Psalmist saith, The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever; they shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied, &c. Again, that little which the righteous have, that fear and serve God, is better than the abundance of the wicked, who serve the world and their own lusts, because that godliness which is joined with it, is the greatest gain, and in the lowest estate bringeth contentation, which is

a Jewel of such value, that it is above the purchase of all earthly riches, and cannot be bought with the price of a monarchy. According to that of the Wise man; The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul, though his commons be never so short; but the belly of the wicked shall want, even when he sitteth at his full furnished table. For when his appetite is satisfied, he is not satisfied, because he wanteth an appetite.

Sect. 5 - That the objection of poverty is but a frivolous and false excuse.

Finally, let all those know, who object their poverty, and their continual labors to supply their wants, as an excuse for their neglect of God's service in the duties of a godly life, that it is but a false and frivolous pretense, whereby they palliate and color their irreligious profaneness. For they who will not serve God when they are poor, would much less do it if they were rich. They that will sue and seek unto God for help and succor, when they are destitute of necessaries, would much more neglect him, if their storehouses were full, and their tables furnished with all plenty. They that will not call upon the Lord when they are in trouble, nor pour forth a prayer unto him when his chastisement is upon him, would much more forget him and neglect this duty in their prosperity and security from danger. And who seeth not by continual experience, that many who have seemed diligent and devout in the duties of God's service, in their poor and mean estate, have afterwards been loose and lazy, cold and negligent, when the world hath smiled upon them, and their wealth and riches have been increased and multiplied? Neither in truth is poverty, and pains to supply our wants, any hindrance to the daily and necessary duties of God's service, seeing if we order our time aright, and wisely dispose of our business, both of them may well stand together. For the Lord requireth not at our hands, that we should spend the greatest part of our time in religious exercises, and neglect the duties of our callings, but only that we allot some small

time to holy duties, and perform our honest labors in the rest, therein yielding obedience by performing these works, because he hath required them. And so far is he off from exacting of us monkish idleness, and vacancy from all labor, under pretence that we may wholly devote ourselves to religious exercises, that he expressly forbiddeth it, and strictly requireth painful diligence in the duties of our callings; and contrariwise condemneth sloth and negligence, adiudging those who will not labor, as unworthy to eat, and censuring them to be worse than Infidels, who by their diligence and care provide not for their family. But yet all this inferreth no necessity of neglecting religious duties, seeing there is no man so wholly taken up with his labors, that may not find some spare time for the duties of God's service, seeing less is required hereunto, then he who is most diligent spendeth in superfluous sleep, idle conferences, and upon other needless and useless occasions; as we shall more fully show in answering the next objection.

CHAPTER XVII.

Their objection answered, who pretend that their multitude of worldly employments will allow them no leisure for religious duties.

Sect. 1 - That earthly blessings are no hindrances unto godliness, but the immoderate love of them.

When the mind and heart are indisposed to God's service, and averse to religious exercises, the flesh will never want excuses to put them off, and withdraw us from them; neither is there any estate and condition, which will not minister distractions and discouragements. For if we be poor, it will suggest, that all our time is little enough, though it be wholly spent in our labors, that thereby we may earn and furnish ourselves with things necessary for our maintenance: if we have sufficiency and plenty of all temporal blessings, they will steal our hearts from God, and so wholly fix them upon earthly things, that they will find little or no leisure for spiritual exercises. And now they have so many things to look unto, the care of so many businesses lying upon them, so many and weighty employments, for the well managing of their worldly estates, if they will not suffer all to go to loss, and the blessings of God to perish through their negligence, that they cannot, like others who have little to do, spend much of their time in religious exercises; as prayer, reading and hearing the Word, meditation and such like. Neither do they think it necessary that they should so do, seeing God will excuse, if not approve and commend them, if they follow diligently the duties of their callings. And this carnal disposition in worldly men, our Savior taxeth in the Parable of those unworthy guests, who being invited unto the Marriage of the Kings Son, pretend diverse excuses, all which are borrowed from their worldly employments. One had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it; another had bought a yoke of Oxen, and must needs go to prove them; another had married a wife, and could not come. Yea even Martha herself,

though otherwise a virtuous and religious woman, being encumbered with worldly employments, thought her neglect of hearing Christ, excused, and her sister Mary, worthy blame, because she did not join with her. For the answering of which objection, let us first know, that God's temporal blessings, which he hath bestowed upon us, are not in themselves any causes to hinder us from the duties of God's service, but our immoderate love of them, which makes us forget and neglect the Author of our good, and to mind and affect the gifts, more than the giver. For otherwise, the greatness of our means and possessions would not, through multitude of employments, be distractions to hinder us from serving God, but rather effectual motives to persuade us unto it, which also being rightly and wisely managed, would afford us better leisure for religious duties, seeing we are well provided for, though we take but moderate care, and but ordinary pains in the works of our callings. It is not our necessary business and employments, which so wholly take us up, that we have no time to spare for God's service; but such cumbersome employments which the inordinate and immoderate love of the world and earthly things imposeth upon us, that by excessive care and labor, our state being managed to the greatest advantage, we may become suddenly rich. It is not the comforts of this life which hinder us in the spiritual race, but the sin and worldly concupiscence that doth so easily beset us, which maketh them so weighty and cumbersome unto us. And therefore we must mortify our carnal love of earthly things, if we would not have them to be hindrances in spiritual exercises. For if we do not immoderately affect them, we shall take little pleasure, so to cumber and overtoil ourselves in our worldly employments about them, that we can find no time for religious duties. Let us not inordinately love the world, and worldly things, if we would have the love of the Father to abide in us; nor devote ourselves to the service of the earthly Mammon, if we would have any time to spare for God's service. Let us cease from our carnal wisdom, and not labor to be rich, seeing riches make themselves wings, and fly away, like an Eagle towards heaven. Let not this heavy Judgment of God be drawn upon us by our worldly love, that we should take pleasure to labor in the very fire, and weary ourselves for

very vanity. Let us remember, that a fearful woe is denounced against him, that toileth himself to increase that which is not his, and ladeth himself with thick clay; so as he cannot go on cheerfully in the ways of godliness. And that, if to multiply and heap up this worldly pelf, we neglect the duties of God's service, he will cross and curse our endeavors; and then we shall sow much, and bring in little; eat, but not have enough; drink, and not be satisfied; clothe ourselves, and not be warm; and put all the wages which we earn, into a bag with holes. For if God blow upon it, when we look for much, it will come to little; or if he do not, he will bring upon us a more heavy Judgment, by suffering us to enjoy our riches, which we immoderately love, that we may fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves thorough with many sorrows. And this is that sore evil which Solomon observed under the Sun, namely, Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. Let us remember, that when we have by all our toil heaped up riches, they shall (as the Wise man speaketh) perish by evil travel; and he that hath most wearied himself by getting wealth; As he came forth of his mothers womb naked, so he shall return as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.

Sect. 2 - That we must not undertake all employments which the world and flesh will press upon us.

Finally, let us know, that if we will undertake all such employments as the world and the flesh will impose upon us, they will play the cruel Pharaohs, and oppress our souls with a much more cruel servitude then that of Egypt. For if we do but make mention of surceasing our labors for a while, that we may have some time to perform that service unto God which he requireth, imputing this unto us as some idle and lazy humor, they will redouble our already

too toilsome task, and press such devout purposes out of us with their heavy burdens, and rather than we should want employment, to keep us from serving God, they will cause us to tire ourselves, night and day, in gathering straw, that is, about idle vanities which will not profit, to be afterwards spent to as little purpose, namely, that upon the foundation of riches thus scraped together, we may erect Pyramids and Towers threatening the skies, and mansion houses and stately buildings, to continue our names unto posterity. Yea in truth, there is not in the whole world such a terrible bondage to the body under the most tyrannous Lord's, as this is to the soul, which the flesh and the world impose upon it. For in them it is lawful for the slave at some time to find leisure for rest and sleep, for eating and drinking, that being refreshed, he may again return to his task; whereas these more cruel tyrants wear out those souls which are embondaged by them with toilsome labors, and yet will allow them no time for their spiritual repast, nor to refresh themselves and repair their strength, by resting from their labors upon the Lord's Sabbaths, or by feeding upon the Manna of the Word, in hearing, reading, and meditation, and by sequestering themselves from earthly business, that they may by prayer and invocation, solace themselves in that sweet communion which they have with God in this holy exercise. But if we would have our souls to thrive in spiritual grace and strength, we must shake off the yoke of this tyranny, and never be so wholly intent to advance our worldly estate, as to neglect the taking of our souls repast in religious exercises, according to the counsel of Jerome to a virtuous Matrone: So (saith he) take care of thine house, as that thou do always allow some leisure and liberty to thy soul. Neither do I say this, that I would withdraw thee wholly from thy charge; yea rather, I do it to this end, that in this vacation from worldly business, thou mayest learn and meditate, how thou oughtest to behave thyself towards thy family and charge, when thou returnest unto them. For howsoever we must take care and pains about things concerning this life, in due time and place, yet so, as we do according to our Saviors counsel, give the priority and precedence, both in our judgments, affections, and practice, unto spiritual and heavenly things, as being of far greater

weight and worth, seeking first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and then temporal and earthly things in a second and inferior place.

Sect. 3 - That no business is of like moment, as by serving God to save our souls.

Neither is there any worldly business of like moment and importance, as by serving God, to seek and assure the salvation of our souls. For this, as our Savior teacheth us, is that one thing necessary, in comparison whereof, all other things must be neglected, though they were of as high a nature as Martha's employment, to give entertainment unto Christ himself. Of which, if we were well persuaded, and did esteem spiritual and heavenly things, according to their true worth, we, who can in our greatest employments find some spare time to spend about earthly trifles of small value, would not only be straightened and scanted of it for religious exercises. Let no man (saith one) think it a lawful excuse to allege his businesses of state, nor complain of his employments in the wars; seeing with every faithful man the Christian warfare ought first to be undertaken. And this was David's judgment, who esteemed the Law of the Lord better unto him, then thousands of gold and silver. The which was seconded by his affection; for as he professeth, he loved God's Commandments above gold, yea above fine gold. So Solomon, or rather the eternal Wisdom of God by him, teacheth us to esteem our spiritual trading for the good of our souls, above the merchandize of silver, and the gain of godliness above fine gold; seeing it is more precious than rubies, and all things that we can desire, are not to be compared unto it. So the Lord by Jeremiah, reckoneth all worldly things in comparison of this, as chaff to wheat. And the Apostle esteemeth those things that were greatest gain unto him, no better than dung, yea, then loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And therefore let us not labor so much for the meat that perisheth, as to neglect for it the meat which endureth

to eternal life; as our Savior exhorteth us; for what will it profit us to gain the whole world, and to lose our own souls? To get earthly treasures and riches, which the rust will fret and the moth eat; and to lose those heavenly and everlasting treasures, which are not subject to any casualties? To compass by our care and labor Dives his dainty fare and costly clothing; and by neglecting the service of God and the means of our salvation, to be cast with him into hell, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth? For there (as one saith) they shall wail and lament, who have so infolded themselves with the cares of this life present, as that they could find no leisure to think of the life to come; whom the coming of the Lord shall take at unawares, oppressed with the sleep of ignorance and carnal security.

Sect. 4 - That they who neglect the duties of God's service, cannot expect good success to their labors.

Secondly, let all such know, that neglect the duties of God's service, under the pretense of their great and weighty employments, that they cannot in so doing reasonably expect any good success of their toilsome labors, or that they will answer their hopes, in the getting and preserving of that wealth, which they so much love and long after; for it is not their most careful and painful endeavors, but God's blessing only that maketh rich; It is he alone that giveth them power to get wealth. And how can they expect this blessing from God upon their labors, when as they can find no leisure to crave it at his hands? How can they think that he will, notwithstanding all their pains, prosper their worldly estates, unless it be for a further and more fearful Judgment, when as they have no care to serve and please him? Yea, why may they not justly fear that he will blow upon their wealth, and cause it to vanish like smoke, and even to melt like butter in the Sun; or cause that riches, which is thus wickedly gotten, by neglecting all duties of God's service, to be as wickedly spent by their heirs and successors, serving unto them as inducements and helps to further them in all riotous and luxurious courses, to their

ruin and destruction, as the getting of them hath been the cause and occasion of many fearful sins, and of the utter neglect of all religious duties, that so both they and their heirs, though they run contrary ways, may yet meet together in hell and condemnation. Let them also know, that if before they go about the works of their callings, they would renew their Covenant with God, by renewing their faith and repentance; and so being reconciled, undertake their employments with peaceable minds and good consciences; if they would first call upon the Lord for his blessing upon their labors, and resign themselves and all their affairs to the gracious guidance of his good providence; If they would propound his glory, as the main end of all their labor, and as they live the life of faith, so also they would labor in the strength thereof; resting upon God's gracious promises, and waiting for a blessing upon all their affairs; if they would sanctify their works by the Word and Prayer, without which, even those things which are in their own nature pure and honest, become impure and profane to the irreligious and unbelievers, and desire the assistance of his holy Spirit for the directing of all their labors to a right end; Finally, if they would by all these religious exercises sharpen their tools before they go to work, they should not hereby find their labors put back and hindered, but profitably advanced, and better achieved, then if they undertake them being blunt and dull; seeing by the sharpness of the instruments, they shall soon redeem the time which is spent in whetting them. Neither would this hinder our Christian thrift, nor our godly and lawful gains, but much further and increase them; and repair all we lose, by that time which we spend in God's service with much advantage, through his powerful blessing upon our labors, from which Fountain alone, all lawful prosperity springeth and floweth. Whereas contrariwise, if neglecting these religious duties of God's service, we rest upon our own pains and providence, and as the Prophet speaketh, sacrifice unto our own nets, either God will curse and cross our labors, and frustrate all our hopes, or if we thrive by them in our worldly estates, all that we get by this means, shall be but like Naboth's Vineyard to Ahab, which rooted out both him and all his posterity; like the Israelites Quails, which came out of their nostrils; like Judas his sop, with which the

devil entered; or like cold water, given to gratify those who are sick of a burning fever; seeing it but inflameth the heat of their carnal concupiscence, and prepareth matter for their everlasting burning in the unquenchable flames of hell fire.

Sect. 5 - That the duties of our particular callings, must give place to the general calling of Christianity.

Thirdly, let them know, that the duties of our particular callings, must give place to the general calling of Christianity, when as both of them (as they ordinarily may) will not stand together. For by these duties we draw near unto God, and have communion with him, and no calling must call us from God, or withdraw us from this blessed fellowship. They are the spiritual repast of our souls, by which they get spiritual strength, and live the life of faith; and therefore if we so highly prize the health and life of our bodies, that we think no business so important, that should make us neglect the means of preserving them, as eating, drinking, resting, sleeping, and such like; why should we imagine any to be so weighty and necessary, as that for the following of it, we should neglect the health and welfare of our precious souls? Let us consider, that our callings were made for us, and not we for our callings; for our good and benefit, and not for our hurt and ruin; for the glorifying of God, and furthering of our salvation, and not for his dishonor, by neglecting his service, and like snares to entangle us, that we cannot proceed in such holy duties, as will make our calling and election sure. When two things come together, which differ in their degrees of excellency and necessity, we can easily resolve, in earthly things to give priority and precedency unto that, which exceedeth the other in worth and use. O would we could be thus wise in this case; and seeing spiritual and heavenly things, and employments about them, which tend to the everlasting salvation of our souls, do as much exceed our earthly affairs, as heaven, earth, and those things which are permanent and everlasting, such as are momentary and of short continuance; I

would we could be so wise for our own good, as to give those duties which excel, the first place and preeminence. God hath so graciously respected our infirmity and weakness, that whereas he might have challenged the greatest part of our time for his immediate service, as being above all other employments most honorable and profitable, he is content that we should consecrate unto him one day of seven, and one or two hours of every day, out of four and twenty, or some small part of the Morning and Evening, leaving unto us all the rest for our businesses and employments, which respect the good of our bodies and estates. And being left so rich, will we yet steal? Will we encroach upon God's right, who hath dealt so bountifully with us, and leave him nothing, that deserveth all? Do we think it absurd to neglect the duties of our particular callings all the week, under pretense of spending our whole time in religious exercises, as hearing the Word, Prayer, Meditation; and yet imagine it to be an excuse which will pass for currant, if neglecting all duties of Christianity, which are much more excellent and necessary, we can say for ourselves, that we are so wholly taken up with worldly employments, that we can spare no time at all for holy duties? Yea, do we think it unequal, that the duties of piety and Religion should encroach a little upon that long time which is allotted to the duties of our callings; and shall these spoil the other of their right, seeing they have ordinarily such scant allowance, though they be in their nature much more excellent, and to us more profitable and necessary? O let not the world and our own carnal love of earthly vanities so much besot us; but let us as willingly and cheerfully allow that short time required to religious duties, which advance our spiritual estate, enrich us with saving graces, preserve our souls in good plight and liking, further our salvation, and assure us of heavenly and everlasting happiness; as we do a far longer time to worldly employments about our corruptible bodies, and fickle estates, and the compassing of such earthly things, as in comparison are vain and of no worth, and in respect of their durableness and continuance, momentary and mutable. And if at any time we be brought into such straights of time, that the one of necessity must give place to the other, let those exercises which are of the more noble nature, have

the precedency; and being much more excellent in worth, and yet bounded with much narrower limits of time, let the better be preferred before the worse, and that which is only poorer in time, borrow from that which out of its plenty hath more to lend. Wherein we have the poor shepherds for our examples and precedents, who neglected their sheep, to seek and find out their Savior; In Mary, who spared time from her worldly, though weighty employments, that she might nourish her soul with the bread of life; and in our Savior Christ himself, who being scanted of time, for the public duties of his calling in preaching the Word and working miracles; yet rather chose to borrow time from his rest and sleep, then he would neglect the Religious duty of private prayer.

Sect. 6 - That we have time sufficient for Religious and civil duties, if it be wisely husbanded.

Fourthly, let us consider, that we are not ordinarily thrust into such straights, but that if we will, we may easily find some convenient time for both sorts of duties; those which are religious belonging to God's service, and those which are civil, about our ordinary callings. Neither is there any vocation so laborious, which if it be wisely followed, will not afford some fit time for holy exercises. For tell me, thou who complainest of thy little leisure, and thy short time for thy great employments, if thou be so stingily thrifty in expending it, that thou hast none to spare from the works of thy calling to any other use or purpose; Doest thou not borrow from them, so much as would serve religious duties, not one hour in the four and twenty, to be divided between thy morning and evening devotions? Doest not thou, who complainest of this waste, in that time which is bestowed upon Christ and the duties of God's service, spend much more upon thine own lusts and sinful pleasures, either in superfluous sleep, or complemental invitations or visitations, or in vain disports and unprofitable pastimes, or in fruitless, if not carnal and corrupt communication and idle chat, or sitting longer at thy meals than

either health or profit, necessity or civility doth require? And is thine hap so hard, that thou art at liberty for all other purposes, and art only pinched in the straits of time, when thou shouldest spare a little for God's service, and the eternal well-fare of thy precious soul? Surely if this be thy case, thy state is miserable; for he that wanteth time for God's service, will also want it for his own salvation. He that can find no time for the Lord's work, shall never have time to receive his wages. He that can find no leisure to enrich his soul with spiritual grace, shall thereby also lose the opportunity of attaining unto heavenly glory. Do not then for shame abuse thyself any longer with so vain an excuse, as though thou couldest find in thine heart to be godly and religious, if thou couldest find any time for religious exercises. For either thou must confess, that thou spendest no time worse, or acknowledge thy folly in not preferring the better: either that the duties of God's service, which concern his glory, and thine own salvation, are less excellent and necessary then any of thine ordinary employments, or else that thou art as unwise as profane, in spending so thy whole time in those, as that the other for want of time should be quite excluded. But rather learn wisely to divide thyself and leisure between them, allotting constantly to either their due portion, and thou shalt find convenient time both for religious and civil exercises; and when thy spiritual man, like Mary, hath chosen the better part, let not the flesh by its murmuring pull thee from it. And if the duties of our callings importune us for a greater allowance of time, that we may dispatch them, let us not encroach upon God's right, and rob our souls of that leisure and liberty which is required to spiritual exercises, but let us rather borrow it from our flesh, which may better spare it; as either from our superfluous sleep, or vain pastimes, or fruitless discourses, or some other thing as worthless and unprofitable. And if we have not yet time enough for our multitude of employments, our best course is to imitate wise Pilots and Mariners, who will lighten their ship of some part of her lading, that they may save the rest and best part of their goods from danger of sinking. And like wise travelers, when we find ourselves ready to faint under our burden, let us cast away the refuse which may best be spared, that we may bring our chief treasures and

choicest jewels to our journeys end. For if our Savior Christ would have us to forsake father and mother, wife and children, yea even our own lives, rather than they should hinder us from being his Disciples; If he would have us to pluck out our eyes, and cut off our right hands, if they offend us, and hinder our journey to heavenly happiness, because it is better that some of our members should perish, than that the whole body should be cast into hell: then how much rather should we cast off some of our worldly businesses, when they so encumber and turmoil us, that they allow us no leisure for spiritual exercises, nor to perform those religious duties, which being neglected, deprive us of all assurance of eternal salvation?

Sect. 7 - That none are exempted by God from the duties of his service, under pretense of any other business.

Finally, let those who excuse their neglect of God's service, by pretending their multitude of important businesses, which allow them no leisure for Religious exercises, know and remember, that the Lord exempteth none, no, not Kings themselves, from performing of them, whose employments notwithstanding exceed those of other men, both in weight and number, as having not only the charge and burden of their own families, but of the whole Church and Common-wealth lying upon them. For even they are commanded to have with them continually the Book of God's Law, and to read and meditate therein all the days of their life, that they may learn to fear the Lord their God, and to keep all the Words of his Law and his Statutes, to do them. Let them also consider the care of God's servants in all ages, to yield unto him this service and obedience. So that though their businesses and employments have been never so manifold and weighty, yet when they have been most encumbered, they ever found time sufficient for the Religious duties of God's service. Who ever had more, and more weighty employments than Joshua, both in war and peace; as having not only a Kingdom to conquer, and many mighty and warlike enemies to

subdue, which was afterward to be divided amongst all the tribes, but also a stiff-necked people under his government, unto whom, upon all weighty occasions he was to administer justice? And yet, as the Lord charged him, that the Book of the Law should not depart out of his mouth, but that he should meditate therein day and night, that he might observe to do according to all that was written therein; so did he answerably yield his obedience, professing before all the people, that though they should all neglect these duties, yet he and his household would serve the Lord. Who could spare less time than holy David from his important employments, both in war and peace? And yet all this could not hinder him from Religious exercises, but upon all occasions he meditated in God's Law both day and night; and thrice in the day at least, did in a set and solemn manner call upon him; besides his often prayers and praises upon special occasions. Who could have less leisure than Daniel, that having the care of managing the chief affairs of a mighty Monarchy imposed upon him, had all his actions so curiously scanned by his many, mighty, and malicious enemies, that small negligence's would have been aggravated against him as great faults? And yet notwithstanding all these businesses of State, and those that concerned his own particular, he could thrice a day sequester himself from them all, and in a solemn manner devote himself to the Religious duties of God's service. Yea, was there ever any man so seriously employed, in such important affairs of his public calling, as our Savior Christ, so as he could scarce spare any time from his preaching, working miracles, and such divine exercises, for the relieving of his body, and satisfying of his hunger? And yet rather than he would want time for his private prayers and devotions, he borrowed some from his sleep. And therefore, unless we would not be numbered among the faithful, let us follow their examples; if we would be esteemed Christ's Disciples, let us imitate his practice, and not think ourselves excused in the neglect of Religious duties by our worldly businesses, which are incomparably less in number, and lighter in value and true worth, then those wherein many of God's Saints and servants have been daily employed, from which notwithstanding they borrowed time sufficient for spiritual exercises.

The which admonition, as it generally concerneth all Christians of every calling; so especially Students and Professors of Divinity, who are more apt then others, to excuse their neglect of Christian practice in pious and Religious duties, because they are so wholly taken up with their studies and speculations, that they have little or no leisure for the other: The which they think not only justifiable, but also commendable, because their minds are continually exercised in the theory and speculation of religious objects, and in divine studies and contemplations. But such are to know, that nothing more hindereth the Religious practice of Christianity, then when we spend our time, and suffer ourselves to be wholly taken up with jejune speculations, and such studies as are only mental: Because being exercises and labors of the mind and soul, they toil and tire it, and so spend all the virtue and vigor of the powers and faculties belonging unto it, and waste and exhaust the spirits, that no strength remaineth for practicing duties, nor any ability to perform any exercises of Religion and devotion. Yea, above all other employments, they most alienate the mind, and withdraw the heart and affection wholly from them. For whereas those who are exercised about bodily labors, as riding, traveling, working in their arts and trades, plowing and such like, may often have leisure, without any great distraction, to lift up their hearts unto God in short Prayers and Meditations, in praising God, and singing Psalms, not for custom, but for conscience sake, not to make themselves merry and pass the time with less tediousness, but out of a pure desire to glorify God; or to entertain one another with Religious discourses and holy conferences; those whose minds are taken up with literal studies and speculations, can no more intend the spiritual exercises of Christian devotion, then they can at the same time sup and blow, because the powers of the mind being finite, cannot intend many things at once. The which (as I think) is a chief cause, why the acutest Schoolmen and greatest and most learned Doctors in high mysteries and curious speculations, are oftentimes most cold in devotion, and most negligent in the practice of holy duties, although they are able to teach them unto others.

CHAPTER XIII.

Their objection answered, who excuse their neglect of Religious duties, under pretence that the times and places wherein they live, are full of corruption.

Sect. 1 - That the corruption of the times is a strong temptation to withdraw us from godliness.

Many other are the objections, which the flesh maketh to hinder us from the profession of piety, and the practice of it in the duties of a godly life. And first, it is ready to object, that the times and places in which we live, and the persons with whom we daily converse, are so corrupt and sinful, that it is almost impossible we should live so strictly, as it were otherwise to be wished, and not be tainted and infected with the common corruptions. For the occasions of sinning are so ordinary and manifold, the provocations pressed upon us by wicked worldlings so strong and forcible, the evil examples which are daily before our eyes, so hurtful and pernicious, as powerfully drawing us to imitation; the neglect and contempt of sincerity and piety, and the practice of it in the duties of a godly life, so usual and almost universal, that he who resolveth to take a different and contrary course, then that which is embraced and applauded by the multitude, must seem to go alone, and to tire and spend his strength in vain, by swimming against the stream, and rowing (as it were) against the wind and tide: Yea, by living innocently, and observing justice and righteousness in all his dealings, what shall he gain hereby, but expose himself to become a prey, as the Prophet speaketh? Besides, with what great discouragements shall the godly meet in such times and places? How are they wondered at and pursued like Owls by little birds? How shall they be crossed in all their preferments, though they deserve never so well, because they do not follow the current of the times; and make conscience of taking

those corrupt courses, and using those unlawful means whereby others rise? How shall they be maligned and reproached, opposed and persecuted, if they refuse to run on with others into the same excess of riot? To which I answer, that it cannot be denied, but that these are strong temptations, and great discouragements which hinder many from the profession of Religion, and the practice of it in Christian duties. The which our Savior himself implieth, where he saith, that because in the latter times iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; And the Apostle likewise, where he calleth the last days perilous times in regard of those manifold and enormous sins which should then reign. For as it is a difficult thing in a general plague, when men draw in daily the infected air, to continue sound and healthy; so is it no less hard in the common corruption of life and manners, to continue in our integrity and holiness of conversation. But yet howsoever hypocrites and time-servers stumble and fall at this stone of offense, for want of Christian resolution, and because they love the things of this present life, better then spiritual grace or heavenly glory, yet the faithful must not be daunted and dismayed with these discouragements, seeing our Savior hath fore-warned them to expect no other, and so forearmed them against they come. Yea, he hath provided cordials of comfort against these cold qualms of earthly calamities, and as he hath foretold the worlds rage and malice against us, so he hath put courage into us, by assuring us that he hath overcome the World. As he hath taught us that the way is narrow, and the gate straight that leadeth to happiness, and that by many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of heaven: so he hath done it not to this end, that we should strain courtesy, and pretend excuses of difficulty, but to arm our resolution, and to make us strive to go in this way, and to enter into this gate, because if we cannot deny the world and ourselves also, we cannot be his Disciples, nor ever reign with him, unless we are also willing to suffer with him. Again, the Lord hath given us express charge, that we should not regard a multitude to follow them in evil; that we should save ourselves from this untoward generation; that when we see the unfruitful works of darkness, we should not thereby take occasion to have fellowship with them, but

rather reprove them, that when our ways are laid full of the snares of sin, we look the better to our footing, and walk so much the more circumspectly, not using the evilness of the days, as an inducement unto sin, but rather of redeeming the time, by doubling our diligence in all Christian duties. And as those who live in infectious places, do not (if they be wise) grow careless and desperate, but use rather their best preservatives to keep out the pestilent air, and the best diet they can to keep them in health: so must we use the like care for our souls in the like case. Which if we neglect to do, we shall evidently declare, that what show soever we make to the contrary, the times and we are well agreed, and that there is not much less corruption within us, then we see without us, so that unless God should change our hearts, we would not by the change of the place and company be much changed.

Sect. 2 - That though it be hard to flesh and blood to live religiously in corrupt times, yet it is possible, yea easy to the regenerate.

It is indeed, in respect of flesh and blood, an hard thing, and almost impossible, to live as Lambes among Wolves, and to retain the sweetness of innocence, when like that River which histories speak of, we run thorough a salt sea of worldly wickedness: but what is impossible to nature, is possible to grace, and much more to the God of all grace and goodness, who hath promised to assist and to establish us in every good work, when once we are thoroughly resolved to undertake it. And this appeareth in the examples of the faithful in all ages, who though they have necessarily lived amongst the wicked, and thereby have been endangered to all the former temptations and incumbrances, that have not been drawn hereby to follow the times, and to imitate the examples of wicked men, but have continued constant in their holy profession, and religious practice of all the duties of piety and righteousness. Thus Enoch walked with God, and Noah continued in his uprightness, though almost all the world followed their own sinful lusts, and lived in all

wickedness and sensuality. So Lot in Sodom, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob amongst the Canaanites, Joseph, David, Nehemiah, Obadiah, Mordecai, Hester and Daniel, retained their sincerity and integrity, though they lived in the wicked and profane courts of Pharaoh, Saul, Artaxerxes, Ahab, Ahasuerus and Nebuchadnezzar. And the Apostle sendeth salvations from the Saints that lived in Nero his household, though like the master it abounded with all manner of outrageous wickedness. And the reason is, because those who are regenerate, have a new nature begun in them, which being spiritual and heavenly, cannot suffer, or receive alteration from things which are of an inferior nature, no more than spiritual substances can suffer of corporal, or heavenly bodies, of those that are elementary. And though the flesh and part unregenerate lieth open to the temptations of the devil and the world, and may easily be allured to any sin, yet so far forth as we are renewed, we resist them and cannot sin, because it is contrary to this spiritual nature, and the Spirit of God dwelling in us, which is the Author of it, according to that of the Apostle John; Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. And therefore as the fish retaineth his freshness in the salt waters, and the hot baths their warmth, though they be enclosed with the cold earth: so the faithful, so far forth as they are regenerate and renewed, retain their piety and godliness of conversation, even when they be encompassed on all sides with wicked worldlings, although their society and examples are exceeding dangerous provocations unto all sin and wickedness, in respect of their flesh and unregenerate part; the one being like fire, the other like gunpowder, or some combustible matter; especially when such familiarity and society is not necessary, but of free choice, seeing it is just with God, that those who love temptation should fall into it. Otherwise, the faithful may retain their sincerity and piety in the midst of a froward generation; yea if necessity, and not their voluntary election thrust them into such times and places, they may not only go on in their Christian course, but even in the most evil days redeem the time, by redoubling their diligence in all pious duties of God's service, as the Apostle implieth. And this we see in the example of the holy Martyrs in the

times of persecution, who have redoubled their zeal and devotion in God's service, when none almost did bear them company, but all the world opposed against them, and did hold in their view a quite contrary course. Thus Elias his zeal was not cooled and quenched by the idolatry and profaneness of those times, but much intended and increased. And David, when he saw the evil examples of transgressors, was not drawn hereby to imitate them, but was the more consumed with his zeal, because they had forgotten God's Law. Thus Paul's fervency of devotion was more inflamed, when he saw the superstition of the Athenians. And thus was our Savior Christ consumed with zeal of his Fathers glory, when as he saw his Temple profaned, and true Religion neglected and contemned.

Sect. 3 - A note of difference between true zeal and devotion, and that which is false and hypocritical.

So that here we may have an undoubted and infallible sign, whereby we may know whether our zeal and devotion be true and sincere, or false and hypocritical; for if they be upright and in truth, they will not be lost in evil places and times; if they be substantial, and (as it were a new nature) and not mere shows and shadows, they will still retain it, and being of superior virtue, will strive against and overcome these corruptions of the times, which are contrary to them. Whereas if they yield unto them, and become profane with the irreligious, neglecting all Christian duties, because they live with those who do neglect them; it is hereby manifest, that there was never any true change in their nature, but only some accidental alteration for worldly respects. Though cold water be made never so hot, yet the heat of it will soon be abated, when it is taken off the fire, and compassed about with the cold air, and becometh more cold then it was at the first. And though the Iron being heat in the Forge, is much more hot and scorching then the fire in other combustible matter, yet being put into the water, or cast upon the ground in the cold air, it becometh more cold then either of them; because in this

alteration there is no change of nature, but only of the quality by outward accident. But contrariwise, the fire which is naturally hot, and the Bath which is naturally warm, are not cooled by the cold winter air which doth encompass them. Yea by this antiperistasis and enclosure, their natural quality being kept in and better compacted, is intended and increased, so that the fire which but moderately heateth in mild weather, scorcheth in cold frosts: and the Bath, which is but temperately warm in summer, even smoketh and scaldeth with heat in the cold winter, because this heat is natural, and no adventitious quality. And so the religion and devotion of hypocrites, being no kindly heat proceeding from a renewed nature, is quickly cooled in the company of the worldly and profane, and returneth to more than natural coldness; whereas the fervor of true Christian devotion is not abated, but rather increased, when they live in corrupt times and sinful places, because proceeding from a new nature, the inherent virtue and vigor of it, uniting itself together to withstand all contrary opposition, is better compacted and becometh more strong and prevalent. So that those evil examples which corrupt others, do but the better arm their resolution to withstand them, and make them strive with more earnestness and devotion, to fly such sins as they see committed, and to put in practice the contrary duties. And as the Ostrich turneth Iron itself, which would kill other creatures, into wholesome nourishment; and as some beasts and birds do convert Spiders, and other poisons into cordials and restoratives, which are deadly and pernicious unto other living things of a different nature: so God's children, which are renewed and regenerate by his holy Spirit, are not only nourished and strengthened with their ordinary food; as hearing the Word, prayer, holy conferences and good company; but through God's Spirit assisting them, are able to turn even Iron ages into good nourishment, and the poison of evil examples into cordials and preservatives, to strengthen them the more against common corruptions and reigning sins. And therefore to excuse our neglect of Christian duties belonging to a godly life, because we live in evil places and times, what is it, but to proclaim that we are like unto them, and are not yet regenerate by God's Spirit, nor changed in our

natures, but still remain in the state of corruption, and consequently liable to death and condemnation?

CHAPTER XIX.

Divers other objections made by the flesh against a godly life, propounded and answered.

Sect. 1 - That it is not enough to live harmlessly, unless we perform religious duties.

Another objection which the flesh maketh against the strict performances of Christian duties, is, that it is unnecessary, seeing if we be harmless, and not guilty of heinous sins; as idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, drunkenness, theft, and such like, but live honestly amongst our neighbors, doing no man any hurt, and in good fame and name in the world, the Lord will accept of us, and bear with our infirmities, though we be not so precise as many others, in performing the duties of a godly life, as they have been before described. To which I answer, that the Lord will never accept of us as his servants and children, if we do not at least desire, resolve and endeavor to yield unto him entire obedience to his whole Law, as well by doing the duties which he hath commanded, as in leaving undone the vices which he hath forbidden; and that this obedience chiefly consisteth rather in performance of that which is good, then in abstinence from that which is evil; and that if to be harmless and innocent, were all that is required to Christianity, then were we best Christians when we sit idly still, rather than when we are in action, yea though we should sleep out our whole lives, because then we are furthest off from doing any hurt. But let us consider that God requireth service at our hands, and he is counted but a sorry servant,

who receiving meat, drink, and wages, doth content himself if he do his Master no harm, though he never endeavor to do him any good. That the axe is set to the root of the tree, to cut it down, that it may be cast into the fire, if it bringeth not forth good fruit, though it should bear none that is evil; and the barren tree must be hewn down and cast out of the Lord's Vineyard, because it doth but cumber the ground. That we must be, not only trees of innocence, but trees of righteousness, if we be of God's planting, which are distinguished from evil trees destined to the fire, not by bearing nothing, but by bringing forth good fruit. Let us remember, that the Fig tree was cursed by our Savior, not because it had upon it figs, like those in one of Jeremiah's baskets, which were so very naughty, that they could not be eaten they were so bad; but because it had none at all, when Christ purposely came to find some upon it. That the unprofitable servant is by his Lord reputed an evil servant, and adjudged to punishment, for not increasing his Masters Talent, though he had not mis-spent it in riotous living. And that the sentence of condemnation shall pass against those, who neglect to do the works of mercy to Christ's poor members, though they never oppressed or wronged them. Finally, let us know that they deceive themselves, who dream of a mean between not doing good, and doing evil; for if we be not on God's side, we are against him; if we gather not with Christ, we scatter abroad: neither can we sooner cease to do evil, but presently we begin to do that which is good.

Sect. 2 - That it is not sufficient to serve God in some things, and at sometimes.

Again, it is ready to object, that if it be not sufficient to abstain from evil, and from gross and heinous sins, but that we must also perform the contrary duties, yet at least it is not necessary that we should be tied so strictly unto all duties of holiness and righteousness which God requireth; or if to all, yet not at all times, but that it is enough, if we perform some good duties, either towards God, or our neighbors,

though we neglect others, and that we be at sometimes zealous and devout, though at other times we take our liberty, and ease ourselves of this hard task, by taking our pleasures, seeing as long as we live in this world we cannot be Saints, but must live like other men, as being alike frail and full of infirmities. To which I answer, that even in this life, we must be of the communion of Saints, if ever we mean to communicate with them in glory and happiness; and howsoever corruption of nature and human frailties hang upon us, yet we must not willingly nourish them, and cheerfully obey the flesh in the lusts thereof; for if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but we must labor through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of this body of sin, that we may live, as the Apostle teacheth us. And although we cannot, by reason of the law of the members, and the sin that hangeth upon us, yield unto the Law that perfect and strict obedience which it requireth: for in many things we sin all; yet if ever we would have any sound comfort in the gracious promises of the Gospel, we must yield unto God the obedience of sons, which consisteth in an earnest desire, full resolution, and diligent endeavor to please our heavenly Father, by framing our lives according unto his will in all things, and at all times. We must put off (as much as in us lieth) the whole old man, with all his corrupt and deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of our minds, we must put on the New man, which after God, is created both in righteousness and true holiness. We must have with David, respect unto all God's Commandments, and lead our lives both in godliness and in honesty. For though we be never so devout and zealous in religious duties, yet if we do not join with them the duties of charity and righteousness, God will reject us, as being no better than hypocrites; according to that of the Prophet; I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings, and meat offerings, I will not accept them, &c. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. So the Lord professeth, that he would not be pleased with thousands of Rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, no, not with the first born of their body, for the sin of their souls, unless also they would do justly, and love mercy. And though we be never so just in our dealings, and so bountiful, that we could

be content to give all our goods to the poor, yet if it be not joined with piety and charity, and do not proceed from saving knowledge and a lively faith, true obedience, and a good conscience, it is all worth nothing, and no better than glorious sins in God's sight. And therefore if we would have our service accepted, we must, according to the Apostles example, live both holily towards God, and justly and unblameably towards men. If we would approve ourselves to be the redeemed of the Lord, we must serve him in holiness and righteousness before him; and that not by fits and flashes, but all the days of our lives. But of these points I have spoken before at large, when I entreated of integrity and constancy, the inseparable properties of a godly life; and therefore refer the Reader to that place.

Sect. 3 - Their objection answered, who pretend that they have outgone many others.

Furthermore, being deluded with the flesh, we are ready to object, that though we have not attained to that perfection which were to be desired, yet we are forward enough in the course of Christianity, seeing we have outrun many others, although there are many also who are far before us. For answer whereof we are to know, that he who thinketh that he hath proceeded far enough, hath not as yet set one foot forward in the Christian Race; and though we had made some good progress, yet if we now stand still, and do not continue running till we come to the goal, we shall never obtain the Garland. And therefore, imitating runners who strive for a prize, we must not look so much to those whom we have outrun, as to those that are still before us, that we may overtake, and get before them to the mark; seeing if we stand still, and rest in that which we have already done, he that is furthest behind, and yet continueth running, will soon overtake us, and get the Garland from us. We must not please ourselves in our good proceedings, and run no more; for in the ways of Christianity, he that goeth not forward, goeth backward; and when

we cease to be better, we begin to be worse; neither must we look how far we have proceeded, but how much of the Race remaineth still unrun, and how far we are yet from the Goal of perfection: And with the Apostle, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, we must press towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He that is ambitious, is not pleased with his present honors, because he is preferred before many others: but if there be yet any above him, he is not quiet in his mind, till he have matched or exceeded him. O then, why should we be so sluggish about spiritual and heavenly preferments, which are incomparably of greater worth and excellency? Why should we not be as religiously ambitious in aspiring, even unto the highest degrees of heavenly glory and happiness, which is permanent and everlasting; as in striving after worldly honors, which are contemptible in their worth, and momentary and mutable in their continuance; seeing man that is in honor, abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish, as the Psalmist speaketh?

Sect. 4 - Their objection answered, who affirm that Ministers only are bound to the strict performance of religious duties.

Moreover, the flesh is ready to object, that howsoever this strict performance of Christian duties be required of Ministers, who have more knowledge, and many helps which many others want, and also fewer lets and distractions, having by reason of their small employments about worldly things, little else to do, then to attend unto spiritual exercises; yet those who are of the common sort of people, as Trades-men, Artificers, and Husbandmen, cannot by the same reason be so strictly tied to religious duties, seeing they are simple, ignorant, and unlettered, and have much more business and employment in the works of their calling. To which I answer first, that though Ministers be tied to exercise themselves, above all others, in those personal duties which belong to their special calling,

as reading, Meditation, and study in the Scriptures, and other religious duties, which are more proper and peculiar unto them: yet the general duties of Christianity, as Prayer, Thanksgiving, receiving the Sacrament, watchfulness, and such like, do lie out in common, both to them and all other men that are true members of the Church. In regard whereof, there is no distinction or difference between one and another, seeing our Savior Christ having with his precious Blood washed us all from our sins, hath made us all alike, Kings and Priests, unto God and his Father. Neither hath he selected some only from among the rest, unto whom he hath appropriated the religious duties of God's service, but hath made us altogether indifferently, a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar people, that we should show forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into this marvelous light, and to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And howsoever the public performance of these religious duties, doeth more peculiarly belong unto them, in respect of their public calling in the Church, yet private devotions, and the duties of God's service and a godly life, belong indifferently unto all, without exception or exemption of any person. Neither are the admonitions and exhortations unto these duties in the Scriptures directed only unto Ministers, as that they should keep the spiritual watch, examine themselves, put on the Christian Armor, pray continually, and in all things give thanks, but unto the whole Church and people of God. Secondly, howsoever God's Ministers ought to shine as lights in the world, to be good examples unto their flocks, over which God hath made them overseers, to be guides unto the rest of the faithful, that they may lead and direct them in the ways of godliness, and to be Captains of the Lord's Armies, to go out and in before them; yet it is to this end, that the people should walk in their light, and no longer sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, that they should imitate their holy example, and propound them as good patterns and precedents for their imitation; that they should follow their guides, be directed by them, and tread in their footsteps, so long as they go before them in the ways of truth and godliness; and finally, that they should march after their spiritual Captains and Leaders, and join with them,

in fighting against the enemies of their salvation. For it were as good for them to want these burning and shining Lights, if they sit idly still and do nothing; to have no such examples, if they never imitate them; to be without guides, if they will not follow them; and these Captains and Leaders, if they let them sustain alone the brunt of the battle, and not like faithful Soldiers, join common forces against common enemies. Thirdly, I answer, that if the special employments of our particular callings, might make us dispense with the general duties of Christianity and God's service; the Ministers calling, if we faithfully walk in it, and diligently perform our duties, hath as much business and employment, and not many fewer or less distractions from private religious duties, then those which are of other professions: As besides his private studies, Reading and Meditation, unto which he must seriously attend, that he may prepare and fit himself for the public service of the Church, and the government of his own family, he must also watch over his flock, visit the sick, strengthen the weak, comfort the afflicted, privately admonish those that err and go out of the way, exhort those that are sluggish, and rebuke those who willfully offend, and continue in their sins. All which, if they be performed with that conscionable care which they ought, will leave them as little time as other men for their private devotions, although under this pretense they must not be neglected. Finally, though more be required of God's Ministers in respect of degree, seeing where the Lord bestoweth a greater measure of his gifts and graces, there he requireth that they should in a greater measure bring forth the fruits of holy obedience; yet the same duties are to be performed of all Christians, according to the proportion of their grace received, and both alike are tied to yield unto God, their common Master, religious service, although those who exceed in knowledge and other gifts, are bound to do them in more perfection. And howsoever a greater measure of knowledge is required of the Minister than the people, because his lips must preserve it, as in a common Treasury, that they may have recourse unto him for the supplying of their wants; yet as all men must live by their own faith, so also they must walk by their own sight, and have such a measure of knowledge and illumination of the Spirit, as may be sufficient to

direct them in all Christian and religious duties. For their souls being alike precious unto them, as theirs are who are called to the Ministry, and the way and means the same which bring both to eternal life and happiness, it behooveth them both alike to labor after this common salvation, in the performance of the same Religious duties, which are also required of both as common unto them.

Sect. 5 - Their objection answered, who pretend the want of means.

But here again they are ready to object, that if they had such means of knowledge, and other saving graces as others enjoy, and such helps and furtherance's in the duties of a godly life as many abound with; then with some reason they were to be blamed, if they did neglect them. But alas, they are under some ignorant or idle minister, which cannot or will not instruct them, or such unconscionable guides, as shine not in the light of a good example, but rather lay stumbling stones of offense before them, by their enormous and scandalous lives, and neglecting all good duties themselves, do dishearten and discountenance them who are careful to perform them, rather than any ways encourage them, either by their words or actions. In which regard they think that they may be excused, if they be not so zealous and forward in performing the Religious duties of God's service and of a godly life. To which I have in part before answered, namely, that if this be our case, first we must use all good means to move them to their duty, and especially that we pour forth our hearty prayers unto God for our Pastors and Ministers, entreating him that he will enlighten their minds, and sanctify their hearts and affections, and so make them as able, as willing to perform those high and holy duties unto which they are called. And secondly, if the courses which they still hold, afford us no better hopes; then accounting the glorifying of God in the eternal salvation of our souls, that one thing necessary, which is far to be preferred before all earthly commodities, we must labor to place ourselves under such Pastors and Teachers, as will carefully and

conscionably break unto us the bread of life, and shine before us, not only in the light of doctrine, but also of a holy life and conversation. In the meantime, these outward wants must not make us neglect the Religious duties of a godly life; or if they do, they cannot be sufficient to excuse our negligence, which doth not so much proceed from the want of external means, or those discouragements which are without us, as from the secret corruptions that lie lurking within us. Which if they were thoroughly mortified, and our hearts inflamed with fervent zeal and true devotion, we would not be moved by these public defects and discouragements, to neglect the private duties of God's service; yea, rather we would use them with more diligence, as being, through want of the other, pressed upon us with a greater necessity. For he that hath no friends or parents to look unto him, or such as greatly care not whether he feed upon wholesome food, or famish for want of bread, findeth that he is the more bound hereby to provide for himself. Whereas contrariwise, these corruptions which make us neglect the duties of God's service, still remaining in us, and quenching in our hearts all zeal and devotion, would make us alike cold and negligent in our private exercises of Religion, although the public means which we enjoyed were never so excellent. Of the former, we have an example in David, who when he lived in the barren wilderness, had his soul so watered with the dew of God's grace, that it never brought forth more and better fruits of holiness; and so inflamed with the fire of God's Spirit, that he was never more devout in religious exercises, nor more zealous in the private duties of God's service, though being banished and exiled from the Tabernacle and the public place of God's worship, he was withal deprived of the ordinary means of his salvation. And the like we see in the example of the persecuted Martyrs, who never were more fervent in their private devotions, then when they durst not show themselves in open assemblies, but hid their heads from their pursuers in secret corners and solitary places. And of many others in our own times, who being necessarily debarred of all public helps, and discountenanced and discouraged in their godly courses, by those which should be their guides and leaders, yet being inwardly furnished with saving graces, do outwardly exercise them in all

religious and holy duties. For howsoever the public Ministry is the ordinary means to begin, as also to preserve and increase God's graces in us, and to give unto us not only birth and spiritual life, but also growth and strength, whereby we are enabled unto all duties of a godly life; so that whosoever neglect it, when they may have it, can never look to thrive in grace, or to have any ability to serve God in any acceptable manner, because they despise his holy Ordinances, fancying unto themselves a life which needeth no nourishment; yet we must hold it to be but a means and instrument, whereby God, who is the supreme cause and chief Agent, is pleased ordinarily to work, but yet when he depriveth us of them, can effect his own good work of grace and sanctification, either without them, or when they are weak and insufficient, as well as with them, and when they are most excellent and in greatest plenty. Of the other we have an example in Judas, who being full of inward corruption, could not thrive, no, not under Christ's own Ministry, and Demas, Ananias and Sapphira under the Ministry of the Apostles, who performed no acceptable service unto God by all these helps, because their hearts were not sincere and upright, but still remained carnal and defiled with worldly love. Yea, we may have experience of it in many unthriving Christians of these times, who though they live under a most powerful and excellent Ministry, and abound in all the spiritual means of grace and salvation, yet remain as worldly and carnal, as averse and backward unto all duties of a godly life, as those who are utterly destitute of them.

Sect. 6 - Their objection answered, who pretend, that it is not safe to be more forward than other men.

Finally, men misled by carnal corruption, are ready to excuse themselves, for not entering into the course of Christianity, though their judgments are convinced of this truth, that it is above all others most excellent, profitable and necessary, by objecting, that it is neither good nor safe to make greater profession than other men, or

to be more strict in our lives, then ordinary Christians; because we are not sure that we shall be able to hold out in our sincerity, and holy practice, and if we should relapse, our latter end would be worse then our beginning. Neither can we tell, in respect of human frailty, whether we may not fall into some grievous and heinous sins, or at least such as are contrary to our strict profession; which if we do, our faults will be more observed in us, though they would be little regarded in ordinary men, and more bitterly censured and condemned; yea, we ourselves shall be a wonderment to all that know us, and both shame ourselves and our profession. To which I answer, first, that none can make any greater profession of strict performing all Christian duties, then that which we all make at our Baptism, when we enter into covenant with God, that we will renounce the service of sin and Satan, the world and our own sinful lusts, and betake ourselves wholly to the service of God, in all duties of holiness and righteousness. Which if we do not all still make, and renew upon all occasions, what do we but disgrace ourselves, by casting off our Lord's livery, denying and renouncing our promise and profession, and returning into the ancient servitude of sin and Satan? Yea, what do we else but daily play the hypocrites, when as praying that we may do God's will in earth, in that purity and perfection, which the Saints and holy Angels do it in heaven, and that we may serve God in holiness, righteousness and sobriety all the days of our lives, we are notwithstanding so far from desiring, or going about it, that we are ashamed to profess that we have any such meaning? Secondly, I answer, that we are all bound, one as well as another, to make this profession of holiness and sincerity; neither is it left unto us as a thing arbitrary, and at our own choice, but expressly commanded and enjoined, that we should glorify God, by professing ourselves his servants, and living according to this profession, which none refuseth to do, but such as are destitute of a lively Faith, whereby we are assured, that God is in Christ our gracious Lord and Father, and we his servants and people; for as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; According to that of David, I believed, therefore have I spoken. Thirdly, I answer, that fear of

falling away, or of being overtaken with some gross sins, must not hinder our profession and practice of piety; but rather this profession and practice must therefore be undertaken, that we may hereby be moved more carefully to use all good means of persevering in all grace and godliness, and to observe our ways with greater diligence, and make straight steps unto our feet, that we do not slip, nor halt, nor turn aside out of the way. And if we with these minds take upon us the profession of Christianity, and endeavor to bring forth the fruits of it in our holy practice, the Lord, who hath begun this good work in us, will also finish it; he will uphold us that we shall not greatly fall; or if we do, yet he will not suffer us to lie still and perish, but will so assist us with his grace and holy Spirit, that we shall rise again by unfeigned repentance. In the meantime no man hath just cause to wonder, if we fall through infirmity, though it be into some greater sins then many commit, who make little or no profession at all; if either he consider human frailty common to all, the relics of corruption remaining still in us after regeneration, and the combat which thence ariseth between the flesh and the Spirit; that, sometime prevailing, and this again getteth the upper hand; the malice of the devil, who most fiercely assaulteth with his temptations, those who have renounced his service, and in whom the Image of God most clearly shineth; or else the examples of the Saints in former ages, who have been subject to like frailties and infirmities, though they were just and upright in all their ways, and men in their ordinary and common carriage, according to God's own heart, and have been sometimes, though rarely, overtaken with gross sins, as Noah, Lot, David, Peter and the rest. And therefore it is no marvel if we, likewise have our slips and falls, yea rather, it is a great wonder, if we, who come so far short of them in grace and obedience, should stand in such slippery places where they have fallen, and be supported so with God's grace and holy Spirit, notwithstanding our greater frailty and weakness, that we may challenge all the world to accuse us of any gross sin. If indeed he who hath professed himself the child of God, and approved himself to be so, by his son-like obedience, should, like the wicked, make sin his way and trade, defend it when he is reproved, and continue in it without repentance, this were a matter

of deserved wonder; but not so, if walking constantly in the ways of Godliness, they sometimes slip and get a fall, especially when they plainly show by their sorrow ensuing, that they are not pleased with their sin, but having done the evil which they hated in the inner man, do not continue in it, but rise out of it by unfeigned repentance. But suppose for all this, that professing sincerity, we shall be wondered at of the world, if we happen to fall into any open and scandalous sin; It is not better that with the godly we should be wondered at for doing evil, then that with wicked men our good actions should cause wonder. For though it be our shame to sin, and thereby to expose ourselves to wonderment; yet this wondering itself, is rather a grace then a blemish unto us; seeing men wonder not at matters common and ordinary, but at such only as rarely happen. We wonder not at profane rakehells, when they break their word, lie, swear and deal unjustly; but to see one that is reputed just and honest to do thus at any time, doth make all that know them, to marvel at it; and the reason is, because it is common and ordinary in the one, but very rare and a thing seldom or never before seen in the other. And yet there is no man that is not graceless and desperate, who would not rather choose so to carry himself, as that he may be reputed an honest man, though his faults are more observed and wondered at, then so as to gain the reproach of a wicked person, although their faults being ordinary, are little observed and less marveled at. Though every man wonder, when he seeth a botching piece of work to come out of the hands of a cunning and curious artisan, and marveleth nothing at all, if he should see such an one or worse come out of the hands of a bungler; yet everyone desireth rather to be a skillful workman, and to be so reputed, then a bungling botcher. And though a spot be sooner seen in a beautiful face, then in one foul and deformed; or a blot and stain in a fine piece of Lawn or Cambric, then in some common rag, or course canvas; and a faithful servant be more wondered at, that is taken halting in some deceitful action, then when a false fellow doth so, that maketh deceitful dealing his usual trade; yet everyone preferreth beauty with some blemish, before foulness and deformity; fine cloth, though a little spotted, before filthy and worn-out rags; and a faithful servant with his

seldom slips, before a dishonest fellow, whose worst dealing raiseth no wonder, because being his ordinary custom, no man that knoweth him, expecteth better fruits from such a bramble: And so, though our profession of godliness, and endeavor to bring forth ordinary fruits of it in an holy conversation, should more expose us to be wondered at, when we fall through human frailty and infirmity; yet this should not hinder us from entering into this Christian course, seeing it is a means to make us stand more upon our credit, to restrain us from all sin, whereby we might blemish it, and to keep with David a careful watch over ourselves, that our hearts being found in God's Statutes, there may be no cause why we should be ashamed. And howsoever, when we are overtaken, our faults are more observed and marveled at, yet though our sin shameth us, this wonder at it, is rather our praise and commendation. And when we are at the worst, yet our state is better, and we preferred in God's estimate and in the opinion of all that fear him, before those who never took upon them the profession of piety, nor cared to bring forth any fruits of it in a godly life, though their faults are little observed or regarded, and not (like the others) matter of table-talk, because no man thinketh them to be any news.

Sect. 7 - That the duties of a godly life must not be delayed.

The last objection which the flesh maketh, is, that it is yet too soon to enter into this strict course of a godly life; seeing howsoever it may be necessary in due time and place to do it, yet the present time of our youth and strength is not fit for such austerity. It cannot be denied, but that God must be religiously served, but all in good time; we have the day before us, and shall have leisure enough to serve ourselves and God too. After we have better settled our worldly estate, and attained unto such a proportion of wealth for our own maintenance and those that belong unto us, or have delighted ourselves with such and such pleasures, then it will be more seasonable to sequester ourselves from the world, and to betake

ourselves unto our devotions. And thus, when the flesh cannot any longer hide from us the profit and necessity of leading a godly life, then it moveth us to make delays, and to post it off from time to time, till at last we be prevented with unexpected death, and so perish in our sins. Of this Augustine propoundeth himself as an example: As no man (saith he) is so sluggish, that will in his judgment prefer perpetual sleeping before waking, and going about his business, but yet when sloth hath seized upon his members, deferreth to shake it off, though it be high time that he should rise: so I thought it better to yield myself rather to thy love, then mine own lust; but that pleased and overcame me; this liked me and held me captive. For I had nothing to answer, when thou saidst unto me; Arise, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light, being convinced with the truth, but only the words of the slothful and sleepy: Anon, behold by and by, let me alone yet a little. But a little and a little exceeded all measure: and, Let me alone a little, grew out to a great length. For the answering of which objection, let us know, that the service of God in the duties of a godly life, is a matter of greatest moment, profit and necessity; and therefore that it is great folly to put it off with delays, seeing all our life is too little for it. For if God is so bountiful and rich in mercy, that he is content to reward our temporary and momentary service, with the eternal wages of heavenly happiness, how ungrateful are we, if we think that the short time of our lives is too much to be spent in his service, who will reward our soon ending works, with everlasting wages? Let us consider, that seeing the service of God is of greatest worth and excellency, most profitable and only necessary; it is therefore ridiculous folly, not to give it precedency and the first place, but to prefer before it every base trifle; yea, things not only of no value, but also such as are hurtful and pernicious, as the service of Satan, the world, and our own lusts, for the contemptible wages of earthly vanities. Let us remember, that we have only the time present for our employment: for the time past is irrevocable, and the time to come uncertain, which if we promise unto ourselves, we encroach upon God's right, seeing he hath given unto us no promise of it, and sin presumptuously, by taking upon us to dispose of that which is only in

the hand of God. That now is the acceptable time and day of salvation, and we do not know whether it will last till tomorrow, which if it be once past, can never be recovered. And therefore whilst it is called today, let us hearken unto his voice, calling us to repentance, and inviting us to serve him, and not harden our hearts: Let us seek the Lord whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is nigh; for if he depart in displeasure, we may long seek him with the Spouse in the Canticles, ere we shall find him. Let us consider, that the leading of a godly life is necessary to salvation, for that time which remaineth after our calling. For as the Apostle saith, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And what madness then is it, to cast a thing of such moment upon all uncertainties? For it is uncertain whether thou shalt live one day longer; if thou livest, uncertain whether thou shalt have the means whereby thou mayest be enabled for God's service, and uncertain if thou hast them, whether God will give thee will to use them, or power to profit by them, for the obtaining of spiritual life and strength, whereby thou mayest be enabled to serve him, seeing he may justly refuse to be served by thee in thy decrepit age, when thou hast no strength to serve the devil, the world, and thine own lusts, because thou hast refused to do it in thy flourishing youth, and chief strength. To which purpose one saith, When the wicked man will, he cannot, because when he could, he would not: and so by an ill will, he loseth the power of well-doing. But thou wilt object, as he of whom Chrysostom speaketh; That God hath given many this privilege, to confess him in old age. To which I answer with him: What then? Will he therefore give it thee? Thou wilt say, Perhaps he will? Why sayest thou perhaps? Doth it but sometime happen? Consider, that the matter in deliberation, is the salvation or damnation of thy soul. And therefore think with thyself of the contrary, and say; But what if God will not give it? Doest thou yet say, And what if he will give it? God grant he may. But sure for all that, to lay hold on the time present, is both more certain and more profitable. For if thou now beginnest, thou art sure to get all that thou desirest, whether God grant or deny the former privilege; whereas if thou delayest, even for this, oftentimes thou shalt not receive it. When thou goest to the wars, thou doest not

say, There is no need for me to dispose of mine estate; perhaps I shall return. Neither doest thou say, when thou doest deliberate of marriage; I will choose a poor wife; for many in so doing have grown rich beyond all hope. And going about to build a house, thou doest not say, I will lay a rotten foundation; for many houses have stood, though their foundations have been weak. And yet when thou hast to deal about the salvation of thy soul, thou layest hold on things more rotten, and puttest all upon uncertainties, saying, It often happeneth, it sometimes cometh to pass. It is indeed uncertain, wilt thou say, but I trust to God's mercy, for he is gracious. This I know and acknowledge; but know this also, that this merciful God hath suddenly taken away, when they least expected it, such as thou art, who have posted him off with vain delays. And what though much time be granted thee? How art thou sure that thou shalt amend and become better, &c? For how doest thou think that God will then assist thee, seeing thou hast so often refused his help, when he hath graciously offered it? Or how canst thou hope of any ability without it? Now thou canst not walk in the ways of godliness; and how wilt thou be able to do it hereafter, when thou art more enthralled unto Satan, more loaded with the intolerable weight of thy multiplied sins, more clogged and hampered, fettered and hindered with the strong chains of thy corruptions, which are grown habitual, and have doubled their force with long custom? Finally, when as thou art more impotent to shake them off, and mortify them, by reason of the infirmities of old age? Yet say, thou couldest then serve God in all Christian duties: yet how much time in the mean while hast thou mis-spent, not only without gain, but to thy incomparable loss, which if it had been employed in God's service, would have added much inestimable riches to the everlasting recompense of heavenly rewards? And therefore when as God requireth at our hands that present service which is due unto him, let us not put him off, like bankrupts and ill debtors, with words and promises, that we will pay all hereafter, seeing the longer we live, the more we spend on the stock, and less able we shall be to make satisfaction. But seeing he requireth present and constant service, not because he needeth it, but that he may take occasion thereby of crowning our works with

richer rewards; let us not be so great enemies to our own preferment, as by deferring and scanting our work, to cause the Lord to abate our wages; but laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us (as the Apostle exhorteth) run with patience the race which is set before us.

Sect. 8 - The Conclusion of the whole Treatise.

And thus have I, through the gracious assistance of God's holy Spirit, finished this long work, for which his blessed Name be praised and magnified; And have not only described the godly life, in all the parts and branches thereof, and the special duties required unto it, but also the means both public and private, whereby we may be enabled, and the arguments and reasons whereby we may be moved and persuaded to perform them, and likewise have showed the greatest and most usual lets and impediments, whereby men are commonly hindered from entering into, and proceeding in the ways of godliness, and how also we may remove and overcome them. And now nothing remaineth, but that I entreat thee (Christian Reader) by the mercies of God, and as thou tenderest his glory, and the eternal salvation of thine own soul, that thou wilt resolve and endeavor to walk in this alone way that leadeth to heavenly happiness, now that he hath so plainly discovered it unto thee. For much better were it for thee never to have known the way of truth and godliness, then after thou knowest it, not to walk in it; seeing the servant that knoweth his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Heretofore thy ignorance might somewhat extenuate thy sin, and neglect of God's service in the duties of a godly life, and mitigate also thy punishment, because thou mightest pretend thy willingness to walk in this way, but that thou diddest want a guide to go before thee: But now this pretense is taken away, and thou quite left without all excuse. For what can the Lord by his Ministers do more for the salvation of thy precious soul, then to show thee the way that leadeth to eternal blessedness, and to teach thee how thou mayest walk in it;

to make known unto thee what thou must do that thou mayest be saved, and the means also whereby thou mayest be enabled to do it? To exhort and persuade thee, by effectual reasons, to use these means, that so thou mayest walk in this way, and to teach thee how to remove all those impediments which might otherwise hinder and discourage thee in thy course? O let not therefore his so great grace be unto thee, not only in vain, but also to thy loss. Let nor, O let not these my poor, yet painful labors, which I have undertaken with cheerfulness, proceeded in with comfort, and finished with joy, that I might glorify God in thy salvation, rise up as a witness against thee at that great Day, because thou hast only read them, and after cast them into some corner, without further use. If thou knowest these things, blessed art thou, if thou doest them. And happy, yea thrice happy shall I think myself, if being furthered by my poor means in the ways of salvation, thou mayest be my crown and my rejoicing. Frustrate not (I beseech thee) the main end of my painful labors, so much desired, so often and earnestly begged, and defraud me not of my hope and joy, and therewith thyself also of thine own salvation. It is not my writing, nor thy reading, that can save our souls in that great Day of the Lord, but the holy practice of those duties which I teach, and thou learnest, in the whole course of our lives and conversations, which because we are unable to perform in our own strength, but it is the Lord only which enableth us, both to will, and to do, let us (I entreat thee) pray one for another, desiring of the Lord, that we may not only be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, but also that in this light we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. And that we may not only be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works; but also that we may be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know, that our labor is not vain in the Lord. But man knoweth not his own ways, neither is it in man that walketh, to direct his steps; and how much less is he able in his own strength to be a guide unto others, or by his most powerful persuasions to

move them to accompany him in the ways of godliness? O thou therefore who art the Author of light and life, and the rich Fountain of all grace and glory, as thou hast graciously enlightened my mind with the knowledge of thy will, and enabled me also to reveal it unto others, so inflame mine heart with the beauty and brightness of it, that I may love and embrace it; kindle in me, more and more, holy desires; confirm my resolutions, and strengthen all my good endeavors, that as I have taught thy ways unto others, so I myself may walk constantly in them, that so I may shine before them, both in the light of doctrine, and also of a good and holy example, in the whole course of my life and conversation. Join also, I humbly beseech thee, with these my poor labors, which I have wholly devoted to thy glory, and the good of my brethren, the inward assistance of thy grace and holy Spirit, and thereby add such power and efficacy, virtue and vigor unto them, that they may not only reveal the way of salvation to the understanding of the Christian Readers, but may also effectually move and persuade them to walk in it sincerely and uprightly, constantly and continually, unto the very end of their lives; to the glory of thy great Name, and the comfort and salvation of all our souls, through thine only Son, and our blessed Savior Jesus Christ: to whom with thee and thy most holy Spirit, three persons, and one only true God, most wise, glorious, gracious and blessed, be ascribed of us, and thy whole Church, all glory, and praise, might, Majesty and dominion, both now and evermore. Amen.

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER

I. A paraphrase upon the Lord's Prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our gracious Father, we thy poor children by adoption and grace,

here acknowledge, that we are utterly unworthy to be counted in the number of thy meanest servants, and much less deserve that high title and privilege to be called thy sons and children. For we have not demeaned ourselves as it becometh children of such a Father, in all love, reverence, and obedience, nor approved ourselves to be like unto thee, in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness. We have abased ourselves, to do service unto sin and Satan, for the trifling wages of worldly vanities; never considering that we are the children of such a glorious Father, and heirs to such a heavenly inheritance. We do not like children securely rest upon thy fatherly providence, and cannot with boldness approach to the Throne of Grace, to make our suits known unto thee, by reason of our self-guiltiness and ill deserving, though thou art gracious and ready always through Christ, to hear and help us. We have not duly feared thee, though thou art our heavenly Father, full of Majesty and power, neither have we been afraid to sin against thee, though we stand always in thy presence, who art able to cast body and soul into hell We have not glorified thy holy Name, by renouncing impiety and worldly lusts, and consecrating ourselves wholly to thy worship and service, but have served sin and Satan, for the base hire of worldly vanities. We have not glorified thee in thy mercies by our unfeigned thankfulness, nor have been encouraged by thy liberal wages, to perform unto thee diligent and cheerful service, but have abused thy good gifts to thy dishonor, and have set our minds and hearts more upon them, then upon thee who hast graciously bestowed them upon us. We have not sanctified thee in thy Judgments, by humbling ourselves under thy hand, nor have profited by thy fatherly corrections for the amendment of our lives, and turning unto thee from our sins by unfeigned repentance. We have not suffered thee to reign and rule in our hearts and consciences by the Scepter of thy Word and holy Spirit, but have often grieved it, by resisting and quenching the good motions thereof, and by subjecting ourselves to be governed by our own lusts. We have not behaved ourselves as it became subjects of thy Kingdom, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living holily, righteously, and soberly in this present world. We have not denied ourselves and our own wills and affections, which are

opposite to thy holy will, nor endeavored as we ought, to perform unto thee in all things, that absolute obedience which is due unto thee our Creator and Redeemer. We have not obeyed thee cheerfully and with delight, readily and without delays, sincerely and constantly, but have divided ourselves between thee and the world, and have served thee but by fits and flashes. We have not in all things submitted ourselves unto thy good pleasure, but have murmured against thy providence, when we have been crossed in our desires. We have not restrained and mortified our carnal and worldly lusts of ambition, covetousness, and voluptuousness, but have immoderately desired, and set our hearts too much upon earthly and momentary things. We have more hungered after the meat which perisheth, then after spiritual food which endures unto life everlasting. We have not contented ourselves with that portion which thou hast allotted unto us, nor cast all our care upon thee for all things needful, but have turmoiled ourselves with carking care, and trusted too much unto our own providence. We have not so earnestly desired to be freed from the corruption and pollution of our sins, as from the guilt and punishment, and have been more ready to have them pardoned, then to leave and forsake them. We have not labored after the fruits of sanctification, to be assured thereby that we are justified and reconciled, or content ourselves with a small measure, and thereby weaken our assurance. We are not pressed with our sins, as with a heavy burden, nor have (as we ought) seriously bewailed them, nor earnestly desired to be eased of them. We do not carefully keep our watch, that we be not again surprised by sin, and so are apt to relapse again into the same sins, after we have repented of them, and received pardon. We are negligent in the use of the means whereby we might be assured of the remission of our sins, neither do we sincerely and from the bottom of our hearts remit injuries, but in profession and show, forgiving, but not forgetting them. We do not approve our sincerity in remitting injuries, by our readiness to perform all good duties to those who have offended us, and by overcoming evil with goodness. We are too apt to take notice of every injury, and do not pass by offenses, approving our wisdom, by our slowness to anger; and our love, by covering a multitude of sins, but

are apt to retain anger, and to seek revenge when we are wronged. We do not as we should, resist the temptations of the flesh, world, and devil, but though we pray against them, yet upon every slight occasion we run into them, and are easily enticed to fall into sin, and to forfeit that liberty which Christ hath purchased for us. We live securely, as if we were free from all danger of enemies, and do not duly consider their malice and subtlety, our own weakness, and their power, that we might be moved hereby to pray with more fervency to be freed from temptations, or for thy assistance, that we might overcome them, and be delivered from all evil: whereof it cometh to pass that we are often foiled by them, and led captive unto sin. We are not daily prepared against the time of temptation, nor keep the Christian Armor fast buckled unto us, that we might be able to resist our enemies. We do not watchfully avoid the occasions of evil, nor carefully observe our hearts and senses, keeping them under Covenant, that they may not rove after worldly vanities, which are the usual occasions whereby we are plunged into all evil. But we beseech thee, good Lord, to be gracious unto us, in the forgiveness of all our sins, and wash them away in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, that they may never be imputed unto us, nor bring upon us that wrath which they have deserved. Yea, Lord, we beseech thee for Christ's sake, not only free us from deserved punishments, but being reconciled unto us in thy Son, multiply thy favors and blessings upon us in all things pertaining to grace and godliness, glory and happiness.

Persuade us by thy Spirit and a lively faith, that thou art in Christ, our Father, and we thy children by adoption and grace. Let us ever love and fear thee, as our gracious Father, perform unto thee the obedience of children, and labor to resemble thee in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness, that so we may walk worthy this high calling whereunto thou hast called us. Let us demean ourselves as Pilgrims on earth, and have our conversation in heaven, where our inheritance is, minding and affecting things above, where Christ sitteth at thy right hand. Let us wholly rely upon thy fatherly providence, who art both able and willing to help us, and let us with

boldness and confidence have recourse unto thee in all our wants, and with assurance that thou wilt graciously hear and help us. Let us in our judgments esteem, in our hearts desire, and in all our actions seek thy glory above all things, and let it ever be more dear unto us than our own salvation. Let us give glory to thy Name, in all our thoughts, words, and actions, and not only do it ourselves, but also give just occasion to others of glorifying thee. Let us sanctify thee, both in thy mercies and judgments, towards ourselves or others; let thy rich wages make us more faithful and cheerful in thy service, and thy fatherly corrections more fearful to displease thee. Remove all impediments of thy glory, and advance the means whereby it is advanced. Advance thy Kingdom universally over all; rule over thine enemies, and subject all things unto thy government, that nothing may resist thy power. Rule over thine own servants and Church after a special manner, in protecting and preserving them, and let them, like dutiful subjects, yield obedience unto thee their Sovereign in all things. Make us in this life true members of the Kingdom of grace, that afterwards we may be triumphant members of the Kingdom of glory. Rule in our hearts effectually by thy Word and Spirit; work in us thine own good work of grace; make us Citizens of the Saints, and meet to be partakers of thy Kingdom of glory. Pull us more and more out of the kingdom of Satan, in which we naturally are subjects, and let him no longer reign and rule in our hearts and minds to our perdition. Let us no longer be ruled by the lawless law of sin, neither let it reign in our mortal bodies, by making our members the instruments of it; but be thou our King, and rule in our hearts by thy Word and Spirit. Erect the Kingdom of grace, where it is not yet begun; continue and increase it amongst us, where it is established; bless the means whereby it is furthered, and remove the impediments which hinder it. Free us from the remnants of the kingdom of darkness, from our sins and corruptions, lusts and concupiscence's. Let us not yield to the temptations of Satan, the world, and our own flesh, but give us victory over them. Let us first seek thy Kingdom and righteousness, and let us endeavor to be members of the Kingdom of grace, that afterwards we may be members of the Kingdom of glory. Let thy Kingdom of glory also

come; hasten the coming of Christ to Judgment; to this end, accomplish the number of thine Elect, and subdue thine enemies under thy feet. Let us so live always, as if we were ready to meet Jesus Christ, and let us labor to be ever such, as we desire to appear before his Judgment seat, that so when he cometh, we may not depart from him ashamed. Let it appear, O Lord, that thou reignest in our hearts by our humble subjection and submission in all things unto thy most holy will; let us see and bewail our imperfect obedience, and daily labor after more perfection. Give us grace to deny ourselves, and our own wills and affections, which are opposite to thy will, and let us labor to perform absolute obedience unto thee in all things. Arm us with patience in all our afflictions, that we may say with Christ, Not my will, O Father, but thine be done. Let us seriously desire that thy will may be done concerning us, and let us not grieve when we see it done, because it crosseth our wills. Let us not content ourselves with a bare outward obedience, but let us do thy will after a spiritual manner, as the Angels do it in heaven, with sincerity and uprightness of heart, with alacrity and cheerfulness, with readiness and speed without delay. Let us do thy will fully, and not by halves; constantly, and not by fits; faithfully and humbly, not assuming any glory to ourselves, but yielding it wholly unto thee. Let all our suites which concern ourselves, be referred to thy glory as their main end. Give us temporal benefits, so far forth as they serve for thy glory and our spiritual good.

Teach us to moderate our desires, and not to covet after superfluities, seeing thou hast taught us to ask for bread, and not for dainties. Let us be contented with our allowance, if we have but necessaries, as food and raiment, yea, bread to sustain our lives; and if thou givest us more, make us thankful unto thee for it. Let us have a true desire and care to get our goods by good and lawful means, that we may be assured that we eat our own bread, and that it is given us of thee. Let us walk diligently in our lawful callings, that we may eat the labors of our own hands, and working with quietness that which is good, let us eat our own bread. Let us not set our hearts and desires upon the things of this life, nor covet other men's goods, but be contented with

our own portion which in thy wise providence thou hast allotted unto us. Let us have a moderate care to provide that which is convenient, that we may not be burthensome, but rather helpful unto others, and let us neither be careless and negligent, nor turmoil ourselves with carking care to hoard up for many years. Let us depend upon thy blessing in the use of good means for the obtaining of our desires, and expect it upon the things themselves when we have obtained them, and let us sanctify all thy blessings to our use, by the Word, Prayer, and Thanksgiving. Let us not trust in our own provision, but in thee; and casting all our care upon thee, let us in all our wants fly unto thee for supply. Give us things necessary, not only for our nature, but also for our states and callings, places and persons. Give us with thy blessings their right use, and give them virtue and strength to sustain and nourish us. Let us, when we want these blessings, beg them from thee, and when we have received them, return thee thanks. Inflamm our hearts with love towards our brethren, and let us not, through covetousness and self-love, seek only our own good, but let us seek the common good of our brethren, and pray for it as well as for our own. Let us know and acknowledge our frailty and mortality, who need to be daily sustained by thee, and let this make us like children, to resort daily unto thee our heavenly Father, craving from thee all things needful. Let us not be distrustfully careful for the time to come, but ever depend upon thy Fatherly providence, being assured that thou who hast provided for us today, wilt provide for us tomorrow. Let us lay up goods to good ends, not only that we may have to supply our wants, and to provide for our families, but also to relieve the necessities of others. Let us not be so addicted to the commodities of this life, but that withal, we do most principally labor for Spiritual graces, and things pertaining to a better life. Let us as much desire to be freed from the corruption of sin, as the guilt and punishment, and as we crave the forgiveness of our sins, so let us earnestly labor to forsake them. Remit and pardon all our sins, and to this end give us a lively Faith to apply Christ for our justification. Let us pray for remission, not only with fervency, but also with Faith, steadfastly believing that thou wilt pardon them, and seal this assurance in our hearts by thy good

Spirit. Let us see our sins, and heartily bewail them, and be truly grieved because they no more grieve us. Let us after reconciliation desire and endeavor in all things to please thee, and choose rather to displease ourselves and all the world, then thy Majesty. Let us confirm our Faith in the assurance of pardon, by forgiving those who have trespassed against us, and that not in show only, but in truth and sincerity. Let us not only forgive injuries, but also forget them, and approve our sincerity in remitting, by our readiness to perform all good duties unto them, that we may overcome evil with goodness. Let us pass by offenses, and show our wisdom in our slowness to Anger and Revenge. Let us do good to those that hurt us, and pray for those that persecute us.

Give unto us not only the grace of Justification, and the Remission of our sins, but also of Sanctification, and the spirit of fortitude, whereby we may mortify sin, and be enabled to resist the temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil. Let us not, when we are washed with the blood of Christ, and freed from the guilt and curse of sin, defile ourselves again, nor be entangled in the yoke of bondage, but let us stand fast in the liberty which Christ hath purchased for us. Let us not abuse our liberty as an occasion to the flesh, and because we are freed from sin, sin the more freely; but being delivered out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, let us worship and serve thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness before thee all the days of our lives. Let us continually watch and pray, that we do not enter into temptations, seeing our spiritual enemies are ever most busy and malicious in assaulting those, whom thou hast pulled out of the kingdom of darkness, and made subjects of thy Kingdom, and servants of thy family. Let us consider our own weakness, and our enemies power, and let this move us with more fervency to crave thy help and assistance. Establish us (O Lord) by thy free Spirit, and so strengthen us with thy wisdom and power, that we may be able to stand against the artificial and cunning temptations of the devil. Do not give us over to the Tempter, nor leave us to ourselves, but with the temptation give a happy issue, that we may have the upper hand, and be preserved from all evil. We

crave not to be freed from temptation, but that we may not be tempted above our power; Yea, try us, O Lord, as much as thou wilt, so that being tried, we may be found approved. Let us quench the fiery darts of the devil with the shield of Faith, and not admit of his suggestions, but nip them in the head, when they are first offered unto us. Lead us not (O Lord) into temptation; give us not over to our own lusts, to be hardened with the deceitfulness of sin, nor to the world, to be carried away with the desires thereof, nor to the devil, to be overcome with his temptations, and to be carried away captive to do his will. Let those weakness which we discern in temptation, make us to rest more entirely upon thy power. Let us in the sight of them be truly humbled; turn them to our good, and make us more careful in the use of all good means to attain unto more strength. Let us not fall away in the time of temptation, but enable us to withstand our enemies in the evil day; and having finished the fight, let us stand fast, and be kept by thy power through faith unto salvation. Let us always be prepared for the day of battle, and put on thy whole armor, that we may be enabled to resist our enemies. Let us not tempt thee by running into temptation, and expose ourselves to Satan's baits and snares, before they be offered unto us. Let all our trials and temptations tend to our good, and the more enrich us with Spiritual graces, and so further our everlasting salvation. Do not (O Lord) punish in us one sin, by giving us over to another, neither leave us to our own lusts, to the hardness of our hearts, or to a reprobate mind, to commit sin with greediness. Give us thy sanctifying Spirit, and enable us thereby not only to fight against the flesh, but also to subdue and mortify our earthly members, our inordinate affections and evil concupiscence. Renew us by thy Spirit, that we may no longer be carnal, but Spiritual, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Let us not be carried away with the world, or overcome with the temptations, either on the right hand, or on the left: But let us overcome the world by Faith.

Give us the Spirit of Wisdom to preserve us, that we be not ensnared with worldly wiles; keep us from being corrupted with rotten speeches, and the enticements and ill counsels of the wicked; let us

not stumble at their scandals and offenses, nor be misled by their evil ensamples, preserve us from the contagion of their company, and let us not be conformed to their fashions, but notwithstanding all their temptations, let us constantly persevere in the course of holiness and righteousness. Give us grace to renounce all worldly lusts, ambition, covetousness and voluptuousness. Wean our hearts from earthly vanities, and let us use the world as not abusing it. Crucify us to the world, and the world unto us, and let us live as pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, and Citizens of heaven. Let us mind heavenly things, and condemn the things of the world as mere vanities, in comparison of Spiritual graces and heavenly glory. Let us not be overcome with worldly afflictions, but either in whole or in part release us of them; or else arm us with patience, that we may bear them and endure temptation, that so being approved, we may receive the Crown of life. Tread down Satan under our feet, show thy power in our weakness, and glorify thy Name in our victory. Perfect the work of our Sanctification and Redemption which is begun in this life; and not only free us in part from our corruptions, but conform us wholly to the glorious Image of thy Son. Deliver us from every evil thing, and preserve us unblameable to thy heavenly Kingdom. Let us shake off security, and be vigilant and watchful, and let us above all observations look to our hearts. Let us keep a narrow watch over our tongues and senses, let us make a covenant with our eyes, and turn them away from beholding vanities. Let us long after our full deliverance, and final victory over our spiritual enemies; and seeing we shall not absolutely be freed from sin, and perfectly sanctified in this life, let us earnestly desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, that so being fully delivered from the body of this death, we may perform unto thee such perfect service as thou requirest. Confirm our Faith in this assurance, that thou wilt hear our prayers, and grant our requests, seeing thine is the Kingdom, whereby thou hast right to give whatsoever we desire, thine is the power and might, whereby thou art able to grant our requests, and thine also is the glory both of giving all good things, and also of all good things given; and therefore thou wilt be willing to hear our suits, seeing they tend to the advancement of thy glory. And so (Lord) we ascribe unto thee

universal Kingdom, whereby thou rulest and governest all things, and acknowledge thy wisdom, power and providence, to thy praise in disposing of them at thy pleasure: we acknowledge and ascribe unto thee the glory of being our King, who preservest and defendest us, rulest and governest us with the Scepter of thy Word and holy Spirit. We ascribe unto thee all power, whereby thou art able to do whatsoever thou wilt, and magnify thy Name for keeping and ruling us with this power unto salvation. We render unto thee all glory, and the deserved praise of all thy goodness, magnifying thee according to the multitude of thy mercies, and the excellency of thy gifts, wherewith thou hast enriched us; desiring that we may ascribe all the good we have done, or can do, to thy glory, as being the supreme end of all things. And this thy Kingdom, Power and Glory, we do not limit with the longest time, but ascribe them unto thee from everlasting, to everlasting, even as thou thyself art without beginning or ending. And thus, holy and heavenly Father, we testify our faith, and the truth of our desires, by saying Amen, and give the assent of our hearts to the words of our mouths in all our petitions; believing that thou in thy good time wilt grant all our suites which we have made according to thy will, as shall best stand with thy Glory, and our salvation; in which persuasion we conclude our prayers, and attend thy leisure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. A private Prayer for the Morning.

O Lord our God, most glorious in majesty, and omnipotent in power, who fillest heaven and earth with thy presence, and yet in a more special manner vouchsafest to dwell with those who are of a broken heart and contrite spirit, to hear and help them in all their necessities; I thy poor humble servant, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, do make bold to approach into thy glorious and dreadful presence, that I may lay open before thee my wretched estate and condition, by reason of my manifold and grievous sins, and those fearful punishments, both temporal and eternal, unto which by their

guilt they have most justly obliged me. For though thou diddest create me holy and righteous, according unto thine own Image, yet I have fallen from that state of innocence and blessedness, in the loins of my first father Adam, and by being guilty of his sin, am become also liable to his punishment. And as I am partaker of his sin by imputation, as being one of his tainted posterity, so also of the corruption of his nature by propagation, the which like a fretting leprosy, or running canker, hath wholly overspread all the powers and parts of my soul and body, utterly disabling them unto all duties of thy service, and making them the ready instruments of sin and Satan. And whereas in their creation they were fit habitations for thine own Majesty to dwell in by thy Spirit, through this natural corruption they became cages of unclean birds, yea, noisome sinks, exhaling and breathing out the loathsome sent, and poisonous vapors of carnal concupiscence and filthy lusts. Mine understanding is so darkened with ignorance, that it is naturally unacquainted with thy will and ways, and though it be wise to evil, yet unto that which is good, I have no knowledge; my carnal reason and wisdom is enmity against thee, and understandeth not the things of thy Spirit, but so foolish it is, that it judgeth them foolishness. My judgment is so corrupted, that it hath no spiritual discerning, being ready to mistake evil for good, falsehood for truth, and wrong for right. My conscience is either seared or superstitious, either senseless of sin, or scared with shadows; my mind and imaginations are only and continually evil, roving wholly after earthly things, and never minding spiritual and heavenly. My memory is become a storehouse of iniquity, with which it is so fully fraughted, that there is no room for good instructions and the rich treasures of thy saving Truth. My will is so corrupted, that it standeth in flat opposition to thine holy will, approving and choosing that which thou dislikest and condemnest, and refusing and abhorring that which thou likest and commandest. My heart is wholly turned from thee, and cleaveth to world and earthly vanities, and is full of infidelity, security and impenitency, hardened in sin, and unflexible to all good. Mine affections are wholly corrupted and disordered, loving, fearing and trusting in the creature more than in the Creator; and all the members and parts of

my body are sluggish and slothful unto all duties of thy service, but the apt and ready instruments of my sinful soul for the acting of all manner of wickedness. From which cursed fountain of original corruption, have plentifully flowed those poisonous streams of actual transgressions, whereby I have violated and broken thy whole Law in thought, word and deed. For instead of doing thy Law, I have wholly transgressed it; instead of observing the duties commanded, I have committed the vices forbidden; instead of continuing in obedience, I have continually disobeyed it, from my tender infancy to this present day. A great part of my time I have lien stark dead in trespasses and sins, not being able to think a good thought, or entertain a good desire, because both my mind and will were enslaved unto Satan in the chains of sin. And all this while my ears were deaf, mine eyes blinded, and my heart without understanding, so as I could neither hear, see, nor discern the things which concerned thy glory and mine own salvation, but utterly neglected thy many and gracious calls inviting me to thy service.

Yea, Lord, since the time that thou hast, through thy mighty power, and of thy mere grace, quickened and raised me from this death of sin, how have I, like Lazarus, come out of the grave bound hand and foot, and still so fettered and hampered with the relics of my corruptions, that I walk slowly and lamely in the ways of thy Commandments, oftentimes neglecting, upon every slight occasion, the duties of holiness and righteousness, and oftentimes performing them with such weakness and imperfection, as it is hard to say whether they were not better undone, then so done? O how often do I forget even the main end for which I live, namely, that by glorifying thee I may live eternally; and as though I were a citizen of the earth, how have I my conversation here, spending my thoughts and strength about worldly vanities which profit not, and not so much as minding spiritual and heavenly things! How slowly (alas) do I come to the duties of thy service, who art so infinitely bountiful in thy rewards! How coldly and carelessly, how dully and drowsily, how irreverently and negligently do I perform them! How soon am I weary of these holy exercises, and desire to return to my worldly

employments! How little sweetness doth my aguish taste feel in thy love, though it be better than wine, and in feeding upon thy spiritual delicacies in thy banqueting-house, thy Word and Sacraments? How little delight have I had in thy Sanctuary and Sabbaths, and how have I consecrated the least part of them as a holy Rest unto thee, and misspent the greatest part in thinking mine own thoughts, in thinking mine own words, and doing mine own works? How much and often have I abused thine holy ordinances, through my worldliness and profaneness, and after that I have long enjoyed them, how little have I profited by them? Mine heart is still full of gross infidelity, which is the cause that I am not much raised and comforted with thy sweet promises, nor dejected and humbled with thy terrible threatening's. It is full of impenitency, being unapt to mourn for sins past, or to resolve upon amendment for the time to come. It is full of carnal security, making me to apprehend no danger, when as I walk in the midst of pernicious snares, which are in every place laid in my way by my spiritual enemies, and to put the evil day far from me, when as pulling it on with my sins, it approacheth near, and is ready to seize upon me. It is much hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, custom in sinning depriving me of the sense of it. There is much spiritual pride that lieth lurking in it, which maketh me ready to arrogate the good things I have not, to overween those I have, and to attribute the praise of both unto myself, and so to rob thee of the glory of thine own gifts. Hypocrisy also still hangeth upon me, being ready, like a sly thief, to steal in, when I open the door of mine heart, to let in any grace or religious duty. I am still tainted and poisoned with carnal self-love, which maketh me oftentimes to incur spiritual hurt and damage, whilst I labor over-eagerly after worldly good, and earthly advantage. Yea as hereby I am made apt to neglect my soul, for the seeming and present good of my body, defrauding it of all dues that belong unto it; so likewise the duties of righteousness and love which I owe to my neighbors, when as they are in my partial affection over-balanced with some worldly profit, pleasure or preferment.

O that my head were a fountain of tears, that I might wash my defiled body and soul in the floods of unfeigned sorrow! O that I could mourn for my sins, as a man mourneth for his only son, and be sorry for them, as a man is sorry for the death of his first-born! O that I could look upon him whom I have pierced with bitter grief, and be thoroughly displeased with myself, because I have by my sins so much displeased thee, who hast been ever unto me so gracious a God, and so loving a Father! O that thou wouldest come down and strike my rocky heart, that out of it might flow wholesome streams of repentance! But alas, the filthy stains and deep die of my sins cannot be washed clean with these waters. It is only that Fountain which thou hast opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness, that is sufficient to purge me from my ingrained filthiness. It is those bloody streams alone which so plentifully flowed out of my crucified Savior, that can cleanse me from all my sins. And therefore (O Lord) for thy mercies sake, and for thy Christ's sake, wash my leprous body and soul in the streams of this thy Jordan. Yea (Lord) seeing they are so deeply stained with the double die of imputed and inherent, original and actual sins, that no slight and ordinary washing can purify and restore them to their created cleanness, multiply thy washings; drench and dive me thoroughly in the streams of this living Fountain, that being cleansed from my Scarlet and Crimson sins, both in respect of their guilt and punishment, I may become as white as Snow, and that no spot remaining of spiritual defilement, I may be justified when thou judgest, and stand righteous in thy sight. And together with the stain of sin, take away also the sting of conscience, and work in it sound and secure peace, by persuading me, by the infallible testimony of thy Spirit, that my sins are remitted, I reconciled through the death and satisfaction of thy Son, and that, of the child of wrath, and heir of perdition, I am now become thine own child by adoption and grace. And to this end let me find and feel it in me, not only the Spirit of Adoption persuading me of thy fatherly love, and sealing me up unto the Day of my Redemption, but also the Spirit of Sanctification, mortifying in me all my sinful corruptions, by applying unto me the virtue of Christ's death, and quickening me in the inner man, unto

holiness and newness of life, by the power and efficacy of his Resurrection. Let me put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of my mind, let me put on the new man, which, after thine own glorious Image, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Let me continually keep a narrow watch over myself, that I be not again entangled in the snares of the devil, nor circumvented and misled through the deceitfulness of my corrupt flesh, but being freed from sin, let me now become the servant of righteousness. Let me make conscience of all my ways, and shun not only open and notorious, but also secret sins, yea, all the occasions of evil, and hate even the garment which is spotted of the flesh. Let me put on daily the whole armor of God, that being weak in myself, I may be strong in thee, and in the power of thy might, and be enabled to withstand the wiles of the devil, and resist all temptations in the evil Day; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. Wean mine heart and affections more and more from the love of the world and earthly vanities, and being a pilgrim on earth, let my conversation be in heaven, from whence I expect a Savior and Redeemer.

Begin, and work in me all spiritual gifts and saving graces which yet are wanting, and daily increase and confirm those that are begun; and let me daily bring forth the fruits of them all, throughout my whole life and conversation in new obedience, laboring to perform unto thee faithful service in all my thoughts, words and deeds. Let me delight in the ways of thy Commandments, and perform all the duties of holiness, righteousness and sobriety, with all cheerfulness and inward joy. Let me daily seek thy face and favor above all things, and rejoice in nothing so much, as in the assurance of thy love, and when the light of thy countenance shineth upon me. Remove out of my way, all lets and impediments, which might hinder me in my Christian course, or so assist me with thy grace, that I may overcome them. Stablish me with thy free Spirit, that I may not only begin well, but also continue in all grace and goodness unto the very end of my life, and let me be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in

the work of the Lord. And with these my prayers and supplications, I do also join my praises and thanksgiving, lauding and magnifying thy great and glorious Name, for thine inestimable love, and the fruits and testimonies thereof showed unto me, even from before all beginnings unto this present day. For that thou hast, of thy free grace, chosen me to life and salvation, created me after thine own similitude and likeness, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness, redeemed me at so dear a price, out of the miserable bondage of my spiritual enemies, effectually called me, by the sound of the Gospel, to the knowledge of thy truth, united me unto Christ by thy Spirit and a lively faith, and made me partaker of all his benefits; for my justification by his righteousness and obedience, and for some degrees of sanctification begun in me, whereby thou hast subdued the power of sin, that though it dwelleth, yet it doth not reign in me, and hast wrought in me some desire, resolution and endeavor to serve and please thee. For that thou hast watched over me with thy providence, in the whole course of my life, and namely, this night past, and hast thereby preserved me from all perils; from the terrors of the night, and the malice of mine enemies, and hast refreshed me with quiet rest, and now raised me up in the strength thereof to do thee service.

O Lord, enlarge my heart, that I may duly consider of thy manifold and rich mercies, and be thoroughly inflamed with the apprehension of thy love. What am I (my God) that thou shouldst be thus gracious unto me, who am altogether less than the least of thy mercies, yea worthy of thy greatest punishments! O that I could love and praise thee according to thy bounty and goodness! And being so poor, that I have nothing to repay; and thou so rich, that thou neither needest, nor requirest anything else; O that I could ever remain a grateful debtor, having mine heart filled with thankfulness, and my mouth with thanksgiving! And now (Lord) I further beseech thee, to continue still my God and guide, to direct, lead and uphold me in all the ways of holiness and righteousness. Take me into thy gracious protection this day and ever, and watch so over me with thy all-ruling providence, that I may be preserved safe from all enemies,

worldly and spiritual, and from those manifold dangers which encompass me on every side. Give me grace so to spend this day, that some glory may redound unto thee by my service, some profit and benefit unto those with whom I live, and some further assurance unto myself (from the increase of saving graces discerned in me, and spiritual strength in all good duties) of my salvation and eternal happiness. Order and govern all my thoughts, that they may be religious and honest; my speeches, that they may be wise, and seasoned with grace, and all my works and actions for the well performing both of the general duties of Christianity, and the special duties of my calling, blessing so all my labors, that I may be cheered and comforted in them by my prosperous success in all my good endeavors. Supply unto me all temporal blessings, and the necessary comforts of this life, and let me live at thy finding, and receive whatsoever I enjoy, as the gifts of thine own hand, and pledges of thy love, that I may return the praise which is due unto thee for them, and use them as helps to further me in all duties of thy service. Finally, I beseech thee, good Lord, to vouchsafe these and all other benefits, not only unto me, but also to thy whole Church and every particular member thereof, especially to this in which I live. Multiply thy favors upon our Sovereign Lord the King, our noble Prince, the Prince Elector Palatine, and the Lady Elizabeth his wife, with their issue; upon the honorable Lord's of the Privy Council, the Magistrates and Ministers of thy Word and Sacraments, the afflicted members of Jesus Christ, my friends and benefactors, kindred and acquaintance, and especially upon this whole family; giving unto us all grace, that we may keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and so join together with our hearts and minds in all duties of thy service, as that we may jointly inherit that eternal happiness of thy Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with thee and thine holy Spirit, be rendered all glory and praise, might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and evermore. Amen.

III. Another private Prayer for the Morning.

O Almighty and eternal God, our most gracious and loving Father in Jesus Christ, I thy poor sinful servant, being in myself utterly unworthy to appear in thy glorious presence, do yet in the Name and mediation of Jesus Christ, offer unto thee my prayers and supplications, in obedience to thy Commandments, and in some assurance of thy gracious promises; rendering unto thee from the bottom of mine heart, all humble and hearty thanks, for thy manifold mercies and abundant blessings multiplied upon me, both in respect of spiritual and heavenly privileges, which concern my everlasting salvation, and of temporal and earthly benefits appertaining to the good of this life, and my present estate in this place of my Pilgrimage. For that thou hast freely loved me from all eternity, and of thy mere grace hast chosen me unto life and glory, without any respect of my works or worthiness. For creating me according to thine own Image, and redeeming me out of the estate of sin and death. For calling me effectually by thy Word and Spirit, and making me a servant of thine own family, and a member of Jesus Christ, whereby thou hast given me just title unto him and all his benefits. For making with me the Covenant of grace, adopting me in him to be thy child, unto a lively hope of my heavenly inheritance. For justifying me in his righteousness imputed unto me, and applied by a lively faith; and sanctifying me with thy Spirit, giving me some power over my corruptions, and some desire and endeavor to serve and please thee in the duties of a godly life. For watching over me with thy providence ever since I had my being and birth, shielding me from dangers, delivering me out of manifold evils, and providing for me all things necessary both for my soul and body. For preserving me this night past from all perils, giving unto me quiet rest, and bringing me in safety to see the light, adding yet another day to my life, that therein I may do thee service, and use all good means for the furthering and assuring of my salvation.

O Lord, give me a true sense and feeling of thy love, that I may love thee again, and a lively apprehension and taste of thy rich mercy and goodness, that mine heart and voice may return unto thee the praises that are due. Yea, so much the more, O Lord, increase my

thankfulness, by how much the less worthy I am of the least of thy mercies, by reason of my manifold and grievous sins. For I confess unfeignedly that miserable estate in which I am by nature; both in respect of my original corruption in which I was conceived and born, whereby all the powers and faculties of my body and soul have been wholly defiled, and utterly disabled unto all duties of thy service, for which I was created; and that I have made myself much more miserable, by adding hereunto actual transgressions, whereby I have broken all and every of thy Commandments, in thought, word, and deed, both by omitting the duties which thou hast commanded, and committing the contrary vices and sins which thou hast forbidden; the which, as they are for the quality of them heinous, so do they in number exceed the hairs of mine head and the stars of heaven. Yea, Lord, I have not only thus sinned against thee in the days of my ignorance, when as I neither had any knowledge of thee and of thy will, nor so much as any desire to serve and please thee, but even since the time that thou hast called me to the knowledge of thy Truth, and by the good motions of thy Spirit, hast persuaded me to embrace, profess, and practice it; since thou hast allured me by thy gracious promises to serve thee, and hast encouraged me hereunto by innumerable blessings, and large testimonies of thy favor, I have often sinned against thee through frailty and infirmity, and not seldom against my knowledge and conscience. Oftentimes I have neglected thy service, to serve in the mean while mine own sinful lusts; and when I have undertaken it, I have performed it oftentimes after a cold and formal manner, with much weakness and weariness, uncheerfulness, and deadness of heart and spirit. By all which my sins thus multiplied against thee, I have justly deserved to be deprived of all thy blessings and benefits, and to be overwhelmed with all those fearful punishments threatened in the Law, respecting both this life and the life to come.

O Lord my God, affect my heart with unfeigned sorrow in the sight and sense of this my sin and misery. And as it is a burden too heavy for me to bear, so let me have such a feeling of it, that I may hunger after the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and apply it unto me by a

lively faith; and so make good the Covenant of grace, which thou hast made with me: one special branch whereof is this, that thou wilt remember my sins no more. I confess that I have offended thy Justice, but my Savior Christ hath satisfied it, by paying my debt to the uttermost farthing: accept therefore of his satisfaction, and impute not unto me that debt which he hath discharged. I have deserved eternal death and condemnation: but he was condemned, that I might be acquitted, and hath suffered the bitter death of the Cross, and thine anger due unto my sins, that I might be freed from death and thy displeasure: and therefore, O Lord, I beseech thee for his sake, to take away the guilt and punishment of all my sins, that they may never be imputed unto me in this life, nor in the life to come. And being thus justified by faith, and at peace with thee, let me also obtain peace of conscience, in the assurance of the remission of my sins, and thy love and favor in Jesus Christ. Give unto me thine holy Spirit, and thereby seal me up unto the day of my Redemption, and make me thine own Child by adoption and grace. Let me approve myself to be thy Child, by resembling thee my heavenly Father in holiness and righteousness; by hating and forsaking all that is evil, and by loving and embracing all that is good. Sanctify me throughout in my soul and body, and let me not only make an holy profession with my mouth, but let it proceed from my heart, and be expressed in the whole course of my life. Encourage me in this work against all difficulties, by assuring me that thou wilt bring it to good effect, and let me apply unto myself thy gracious promises, which assure me as well of my sanctification and victory over my corruptions, as of my justification and freedom from the guilt and punishment of my sins.

Let me set continually before me thy Law, as the rule of my life, and labor to conform my obedience in all things thereunto, denying ungodliness and all worldly lusts, and living holily and religiously, in respect of thee; righteously and charitably, in respect of my neighbors; and temperately and soberly, in respect of mine own person. Let me labor to observe thy whole Law, in forsaking all sin; especially that which is most sweet and pleasing to my corrupt flesh,

and in embracing all virtues and Christian duties which thou hast commanded, especially those unto which my nature is most averse. Let me not content myself with such a hypocritical holiness as is destitute of righteousness, nor with such a merely moral righteousness as is without holiness; but let me approve my piety to be sincere, by my justice, charity, and mercy, and let these be sanctified by my true godliness and religious devotion. Let me not stand at a stay, contenting myself with that small measure of sanctification which is begun in me, but let me daily strive in the use of all good means, whereby I may attain unto more perfection, and so sanctify them unto me by thy holy Spirit, that they may be effectual to perfect that good work which thou hast begun. Enrich me more and more with all sanctifying and saving graces, with the knowledge of thee and thy will, a lively faith in Jesus Christ, unfeigned repentance for my sins, firm affiance and confidence in thee, fervent love of thee and my neighbors, yea, even mine enemies for thy sake. Inflamm mine heart with an ardent zeal of thy glory, replenish it with thy fear, that it may never depart from thee. Strengthen mine hope, in the assured expectation of all thy gracious promises, especially those which concern my everlasting happiness; give me patience in all my troubles, thankfulness for all thy benefits, peace of conscience, spiritual joy in the assurance of thy love, and the grace of perseverance in the profession and practice of thy true Religion unto the end. Remove all stumbling blocks of offense out of my way; comfort me against all discouragements, and arm me against all the temptations of my spiritual enemies, that they may never prevail against me. Take me into thy gracious protection this day and ever, preserve me with thy providence from all dangers, uphold me with thy Spirit, that I fall not into sin. Direct me with thy Wisdom, and strengthen me with thy power in all my thoughts, words and works, that they may be acceptable in thy sight. Bless and assist me in the general duties of Christianity, and in the special duties of my calling, that they may have good success, and wholly tend to the advancement of thy glory, the edification of my brethren, and mine own spiritual and everlasting good. Bless thy whole Church and every member thereof, especially this in which I live, with all the

Magistrates, Ministers and people, this Family, and all to whom I am bound in any special bond of duty, beseeching thee to give unto us all, according to our several necessities, all those gifts and graces which thou in thy wisdom knowest needful, even for Jesus Christ his sake: to whom with thee and thy holy Spirit, I ascribe all glory and praise, power and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

IV. A Prayer for the Family in the Morning.

O Lord our God, who by thine infinite wisdom and power hast created all things in heaven and earth, and by thy gracious and all-ruling providence dost continually sustain and preserve them, we thine humble and unworthy servants, do here, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, prostrate ourselves before the Throne of Grace, acknowledging that unto thee belongeth all glory and praise, but unto us shame and confusion of face; for whereas thou diddest create us, according to thine own Image, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness, we have fallen in the loins of our first parents, from this blessed estate, by transgressing of thy Commandment, and thereby have defaced thy glorious Image in us, deprived ourselves of all happiness, and become liable unto death of body and soul. Yea, we have derived from our first parents, not only the guilt of their sin, but also the corruption of their nature, which hath so overspread all the powers and parts of our souls and bodies, that they are utterly impotent and insufficient to perform any duties of thy service, for which end they were created; but most forward and cheerful in the service of sin and Satan. From which root of original sin, we have brought forth those cursed fruits of actual transgressions, which we have multiplied against thy Majesty, by breaking all and every of thy Commandments in thought, word and deed, even from the beginning of our days to this present time. Many have been our secret sins, of which, thou alone and our own consciences have been witnesses; and many have we committed in the view of the world, to the dishonor of thy blessed Name, and slander of our Christian profession. Many

have been our sins of ignorance, the which unto us are inexcusable, because thou hast revealed thyself and thy will so clearly unto us; and many likewise have been our sins against knowledge and conscience, and the good motions of thy holy Spirit. Oftentimes have we sinned through frailty, being surprised upon the sudden, with the violent and subtle temptations of our spiritual enemies; and oftentimes willfully, advisedly and deliberately, after many vows and promises of repentance and amendment. We have sinned against thee before our conversion, when as Satan's throne being set up in our hearts, we performed unto him in all things cheerful obedience, and suffered sin to reign and rule in us, without any gainsaying or resistance; and since we have been called to the knowledge of thy Truth, though we have submitted ourselves as subjects of thy Kingdom, to be governed by thy Word and Spirit, yet have we much failed in yielding that obedience which is due unto thee, being so led captive by our corruptions, that we could neither do the good we would, nor leave undone the evil we would not; and though by thy holy Spirit, we have cast Satan out of his Throne, and vanquished the flesh with the lusts thereof, so as they could not reign over us, as in former times, yet these enemies of our salvation do still fight against our souls, and being not quite cast out, are as thorns in our sides, and as pricks in our eyes, disturbing continually our peace, wounding our consciences, and leading us captive unto sin.

And hereof it is, that we have so often, and upon such slight occasions utterly neglected the duties of thy service, and when we have set ourselves about them, have done them so coldly and carelessly, and discovered therein so many wants and weaknesses, imperfections and corruptions, that if thou shouldest deal with us according to thy righteous Judgment, even the best duties that ever we performed, could not escape unpunished. O Lord our God, make us truly apprehensive of our sin and misery, that we may humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, and turn unto thee by unfeigned repentance, and not only bewail our sins past with unfeigned sorrow, but amend our lives for the time to come; and so accept of us in thy Best-beloved, and whilst we are returning unto thee, meet us in the

way, and like a tender Father embrace us in the arms of thy mercy. Do away all our sins, and blot out all our iniquities; and so wash and purge our defiled souls and bodies in the precious blood of thine innocent Son, from the guilt and punishment of all our sins, that they may never be laid to our charge, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Yea, Lord, let us not only have the benefit of thy grace in thy free pardon, but also the comfort and peace of it, by having it sealed through the inward testimony of thy Spirit in our hearts and consciences; and for our better assurance, let us find and feel the power and efficacy of Christ's death and Resurrection thereby applied unto us, as effectual for our Sanctification, as for our Justification, and for our freedom from the corruption of sin, that it may have no longer dominion over us, and spiritual renewing unto newness of life, as well as from the guilt and punishment. It is enough, Lord, and too much, that Satan and sin have thus far prevailed, not only for the bringing of us into the state of death and condemnation, but also for the condemning and crucifying of the Lord of life, the nailing of his innocent body to the Cross, and the shedding of his precious blood.

Now (Lord) reward them as they have deserved, and pay them double into their bosom. Break the head of the old Serpent, that though he hiss against us with his temptations, yet he may not hurt us; nail our body of sin unto the Cross of Christ, and by virtue of his death, crucify our flesh and the lusts thereof, that they may no longer have dominion over us, but may like slaves be held in perpetual subjection to our spiritual part. Yea, subdue the power of sin in all the faculties and parts of our souls and bodies. Mortify the corruption of our minds and understandings, the wisdom of the flesh, and errors of our judgments, our foolish phantasies and conceits, our earthly mindedness, and all vain and wicked thoughts, that we may check sin in the first motions, and kill this viperous brood, before they come to growth and strength. Mortify the frowardness, and perverseness of our wills, the corruption of our hearts and affections, especially our self-love and love of the world, unjust anger, and desire of revenge, carnal concupiscence and

uncleanness, intemperance, ambition, pride, covetousness and voluptuousness. Let us hold our eyes and ears, our tongues and taste, and all other our senses under covenant, and make all vain and wicked sights, all rotten and unsavory speeches, all intemperance and insobriety odious and loathsome unto us. Quicken us in the inner man, and frame us in all holy obedience unto thy heavenly will; make us such as thou wouldest have us to be, and renew thine own Image in us, in wisdom, holiness and righteousness, and let us no more defile and deface it with our corruptions. Let us submit ourselves in all things to be guided by thy good Spirit, and yield cheerful obedience unto all the motions thereof, not grieving it by checking and quenching them, or putting them off by delays to another time. Let us serve thee in holiness, righteousness and sobriety, not dividing those things which thou hast conjoined; and not by fits and flashes, but constantly and continually throughout the whole course of our lives. Enrich us plentifully with all the gifts and graces of thy sanctifying Spirit, as Faith, Hope, Humility, Patience and the rest; yea, let us daily thrive in Spiritual strength, and not stand at a stay, but grow up towards perfection, from child-hood to a ripe age in Jesus Christ. And with these our prayers and suites, we do with like humble heartiness join thy praises and our thanksgiving, for thy manifold blessings and benefits, respecting our souls, bodies or estates. For thine undeserved love, whereby thou hast of thy free and mere grace elected, created, redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and preserved us unto a heavenly inheritance, and hope of a better life. For our present peace and prosperity, health, food, apparel, sufficiency of all temporal benefits, and contentedness in them, and especially for causing us so long to enjoy the Light of thy Gospel with such liberty and safety. For preserving us from all dangers this night past, and this day hitherto, and enabling us by our rest, and other comforts of this life, to do thee service.

O Lord, we praise and magnify thee for these and all other thy mercies, and are sorry and ashamed, that we can be no more thankful, having nothing else to return unto thee for all thy benefits. And now, Lord, seeing in thee we live, move, and have our being, we

beseech thee to continue thy grace and favor still unto us in the whole course of our lives, and namely, this day receive us into thy keeping, watch over us with thy providence, and preserve us with thy grace and power from all dangers, both spiritual and temporal, and from all evils both of sin and punishment. Let us set ourselves wholly to seek and serve thee, and propound thy glory unto ourselves, as the main end of all our thoughts, words and actions, and so direct and order them by thy holy Spirit, that they may upon all occasions further and advance it. And for as much as if thou dost not build the house, we shall but labor in vain to build it, O Lord, bless us all in the duties of our several places and callings, that they may tend to the joint good of the whole Family, and every one of us in particular, that finding thy blessing upon the works of our hands, we may with more courage and comfort be faithful and painful in them. Set thy fear always before us, and let us carry ourselves in all our courses carefully and conscionably, as in thy sight and presence, that whatsoever we do, or take in hand, may be acceptable unto thee. Bless together with us thy whole Church, this especially in which we live, our gracious King, and Noble Prince, the Prince and Princess Palatine, with all their issue, the Council, Magistrates, Ministers, and the whole people of this Land, the afflicted members of Jesus Christ, and this whole Family, with all other our friends, kindred and acquaintance; beseeching thee to vouchsafe unto us all, and to every one of us in our several places and callings, all things necessary for our present comfort and future happiness, even for Jesus Christ his sake; in whose Name and words we conclude our prayers, saying as he hath taught us; Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

V. Another Prayer for the Family in the Morning.

O Lord our God, who art in thine own nature glorious and full of majesty, infinite in goodness, wisdom, power, bounty, truth, and all perfection, most just in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works, and our most gracious Father in Jesus Christ, we thine unworthy

servants, finding and feeling ourselves loaded with the unsupportable weight of our manifold and grievous sins, do come unto thee for ease, and being sick in sin, even unto the death, do flee unto thee the alone Physician of our souls, that we may be eased and cured, and do here lay open before thee our miserable estate and condition, that thou mayest magnify thy mercies in our recovery. We confess our hereditary diseases, and that original leprosy of our bodies and souls, whereby they were infected and corrupted, even in our first conception, and so disabled unto thy service, that we cannot of ourselves think a good thought, nor so much as entertain into our hearts a desire to come out of the miserable thralldom of sin and Satan. Our wisdom is enmity against thee, and we are not capable of that knowledge which thy Spirit revealeth. All the imaginations of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil, and that continually; our consciences are loaded with dead works; our wills crooked and rebellious, still resisting all good motions of thy Spirit; our hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; our affections, desires and passions so disordered and poisoned with natural corruption, that they are become filthy and loathsome sinks of sin; and all the members of our bodies, the ready instruments of our defiled souls for the acting of all abominable wickedness. So that being, through his natural corruption, a sinful generation and viprous brood, we have justly deserved, that thou shouldest reject and pursue us with thy wrath, though we were free from all other sins, saving those alone whereof we were guilty as soon as we were born. And yet (alas) we have not stayed here, but have added unto this our original sin, innumerable numbers of actual transgressions, by breaking thy whole Law, and every Commandment thereof, in thought, word and deed, both in the omission of all duties therein required, and in the commission of the vices and sins therein forbidden; whereby we have made ourselves liable to the fearful curse thereof, and to all the plagues and punishments of this life, and the life to come. Neither is there any power in us to help ourselves out of this misery, being as unable to renew our nature, as the Blackamore to change his skin, or the Leopard his spots. Yea, when by thy Spirit we are regenerate, and have some desires and endeavors to serve and please thee, we are

utterly unable to satisfy thy Justice for the least of our sins past, seeing, if thou lookest upon us with thy pure eyes, our best righteousness will appear like a polluted cloth, so mingled with our imperfections, and stained with our corruptions, that it cannot challenge any other reward as its due, but thy displeasure and everlasting death.

O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, let us not securely rest and please ourselves in this our woeful condition, but having a lively sense and feeling of our sin and misery, let us labor above all things to be freed from it. And seeing there is no name in heaven or earth, whereby we may be saved, but by Jesus Christ alone, thine only Son and blessed Redeemer, whom thou hast purposely sent into the world to save sinners; O Lord, let us renounce ourselves and all creatures in heaven and earth, as being utterly insufficient to satisfy thy Justice, and save our souls, and let us rest upon him alone, hungering and thirsting after his righteousness, and desiring above all things that we may be found in him. And for his sake we humbly beseech thee to magnify thy mercies in the free forgiveness of all our sins: and as they in their weight and number do exceedingly abound, so let thy grace abound much more in their forgiveness. Enter not into judgment with thy servants; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. We are not able to answer unto thy Justice one of a thousand, but Christ our surety hath paid our debt, and now as our Advocate pleadeth for us, that by him thou hast thy due, and that thy Justice shall sustain no loss in setting us free, seeing he hath made full satisfaction for us. Hear him then, dear God, thus pleading for us; Hear us, holy Father, in his mediation pleading for ourselves; forgive us all our debts, and cancel the hand-writing by which we were obliged, that it may never be produced in judgment against us. Contrariwise, we beseech thee, write the new covenant of grace, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of our hearts, and not only enroll the great Charter of our peace in the volume of the Book, containing in it the glad tidings of the Gospel, but engross and engrave it in the book of our consciences, by the finger of thy Spirit, that we may with inestimable joy daily peruse it, when we have it in

our own custody. And not only work in us this peace, in our assured freedom from the guilt of all our sins, but also inward and outward purity in our souls and bodies, by bathing and washing them in the blood of Christ from all sinful corruption: And sanctify us throughout, that our whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: make us in him more than conquerors over all the enemies of our salvation, and spiritual Kings reigning especially over our corruptions, that they may not by their might and malice disturb our peace. Revive us more and more with the Spirit of Grace and power; that we may walk with cheerfulness in the ways of thy commandments, performing throughout the whole course of our lives, all Christian duties of holiness, righteousness and sobriety. Indue us plentifully with all sanctifying and saving graces, and let us bring forth the fruits of them all in our new obedience, with all sincerity and uprightness of heart.

Open our blind eyes, that we may see the wonderful things of thy law; increase our faith, that the gates of hell may not prevail against it; preserve us from carnal security and hardness of heart; and as we daily renew our sins, so let us daily renew our repentance and sorrow for them. Confirm our affiance in the assurance of thy power and love, strengthen our hope, work our hearts to thy fear, inflame them with thy love, and with fervent zeal of thy glory; give us humility, patience, and spiritual rejoicing in the assurance of thy favor, even in our afflictions and tribulations. Make us zealous of good works, that we may approve our faith by the fruits of it, and let us never be weary of well-doing. Arm us against all the assaults of our spiritual enemies, against the fear of death and judgment; to which end let us keep always our accounts even, that we may not be loath to be called to a reckoning. Prepare us for the days of affliction and persecution, that we may be ready with wisdom, constancy and courage, not only to do, but also suffer all things for thy sake. Accept, with these our suits and prayers, our praises and thanksgiving for thy manifold blessings and benefits, both corporal, spiritual and eternal; for thy inestimable love, and that singular pledge thereof, thy dear and only

Son, whom thou hast given unto us to work that great work of our Redemption; for our being, and well-being, all thy graces in this life, and assured hope of glory and happiness in the life to come. For our continual preservation in the whole course of our lives, this night past, and this day hitherto; for our quiet rest, and all other comforts of this life. For all which, and all other thy mercies, thy blessed name be praised and magnified. We beseech thee (good Lord) continue thy mercy and love towards us in the whole course of our lives; and namely, in the residue of this day watch over us with thy gracious providence, and thereby preserve us from all sin and danger, and so rule all our thoughts, words and deeds, that being holy and righteous, they may be acceptable in thy sight. Let us so spend this day in thy fear, as though it were the last day of our lives; and let us, with all care and watchfulness, so arm ourselves against all the temptations of our spiritual enemies, as that they may not prevail against us to make us slothful in thy service. Finally, give unto us all things necessary for our souls and bodies, and so sanctify all thy blessings to our use, that they may be helps and furtherance's unto us in seeking thy glory, and our own salvation. Vouchsafe these, and all other blessings, not only unto us, but also to thy whole Church, and every member thereof, as if particularly we had named them, and so join us in the holy communion of grace, as that we may forever enjoy the communion and fellowship of thy blessed Saints and Angels in the Kingdom of glory. Hear us, and help us, O God of our salvation, in all these our suits, for thy Son and our Savior Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with thee and thy holy Spirit, one true and everlasting God, we ascribe the glory and praise of all goodness and perfection both now and evermore. Amen.

VI. A Prayer for the Family in the Evening.

O Lord our God, most high and holy, most dreadful and glorious in thy might and Majesty unto all creatures, terrible and like a consuming fire unto all impenitent sinners; but a most gracious and

loving Father unto all those, who are reconciled unto thee in Jesus Christ. Thou hast commanded us to call upon thee in all our necessities, and hast encouraged us hereunto by thy most gracious and free promise, that where two or three are gathered together in the name of thy Son, there thou wilt be present amongst them by thy holy Spirit, to hear their suits, and relieve their wants. In obedience to which Commandment, and in some assurance of thy gracious promise, we thy poor and unworthy servants, do here, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, humbly prostrate ourselves before thy Throne of grace and mercy, acknowledging ourselves guilty of innumerable sins, and thereby liable to as many fearful punishments; but yet in the merits of thy Son, and in the truth of thy promises, pleading for pardon and forgiveness. We confess unto thee, that we were conceived and born in sin, having all the faculties and powers of our souls and bodies so wholly defiled with original corruption, that we are utterly disabled for thy service, and prone unto all manner of wickedness; and have, in the whole course of our lives, multiplied against thee our actual transgressions, by breaking thy whole Law, and every Commandment thereof, in thought, word, and deed. We are naturally full of ignorance and blindness of mind, neither knowing thee, nor thy truth, and after that thou hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine unto us for many years, our minds are still full of darkness. We content ourselves with a small measure of knowledge, and continue children in understanding, when we should be of ripe age, not striving after more perfection; neither according to the measure of our means, are we rich in knowledge, and in the fruits of new obedience. We are full of infidelity and doubting, and negligent in the use of the means, whereby our faith should be confirmed and strengthened; and are full also of impenitency, security and hardness of heart, and do both seldom and slightly bewail our sins past, and but weakly and unconstantly resolve and endeavor to amend our lives for the time to come. We are ready to trust in the creature, more than in thee the Creator, and cannot, as we ought, rest upon thy power and promises in the absence of inferior means. We are apt to forget thee, when thou most rememberest us, and the more that we abound with thy blessings,

the less mindful we are of thee from whom we have received them. We have loved the world and earthly things, more than thee and heavenly excellencies, and have preferred the pleasures of sin, before thy love and favor, being ready to hazard these, rather than to forgo them.

We are full of self-love, and have been moved hereby to sow unto the flesh, of which we can reap nothing but sin and punishment; and have set our hearts so much upon carnal vanities, that they easily draw them away from thee. We do not patiently and constantly hope and wait for the accomplishment of thy promises, though we have great experience of thy power, truth and goodness towards us. We are cold or luke-warm in our zeal, and have not with any fervency advanced the means of thy glory, nor removed the impediments whereby it is hindered. Our rejoicing is more in the flesh than in the Spirit; in worldly things and the pleasures of sin, more than in thee the Fountain of all true joy; in the fruition of thy present favors, and expectation of heavenly happiness. We are ungrateful unto thee for thy manifold benefits, and oftentimes when we praise thee, it is with our lips only, and not with inward joy and cheerfulness of our hearts. We do not approve our love and thankfulness unto thee by our fruits of obedience; but have been negligent in the duties of holiness and righteousness, that we might give glory to thy holy Name, and all we do, is maimed and imperfect, full of wants and weaknesses, and stained with many corruptions. We are ready to murmur and repine in our least afflictions, and do not bear thy fatherly corrections with patience and thankfulness, being more sensible of the smart, than of our sins which have caused it; and looking more to the rod, than unto thy hand, which thereby chastisest us for our amendment. We do not fear to displease thee by our sins, nor avoid thine anger as the greatest evil; or if we do fear thee at all, it is not so much for thy mercies, as to avoid thy Judgments.

We have not adorned ourselves with humility and meekness, in the sight and sense of our own vileness and unworthiness; but are full of spiritual pride, arrogating unto ourselves those gifts we have not, and

overweening those we have, or ascribing the praise of them unto ourselves, which is only due to thee. We are negligent in the duties of thy service, and do not perform them in Spirit and truth, but either neglect them upon every slight occasion, or do them without due preparation, coldly and formally, without any fervency of zeal, respecting thy glory, or our spiritual good. We have often taken thy holy Name in vain, and abused thine holy ordinances, and profaned thy Sabbaths, not doing thy will only on thy holy Day, but speaking our own words, walking in our own ways, and seeking our own carnal delights. We have also neglected the duties of righteousness, charity and mercy towards our neighbors, and of temperance and sobriety towards ourselves. By all which, and many other our sins, we have made ourselves subject to thy wrath and the curse of the Law, and have justly deserved to be deprived of all testimonies of thy love, and to be overwhelmed with all thy judgments and punishments, both in this life, and the life to come. O Lord our God, affect our hearts with son-like sorrow, because we have so much and often displeased thee our gracious Father; and let us be grieved in our souls, that we are so little grieved for our sins, whereby we have pierced our Savior, and grieved thy good Spirit dwelling in us. And further, we beseech thee, in the multitude of thy mercies, to remit and forgive all our sins, and wash us clean from the guilt and punishment of them all, that they may neither deprive us of thy love and manifold blessings temporal and eternal, nor expose us to thy wrath and fearful punishments. And not only remit our sins, and heal our souls, but speak comfortably to our consciences, by the secret voice of thy Spirit, as once thy Son did to the sick of the palsy, Sons, be of good comfort, your sins are forgiven you. Strengthen our weak faith in the assurance of thy love, and the remission of our sins, and let us labor earnestly in the use of all good means, whereby it may be more and more increased and confirmed, that so without wavering and doubting we may apply Christ unto us with all his benefits, and thy gracious promises made in him. Let us not weaken and wound it with sins committed against our knowledge and consciences, but nourish it by bringing forth the fruits of obedience in a godly life. Assure us that we are thy children by adoption and

grace, and heirs of that heavenly inheritance reserved for thy Saints, and let us approve ourselves to be so, by demeaning ourselves in all things as it beseemeth thy Sons. Let us love, reverence, and obey thee our heavenly Father, and think all too little which we can do or suffer for thy sake, that thereby we may express our love towards thee. Let us, above all things, be zealous of thy glory, rejoicing when it is magnified, and grieving when it is neglected either by ourselves or others. Let us not hazard our heavenly inheritance, by willful sinning for the gaining of the whole world, but let us labor to make our calling and election sure, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Give unto us peace of a good conscience, and replenish our hearts with spiritual joy in the assurance of thy favor. Let us undoubtedly expect the performance of all thy gracious promises made in Christ, even when thou seemest to delay them, especially that main promise of everlasting life and happiness; and having this hope, let us daily purge ourselves, as he also is pure. But especially give us grace, that we may bring forth the fruits of our faith, in true, hearty, and unfeigned repentance; bewailing our sins past, hating our present corruptions which still hang upon us, and both purposing and seriously endeavoring to leave and forsake our sins, and to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. Let us not defer our repentance from day today, but seeing the necessity thereof unto salvation, let us lay hold of the acceptable time, and whilst it is called today, let us not harden our hearts, but turn unto thee with all our souls. Let us, as we daily renew our sins, renew also our faith and repentance, and have an earnest and serious study of pleasing thee in all things. Let us not content ourselves with a small measure of repentance, seeing our sins are many and grievous, but let us aspire to the highest perfection, hating sin with a perfect hatred, and bewailing it with bitter grief. Finally, let us constantly persevere in the practice of repentance, and having begun in it, let us continue it to the very end of our lives. And as we beg these benefits at thy hands, so we yield unto thee most humble and hearty thanks, for all thy mercies and favors vouchsafed unto us, especially for all thy

spiritual graces concerning eternal life, and above all, for that inestimable pledge of thy love, thy dear and only Son, whom thou hast given to the death, that he might free us from all our spiritual enemies, and purchase for us everlasting happiness. We praise thee, for that thou hast watched over us with thy gracious providence, in the whole course of our lives, and namely, this day past, preserving us from all dangers, and furnishing us with all necessaries, and blessing us in all our labors and endeavors.

We beseech thee, holy Father, to continue with our thankfulness, thy love towards us and care over us. Take us this night into thy gracious protection, and watch over us with thy providence, waking and sleeping, and thereby preserve us from all perils and dangers, and from the malice and fury of all our enemies spiritual and temporal, especially of that raging and roaring Lyon, the devil, who seeketh all advantages to work our destruction. Let us not sleep, like others, the sleep of sin, which bringeth death, but let us still keep the spiritual watch, that we may always be prepared for the day of death and Judgment, and have our accounts continually in readiness, that when we are called to a reckoning, we may with comfort appear before our Judge. Preserve us in the dark from the works of darkness, and let us day and night behave ourselves as in thy sight and presence, making no less conscience of secret sins, then of those which are open and manifest. Let us, whilst our bodies rest, have our minds exercised with holy and heavenly Meditations, and let them be so seasoned with thy grace, and guided by thy good Spirit, that they may not in our sleep give way to sinful thoughts and vain imaginations. Give unto us such quiet and moderate rest, that our bodies may thereby be refreshed, and their decayed strength repaired; and so bless and sanctify our sleep unto us, that it may be a means of preserving our health, and of making us more fit for all duties of thy service. Hear us, gracious God, in all these our suites, and vouchsafe these and all other blessings which in thy wisdom thou knowest needful, not only unto us, but also to all thy children and servants, and especially such as be of this Church, the Magistrates, Ministers, and whole people, even for Jesus Christ his

sake; In whose Name and words we conclude our prayers, as he himself hath taught us, saying, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

VII. Another Prayer for the Family in the Evening.

O Immortal, invisible, and only true God, most wise, mighty, just, and merciful, holy and infinite in all perfection, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our most gracious and loving Father: Thou hast in thy Word invited sinners to come unto thee, promising that if we confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy; if we lay them open, thou wilt hide them; and if we acknowledge and bewail them, thou wilt show thyself faithful and righteous in forgiving them: we thy unworthy servants, being loaden with sin and misery, do here humble ourselves before thee, and in the mediation of Jesus Christ, prostrate ourselves before the Throne of grace, suing unto thee for mercy and forgiveness. We confess unto thee, holy Father, that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and the children of wrath as well as others, loaded with the guilt, both of that corruption in which we were conceived, and of innumerable actual transgressions, whereby we have violated thy whole Law, and so made ourselves subject to the curse thereof, and everlasting death of body and soul. The which our sin and misery is much aggravated, in that we have long lived without any sense of it, or any desire to be freed from it, but took all our delight in displeasing thy Majesty, and in performing cheerful service unto sin and Satan. Yea, Lord, after that thou of thy free grace hast given us a sight of our misery, and hast pulled us out of this wretched thralldom, working in us some desires, resolutions, and endeavors to serve and please thee, we confess that the relics of sin do still remain in us in great strength; and howsoever the old man and body of sin, have by thy holy Spirit received their deadly wound, yet have they in them such life and strength, and are so animated and revived with the suggestions of our old adversary the devil, breathing (as it were) a new life into them, that they do still much vex and trouble us, making continual war against our souls,

and oftentimes leading them captive unto sin. Much blindness and vanity do still remain in our minds, so that we have but a dim sight of thee, and thy will and ways.

Our memories are weak and slippery, and, like riven vessels, let the precious liquor of the Word of life and grace run out, as soon as it is put into them. Our consciences are defiled and impure, loaded with the guilt of sin, and yet oftentimes senseless of their burden. Our judgments are full of error and ignorance, and very weak in spiritual discerning. Our wills perverse and obstinate in evil, and very averse and awk to good things, and do not incline to the doing of thy will with cheerfulness and delight. Our hearts remain still hard and full of carnal security, intractable and inflexible, and do not relent and melt, either with thy mercies or judgments. We are still assaulted with much doubting and infidelity, and our faith is often shaken with dangerous temptations. Our repentance is weak, and full of wants; our sorrow for sin slight, and soon over, and our resolutions and endeavors to amend, subject to much inconstancy, and broken off with every small impediment. There is much poison of corruption still remaining in our affections, which draweth us from thee, when we sell ourselves to seek and serve thee, unto the world, and earthly things. We are still full of carnal self-love and love of the world, which queneth and cooleth in us the love of thee, and of spiritual and heavenly things; our affiance in thee is weak, and after much experience of thy power and sufficiency, goodness and truth, we can hardly trust thee, unless we have inferior means and helps, as pawns in our hands, and we are too prone to rely upon the creatures, and our own policies and strength; our hopes are faint and wavering, one while inclining towards presumption, and soon after forsaking us, endanger us to despair. We oftentimes fear men, and neglect thee, and hazard thy love, to avoid their displeasure. Our zeal is lukewarm, in seeking thy glory, and our devotion cold in holy duties. There still remaineth in us, much pride, hypocrisy, impatency, unjust anger, covetousness, voluptuousness, and all other sinful lusts, which continually fight and strive against the good motions of thy holy Spirit, and oftentimes overcome, and quench them. And

notwithstanding that the flesh and the corrupt lusts thereof do still remain so strong in us, yet we acknowledge to our shame, that we are careless and negligent in fighting against them, and in using those good means whereby we might be enabled to subdue them, and to purge our hearts from these carnal corruptions: whereof it is, that residing in us in great vigor and strength, they disable us in doing the good we would, and make us to do the evil we would not, oftentimes wholly hinder us from the duties of thy service, and oftentimes so disturb and distract us in them, that we perform them with much weakness and weariness, with great dullness and deadness of heart and spirit; and whilst we are delighted in thy Law in the inner man, this Law of our members rebelling against the law of our minds, leadeth us captive to the law of sin. O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from the body of this death!

Gracious God, we beseech thee, give us more and more a lively sense and feeling of these our wants and imperfections, frailties and corruption, that we may wholly deny and disclaim ourselves and our own righteousness in the work of our justification and salvation, to the end that we may entirely rest upon thine infinite mercies and the all-sufficient merits and perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. For whose sake we most humbly beseech thee to pardon graciously all our wants and weaknesses, covering our imperfections with his most perfect righteousness, and washing away all our sinful corruptions in his most precious blood. Yea, Lord, forgive and forget for his sake not only our errors and infirmities, but also those manifold and grievous sins, which we have committed against thee in the whole course of our lives, whether in the days of our ignorance, or since we attained the knowledge of thy truth: wash them all away in the blood of Christ, and heal our souls with that sovereign salve of sin, which is as sufficient to cure deep and deadly wounds, as small sores and slight scratches. Yea, Lord, not only remit and forgive us all our sins, but let us also have comfort and peace in our consciences in the assurance of our pardon, through the infallible testimony of thy holy Spirit; and thereby sanctify us throughout, that we may devote and consecrate both our souls and bodies wholly to thy worship and

service. Mortify our corrupt flesh with the lusts thereof, and let them have no longer dominion in us.

Yea, holy Father, not only lop the branches of our corruptions, but pull them up by the very root, and not only wound and weaken the Old man and body of sin, but kill and crucify, destroy and abolish it in thy good time, that no relics of it may remain in us, to disturb our peace, and distract us in thy service. Quicken us with the Spiritual life of grace, that being made strong and vigorous, we may courageously overcome all lets and difficulties, which oppose us in our Christian course, and may perform unto thee all duties of piety, righteousness and sobriety all the days of our lives, with all cheerfulness and delight. Let thy Spirit dwelling in us, replenish our hearts and souls with all sanctifying and saving graces. Enlighten our minds with a sound, saving and experimental knowledge of thee and thy Truth, and let us draw whatsoever we know into use and practice. Take away from us our natural doubting and infidelity, and work in us a true, lively and justifying faith, that we may apply unto us all thy gracious promises made in Christ, and rest only upon his merits and thy mercies, for our justification and salvation. Give us hearty and unfeigned repentance for our sins, that, we may not only bewail them with godly grief, but also leave and forsake them, and serve thee in holiness and newness of life. Confirm our affiance in thee, and let us firmly resolve, that though thou shouldest kill us, yet we will still trust in thee. Let us confidently expect the performance of all thy gracious promises with a lively hope, and still wait upon thee when thou seemest to defer thy help. Let us have a sensible feeling of thy love, shed abroad in our hearts by thy holy Spirit, that being inflamed thereby, we may love thee again with all our souls and strength, and all others in and for thee. Let this fire of holy love show, and approve itself by the flame and heat of godly zeal, in seeking thy glory in and above all things, fervently, yet wisely and discreetly, opposing whatsoever hindereth it, and furthering all the means whereby it is furthered. Work thy fear in our hearts, and let us stand in awe of thee, not only for thy Judgments, but also for thy mercies, abhorring nothing more than thy displeasure, who hast ever

been unto us so gracious and good a Father. Give us grace to yield unto thee all son-like and true obedience, both by doing that which thou enjoimest, and suffering that which thou imposest.

Adorn us with meekness and humility, and let us be base in our own eyes, that we may be precious in thy sight. Replenish our hearts with Spiritual joy in the assurance of thy love and our salvation, that nothing may daunt or damp it; and stablish us with thy free Spirit, that we may never fall from thee, but may persevere in the profession and practice of true godliness, till death summoneth us to Judgment. Let us be just towards all, and merciful towards the poor and afflicted, still abounding in all good works, and make us temperate, sober and thankful in the use of all thy blessings, that they may further, and not hinder us in all Christian duties. And as we implore thy goodness for those things which we want, so with thankful hearts and voices, we praise and magnify thy great and glorious Name for all thy mercies and favors vouchsafed unto us, respecting either this life or the life to come. And namely, for preserving our lives, and blessing our labors; for relieving our wants, and defending us from danger this day past. We beseech thee unto the multitude of thy other graces, add this with the rest, that we may make right use of them, for the stirring up of our thankfulness, and inflaming of our hearts with thy love. O Lord, be still gracious unto us, and now receive our bodies and souls into thy hand this night, that they may be safe in thy keeping from all evil both of sin and punishment; and as we cease from the works of our callings, so much more let us rest from all works of darkness, with a full purpose never again to undertake them. Give us comfortable and quiet sleep, that our spirits being thereby refreshed, and our strength renewed, we may be the fitter to serve thee in the general duties of Christianity, and the special duties of our callings. Let not our sleep break off our spiritual watch, but let us still be in readiness for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. When we wake, let us wake with thee, lifting up our hearts and souls in holy and heavenly Meditations, and praising thee for all thy goodness. Together with us, bless thy whole Church, this in which we live, our sovereign Lord and King, our Noble Prince, the

Prince and Princess Palatine, the Council, Magistrates, and Ministers, those which are afflicted, and thy whole people, beseeching thee in our several places, to give us whatsoever thou knowest needful for us, for Jesus Christ's sake: to whom with thee and thy holy Spirit, we ascribe all glory and praise both now and evermore. Amen.

VIII. A Prayer for the Lord's Day in the Morning.

O Lord our God, glorious in Majesty, omnipotent in power, infinite in all goodness and perfection, and our most gracious Father in Jesus Christ, who hast created all things of nothing for thine own glory, and man especially for thine own service; the which he is bound to perform both by the right of creation, wherein thou hast vouchsafed unto him his being; and of Redemption, whereby thou hast given unto him his well-being, by restoring him to that estate of blessedness which he had lost by his sins. But yet in a more especial manner ought this service to be performed on thine own peculiar Day, which thou hast appropriated to thy worship, and consecrated to an holy rest, both by thy commandment, and also thine own example. We thine unprofitable servants, and utterly unworthy of these high and holy privileges, do here present ourselves before thee, desiring, and in some poor measure endeavoring to sanctify this Day of rest, and to glorify thee by performing, as we are able, such duties of thy service as thou requirest. Howbeit, we must needs acknowledge, to thy glory and our own shame, that we have utterly disabled ourselves unto them by our manifold and grievous sins. For through our natural corruption, thy Sabbaths, which should be our delight, are become tedious and unpleasant; thy service, which should be our meat and drink, and even the very life of our life, and joy of our hearts, is become so loathsome and distasteful to our carnal appetite, that either we utterly neglect it, or else perform it after a cold and careless manner, with much dullness, drowsiness, and irksome weariness. Our wisdom is enmity against thee, and our

understandings dull in conceiving spiritual things, our thoughts and imaginations so wholly carried away with earthly vanities, that when they should be wholly intent unto spiritual exercises, they rove and wander after worldly trifles. Our consciences are so loaded with dead works and the guilt of our sins, that they weaken our faith in applying thy promises, and deprive us of that confidence and comfort which we should otherwise have in our praying and hearing. Our memories are like riven vessels, which suffer the precious liquor of thy Word to run out without use or profit. Our wills are so stubborn and rebellious, that we cannot submit to thine holy Ordinances, but resist both the outward ministry of thy Word, and the inward motions of thy holy Spirit. Our hearts are so hardened with the deceitfulness of sin, that they are not easily mollified with thy sweet promises and gracious benefits, nor terrified and broken with thy threatening's and righteous Judgments. Our affections are so wholly corrupted and disordered, that they are wholly set upon worldly things; and little love and delight in thee and thy saving truth, in thy service and Sabbaths, do we feel in our dead hearts, in comparison of that fervor of affection, which we sensibly perceive in the pleasures of sin, and worldly delights. And with this corruption of our sinful souls, our bodies likewise are so tainted and infected, that they are altogether indisposed unto thy service, and exceeding dead and lumpish in the performance of all holy and Religious duties. From which total corruption of our natures, have issued and sprung those innumerable numbers of actual transgressions, whereby we have broken thy whole Law, and every Commandment thereof in thought, word and deed. But especially we acknowledge our fearful neglect of the duties of thy service, and our weak and imperfect performances, when we have undertaken them; our profanation of thy Sabbaths, and abuse of thine holy Ordinances; our little profiting by those plentiful means of our salvation, which for a long time thou hast graciously afforded us, either for the increasing of saving knowledge, the strengthening of our faith, or bringing forth fruits of new obedience; our want of faith and fervency of spirit in calling upon thy Name; our want of reverence and attention in hearing thy Word; our many distractions and wandering thoughts; our want of

care to treasure it up in our hearts, and of conscience to make an holy use of it in our lives and conversations. By all which and innumerable other sins, we acknowledge (good Lord) that we have justly deserved to be deprived of all means of our salvation, and that thou shouldest take away from us the food of our souls, and cause them to perish through Spiritual famine; or that thou shouldest turn our meat into poison, and make it to become the savor of death to our deeper condemnation, which in its own nature is the savor of life unto life, and thine own strong power unto salvation. But we beseech thee (good Lord) for thy Sons sake, to be gracious unto us in the free pardon of these and all other our sins; and seeing he hath fully satisfied thy Justice, by that all-sufficient sacrifice, which he hath once offered upon his Cross, be reconciled unto us in him, and cleanse us thoroughly from the guilt and punishment of all our sins, that they may not be as a wall of separation to stop from us thy blessings, nor as strong chains to pull down upon us thy judgments and punishments, either in this world, or in the world to come. And being thus freed from all our sins, let us devote ourselves wholly to thy service: which that we may perform with greater cheerfulness and diligence, let us have the comfortable assurance of this thy mercy in the remission of our sins, sealed in our hearts by thy good Spirit, witnessing unto us that we are thy children by adoption and grace. And thereby not only seal us up unto the Day of our Redemption, but also sanctify us throughout in our bodies and souls, by the mortification of the flesh, and our spiritual quickening in the inner man, that we may, in the whole course of our lives, serve and please thee. But in a more especial manner we beseech thee (good Lord) to sanctify us, that we may sanctify this thy Sabbath; and assist us by thy grace and holy Spirit, that we may so perform the religious duties of thy service, as that we may be made more holy, and enabled unto the leading of such a Christian life as may be acceptable in thy sight.

Take away from us the corruption of our natures, whereby we are made backward and untoward to the duties of thy service, and make us willing to sequester ourselves from all worldly affairs, that we may wholly be employed in them. Let us rejoice in thy Sabbaths, as being

the time of our spiritual refection, and the market of our souls, and let us not rest in a formal keeping of them, but perform the duties required in them, with all care and good conscience, not only in the outward man, but with our hearts and souls, in spirit and truth. Free us from carnal weariness, as thinking the time long till they be past: but knowing that time to be best spent which is employed in thy service, let us take most comfort and contentment in it. Enable us (good Lord) by private preparation to fit ourselves for thy public service, meditating on our wants, that we may use all good means whereby they may be supplied, and on our special sins and corruptions, that we may get spiritual strength against them, and imploring the assistance of thy good Spirit, that we may be enabled thereby to perform, in a holy manner, all duties which thou requirest. Let us keep a holy Rest unto thee, and abstain not only from the ordinary works of our callings and worldly affairs, but also from all carnal pleasures and sensual delights. Suffer not our thoughts to be taken up with worldly or wicked cogitations, but let our minds be exercised in spiritual and heavenly meditations. Set a watch before our mouths, that we may not, on thine holy Day, speak our own words, nor utter any idle, vain, worldly or wicked speeches; but let our tongues speak to thy praise, and be exercised in holy and religious conferences, tending to the mutual edification one of another. Let us not content ourselves with a mere cessation from our labors, but refer this Rest to holiness, as the main end thereof, without which the outward rest is but vain; and with the external, let us join the internal rest from sin, exercising ourselves in repentance from dead works. Make us careful in using all good means which thou hast ordained for the sanctifying of thy Day, both publicly and privately, and let us, with one heart and voice, join with the rest of the Congregation in all the parts of thy service. Enable all thy Ministers in all places, and him especially to whose charge thou hast committed us, that they may break unto us the Bread of life, and rightly divide thy Word for our spiritual nourishment. Furnish them with all gifts and graces necessary for their high calling, and let them deliver thy truth as in thy presence, faithfully and powerfully, truly and sincerely, and so assist them with the inward working of thine

holy Spirit, that thy Word may be effectual for the conversion, edification and salvation of their hearers. Enable us by the same Spirit, to call upon thee with faith and fervency, and with all love and thankfulness to praise thee for all thy blessings vouchsafed unto us. Let us with all due reverence and attention hear thy Word, lay it up in our hearts and memories, and bring forth the fruits of it in our lives and conversations. Give us grace also (O Lord) to sanctify thy Sabbaths privately, by performing by ourselves, and in our own families, those private duties which are specially required on this thy Day. Let us meditate on thy Word after we have heard it, and apply it unto ourselves for our own use. Let us meditate on thy marvelous works of Creation, Preservation and Redemption; but especially on the death and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, that they may be effectual to mortify our sins, and to quicken us unto newness of life. Let us spend our time in religious exercises, and in the works of charity and mercy, as being those sacrifices wherein thou most delightest; but especially in those spiritual duties which tend to the salvation of our own and others souls, taking care not only to sanctify thine holy Day ourselves, but, as much as in us lieth, that it may be sanctified by all those who any ways belong to our charge. Accept of our praise and thanksgiving for all thy blessings and benefits, both spiritual and temporal, which thou hast multiplied upon us, and continue them unto us this day and ever, preserving us from all perils, and furnishing us with all necessaries, that we may be the fitter with all cheerfulness to do thee service: And vouchsafe all these blessings which we have craved for ourselves, with all other things which in thy wisdom thou seest needful, unto every true member of thy Church, &c. even for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thee and thine holy Spirit, we ascribe all praise and glory, power and dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

IX. A Prayer for the Evening of the Lord's Day.

O Eternal God, who art glorious in Majesty and power, and of infinite goodness and mercy unto all those who are reconciled unto thee in thy Son; we thine unworthy servants, having nothing else to return unto thee for the innumerable testimonies of thy love, which with a bountiful hand thou hast multiplied upon us, do here offer unto thee the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all thy blessings and benefits, which either respect our souls or bodies; this life, or the life to come. More especially, we laud and magnify thy great and glorious Name, for that thou hast loved us from all eternity, and of thy mere grace, without any respect of our worthiness, hast made us vessels of grace by thy free election, created us according to thine own Image, redeemed us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, by giving thy dearly beloved Son to die for us, when as we were strangers and enemies; for calling us by thy Word and Spirit, to the saving knowledge, and effectual participation of him and all his benefits; for our justification by his obedience, our sanctification by thy Spirit, and for that assurance which thou hast given us of a better life in the world to come. For all temporal benefits, as health, wealth, peace, plenty, preservation from dangers, and protection from all our enemies, both worldly and spiritual. And especially, we praise and glorify thee, for vouchsafing unto us, in such a gracious manner, the means of our salvation; for our blessed opportunities and liberties, with peace and safety in sanctifying thy Sabbaths, publicly and privately, by hearing thy Word, and calling upon thy Name, and performing other duties of thy service, that thereby we may glorify thee, and make our own calling and election sure; and for giving unto us hearts, wherein, by thy Spirit, thou hast wrought some poor desires and endeavors, to make use of these thy benefits, for the enriching of our souls with all spiritual graces, as at other times heretofore, so namely, this day past. O that our souls could be ravished with the sweet apprehension of such inestimable blessings! O that we could exceed all others in love and thankfulness, as far as we exceed them in these high and holy privileges, and were able to express them in our careful and conscionable endeavors to glorify and please thee in all things, who hast been so gracious and good unto us! But alas, how unworthy have we made ourselves of the least

of these thy benefits, by our manifold and grievous sins; both our original corruption, which having over-spread all the powers and parts of our souls and bodies, hath utterly disabled them unto all duties of thy service; and our manifold actual transgressions, which in number and weight exceed all things but thy mercies, which are above all thy works, and the merits and satisfaction of thy Son, which are of infinite worth and value?

More especially, we humbly acknowledge our fearful abuse of those great privileges and means of our salvation, which for a long time thou hast graciously granted unto us. For not only have we, in the days of our ignorance, utterly neglected all duties of thy service, spending our whole strength in the miserable slavery of sin and Satan, and profaned and mis-spent thy Sabbaths, in pleasing our carnal lusts, and performing the works of darkness, in greater measure, and worse manner than any other days besides; but even since we have been called to the knowledge of thy truth, and have consecrated ourselves to thy service, we have either upon slight occasions neglected those holy duties of thy public and private worship, or performed them with many wants and weaknesses, discovering unto thee who searchest the heart, many imperfections and great corruptions. For we have not remembered thy Sabbaths, nor with fervent desires longed after thine holy Day. We have not delighted in them, nor consecrated them unto thee as a holy Rest; but though the spirit hath been willing, yet the flesh hath been weak, and soon tired with spiritual exercises. We have been much defective in our zeal and devotion, and have been too cold and formal in religious duties, and have not performed them with that care and conscience, nor have served thee with our hearts and souls, in spirit and truth, in that degree which thou requirest; but externally and with the outward man, having in the mean while our minds and hearts carried away with many distractions and worldly imaginations. Our cogitations have not been taken wholly up with spiritual and heavenly things, but we have suffered them to rove and wander after earthly trifles. Our tongues have not, in that measure as they ought, been exercised in setting forth thy praise, nor in such

holy and religious conferences as tend to the edification one of another: but we have spoken our own words on thine holy Day, and many of our speeches have been idle and vain, worldly and unsavory. We have not, as we ought, privately prepared and fitted ourselves for thy public service, by prayer and meditation, and by renewing our faith and repentance; but have come into thy glorious presence without due fear and reverence, having our hearts clogged and choked with many corruptions, which have disabled them to the duties of thy service, and have made them like unfallowed and unweeded grounds, unfit to receive the seed of thy Word. We have not called upon thy Name with faith and fervency of spirit, nor given thanks unto thee for all thy benefits, with such cheerfulness as became us. We have not, with due reverence and attention, heard thy holy Word, nor laid it up in our memories, nor applied it to our hearts and consciences, nor made a holy use of it, by putting it in practice in our lives and conversations. We have not meditated, as we ought, on thy Word which we have heard, nor on thy marvelous works of Creation, Preservation and Redemption, nor diligently read and studied in thy holy Book, nor exercised ourselves in the works of mercy and Christian charity towards our brethren, in that manner and measure which thou requirest, especially in those spiritual duties which tend to the mutual edification of one another. In which, and many other kinds, as we have often offended heretofore, so we cannot excuse ourselves of many imperfections and corruptions which we have showed this day past, in all the duties of thy service which we have performed unto thee. But seeing we do acknowledge our wants and weaknesses, and do bewail them with unfeigned sorrow, we beseech thee (dear God) accept of us in Jesus Christ, according to thy gracious promises, covering all our imperfections with his most perfect obedience, and washing away our corruptions in that pure Fountain of his precious blood. In him accept of our poor desires and endeavors to do thee service; seeing what is wanting in us, is abundantly supplied by his absolute and all-sufficient righteousness, which is made ours by faith. And that we may, for the time to come, perform service unto thee with more diligence and cheerfulness, let thy Spirit witness unto our spirit, that thou hast

forgiven all our sins past, passed by and covered all our infirmities and frailties, and doest graciously accept of us in thy Best-beloved. And with the same thine holy Spirit, prosper and perfect thine own good work of grace and sanctification which thou hast begun in us. Thou seest (Lord) how we are hampered and fettered in the chains of our corruptions, which so distract and hinder us in all holy duties, that we perform them with much discouragement, and little joy.

Help us, O God of our salvation, and break in sunder these chains of sin, that being set at liberty, we may, with all alacrity and delight, run the way of thy Commandments, and esteem it our meat and drink to do thy will. To this end assist us (good Lord) by thine holy Spirit, and thereby sanctify unto us thine holy Ordinances and means of our salvation, that they may be effectual for the effecting and perfecting of thine own good work of grace and sanctification in us. Apply unto us powerfully thy Word, which either this day, or any other time we have heard, that it may enlighten our minds with saving knowledge; sanctify our hearts and affections, that they may be more and more weaned from the love of the world and earthly vanities, and fixed upon spiritual and heavenly things, and may be effectual for the reforming of our lives and conversations, and the strengthening of us unto all duties of a godly life; that so being not only hearers of thy Word, but also doers of it, we may be assured of eternal blessedness. Let us walk worthy our high and holy calling, and in all things adorn our Christian profession, that by our holy and unblameable lives we may gain others to thy Kingdom. Let us exceed all others as much in spiritual graces, and in bringing forth the fruits of new obedience, as we are preferred before them, through thy free grace in outward privileges, and in the gracious means of our salvation; and as thou doest continually sow in our hearts the seed of thy Word, and water it with the dew of thine holy Spirit, so let us answerably grow in grace from one measure to another, till we come to a perfect age in Jesus Christ. Do not only pardon graciously all our wants and weaknesses, which either this day or heretofore we have showed in the duties of thy worship and service, but enable us for the time to come to perform them daily with more and more perfection; and grant that

we may so sanctify thy Sabbaths here upon earth, as that we may be assured that we shall keep an eternal Sabbath with thee in thy glorious Kingdom. Finally, we beseech thee for thy Christ his sake, to take us this night and ever into thy gracious protection, and thereby preserve us from all perils, and from the malice of all our enemies spiritual and temporal. Leave us not now unto ourselves, but still assist us with thy grace and holy Spirit, that we may perform the duties of thy Sabbaths, which yet remain in some good and acceptable manner. Season our hearts with those holy instructions and comforts, which thou hast imparted unto us this day past, and make them faithful treasuries of these precious Jewels. Let our minds, whilst we are waking, be so wholly taken up with heavenly Meditations, that even our dreams may savor of them, and in our deepest sleep, let our minds and souls watch and wait upon thee. Thou hast sown good seed in our hearts: O let not the enemy steal it away, nor whilst we sleep, sow in them the malicious tares of evil and vain thoughts and imaginations, and so hinder the growth thereof. Give us quiet and moderate rest, for the better refreshing of our bodies and minds, that so tomorrow we may be enabled to perform such faithful service unto thee in the general duties of Christianity, and the special duties of our callings, as may tend to thy glory and the everlasting salvation of our own souls. And together with us, bless thy whole Church and every member thereof, &c. And vouchsafe both to them and us, these and all other blessings which in thy wisdom thou knowest needful, even for Jesus Christ his sake: to whom with thee and thy blessed Spirit, we acknowledge to be due, and from our hearts desire to give all glory and praise, both now and evermore. Amen.

X. A Prayer before receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

O Lord our God, who art infinite in goodness, grace, and mercy; most true in all thy promises, and most just and powerful in performance; thou hast, when we were strangers and enemies, subject to the curse

of the Law, and liable to thy wrath, by reason of our manifold and grievous sins, and utterly unable to free ourselves out of the state of death and condemnation, given unto us thine only and dear Son, to work the great work of our Redemption, by his perfect satisfaction, death, and obedience. By whom, thy Justice being fully satisfied, and thy wrath appeased, thou hast made with us in him thy Covenant of grace, wherein thou hast promised the free pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, grace in this life, and glory and happiness in the life to come, upon the alone condition of faith, laying hold upon Christ and his righteousness, and bringing forth the fruits thereof in hearty repentance and amendment of life. The which, though it be in itself of most infallible truth, yet having respect to our weakness, doubting, and infidelity, thou hast been graciously pleased to confirm it unto us, by adding thereunto thy Seals, the Sacraments. So that nothing hath been wanting on thy part, either for the perfecting the great work of our Redemption, or the effectual applying of it unto us for our use and benefit. But (O Lord) we humbly confess, that as we have shamefully broken the Covenant of works, by failing in the condition of perfect obedience; and have made void thy promises of life and happiness, by our grievous and innumerable sins, both original and actual; so also, as much as in us lieth, we have deprived ourselves of the benefits which thou offerest unto us in the new Covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, by our manifold failings, wants, and imperfections in performing our promises made unto thee, if thou shouldest look to the perfection of our graces and outward actions, and not unto the inward truth and sincerity of our hearts. For we have not thoroughly acquainted ourselves with the knowledge of thy saving truth, concerning this great mystery of our salvation, nor searched and examined these spiritual Evidences, for the clear understanding of them; and much less for the bringing of them home to our hearts and consciences, that in them we might have sound peace and comfort in the assurance of thy love and our own salvation. Our faith hath been exceeding weak in apprehending and applying Christ and thy gracious promises made in him; and we too negligent in using those blessed means which thou hast graciously afforded us, for the

strengthening of it. For we have not only been exceeding negligent in hearing, reading, and meditating in thy Word, the great Charter of our peace, which containeth in it all our spiritual and heavenly privileges; but also in making right use of thy Seals, the Sacraments, annexed unto it, especially this of our Lord's Supper, which thou hast ordained for the spiritual food of our souls, to nourish them unto everlasting life. We have not highly esteemed of this holy banquet, but have often pretended excuses, and absented ourselves, when as thou hast graciously invited us unto it. We have not hungered and thirsted after this heavenly Manna and waters of life; but with cloyed appetites have carelessly neglected them, when as they have been set before us. And when we have presented ourselves at this holy feast, we have come to thy Table, after a cold, careless and formal manner, without all due preparation, and have performed this holy action with profane and unwashen hands, more for custom then for conscience sake. We have come in much ignorance of thee and thy truth, thy gracious Covenant, and the Seals annexed unto it; and that little knowledge we have had, hath been more in our heads, then in our hearts and affections, in idle speculation, then in use and practice. We have not rightly discerned the body of our Lord, nor put that difference which we ought, between these elements consecrated to this holy service, and those which are for common use. We have not duly considered, as became us, the relation between the signs and the things signified, but have too much stuck in the outward elements and actions, not looking to the spiritual graces signified and sealed by them. We have not approved ourselves as worthy guests, by renewing carefully and conscionably our faith and repentance, but have presented ourselves before thee with much infidelity and great impenitence; though, since our last coming to thine holy Table, we have often renewed our sins; neither have we brought forth such plentiful fruits of charity towards our brethren for thy sake, as thou requirest, and as it becometh the true members of Jesus Christ, either by liberal giving unto those that want, or free forgiving those who have offended us. We have not showed our Saviors death in this holy action, nor thankfully remembered the great work of our Redemption, by his precious death and blood-shed. And though we

have professed ourselves thy servants by wearing thy livery, yet we have not endeavored to walk worthy this high calling, by glorifying thee our Lord and Master. O Lord our God, shame and confusion covereth our faces, not only in the sight and sense of our manifold and grievous sins, both original and actual, but also of our great imperfections and corruptions, which we show in the best duties of thy worship and service. We confess, holy Father, that if thou shouldst enter into judgment with us, and deal with us according to our deserts, thou mightest justly make void thy Covenant with us, deprive us of these means of our salvation, or else make them ineffectual and of no use unto us whilst we enjoy them.

But seeing we are heartily sorry for our sins, and not only unfeignedly bewail our imperfections, but also desire and labor after more perfection, promising for the time to come, that we will more carefully use all good means, whereby we may be enabled to perform all duties of thy service in a more perfect manner; Good Lord, we most humbly beseech thee, for Jesus Christ his sake, to pardon graciously all our wants and weaknesses, to accept, according to thy gracious promises, our will, for the deed; our poor endeavors, for perfect performance, and to cover all our imperfections, with Christ's perfect righteousness and obedience, and to wash away all our corruptions in his most precious Blood. And seeing we do now again intend to perform the holy duties of thy service, in hearing thy Word, Prayer, and receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: Good Lord, we earnestly beseech thee, for thy Sons sake, to assist us so with thy grace and holy Spirit, as that we may perform these actions of thy service, in some good and acceptable manner, for the advancement of thy glory, the comfort of our souls, and the furthering and assuring of our own salvation. More especially, we entreat thee to enable us with thy grace, that we may be duly prepared, and come as worthy guests to thy Table. Give us a lively sight and sense of our sins and imperfections, wants and weaknesses, and let us hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness; and after the spiritual food of his Body and Blood, for the nourishment of our souls unto eternal life. Let us not coldly and formally perform

this high and holy duty, but bend all the powers of our souls to the doing of it, in some such manner as may be acceptable in thy sight. Enlighten our minds more and more with the saving knowledge of thee and thy truth, and especially of the great work of our Redemption, and thine infinite love shining in it, of the Covenant of grace, and Seals annexed unto it; and let not this knowledge reside only in our understandings, but let it also descend into our hearts, that it may be profitable for their sanctification. Enable us rightly to discern our Lord's Body, and feelingly to understand the relation between the Signs and the things signified, applying both unto ourselves in their right use.

To this end indue us with a true and lively faith, that we may not only receive the outward Elements, but also may inwardly feed upon the precious Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that thereby we may be enriched with all saving graces, strengthened unto all good duties, and nourished unto everlasting life. Enable us also to bring forth the fruits of this faith in unfeigned repentance, bewailing our sins past, hating those corruptions which still hang upon us, and resolving to leave them for the time to come, and to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. And as we have daily renewed our sins, so give us now grace, that we may renew our faith and repentance, bathing our souls and bodies afresh, even in the Fountain of Christ's precious Blood, and in the tears of unfeigned sorrow, mourning with bitter grief, because we have pierced him with our sins, and caused the Lord of life to be put unto a shameful death. In flame our hearts with most fervent love towards thee and our neighbors, yea, even our enemies for thy sake, and link our hearts together in a holy Communion, as it becometh the true members of Jesus Christ. Let us also approve our love to be sound and sincere, by the fruits of it, and especially, by forgiving and forgetting all our wrongs and injuries, as heartily as we desire to be forgiven of thee, and by performing all works of mercy and Christian charity, towards all those who need our help; not only by comforting and refreshing their bodies, but also by performing all Christian duties for the eternal salvation of their souls. And being thus

prepared, let us, when we come to thy Table, perform that duty of thy service in some good and acceptable manner, with all reverence, faith and inward fervency and devotion. Let us with the outward signs receive the things signified, Jesus Christ and all his benefits; that being more and more united unto him, we may receive from him the Spiritual life of Grace, and those holy virtues of his divine nature, that we may grow up in him unto a perfect man. Let us bring with us the hand and mouth of faith; and let it be more and more strengthened in the assurance of all thy gracious promises, by these seals of thy covenant communicated unto us. Make us partakers of Christ's merits, by imputation of his nature and essence by conjunction, and of his power and efficacy by thy holy Spirit; and let us show his death till he come, gratefully remembering this great work of our Redemption by his blood, that we may be thankful, and praise thee the blessed Trinity in unity, all the days of our lives. Finally, as we do by these means profess ourselves thy servants in taking upon us thy livery and cognizance, so give us grace, that we may constantly strive and endeavor to walk worthy this high calling, and to glorify thee in the duties of holiness and righteousness, whilst we have any breath or being. Hear us and help us, O God of our salvation, and answer us graciously in these our suits and petitions, for Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with thee and thine holy Spirit, be rendered of us and thy whole Church, all glory and praise, power and dominion, both now and evermore. Amen.

XI. A Thanksgiving after the receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

O Lord our God, most glorious and most gracious, infinite in bounty and goodness unto all thy children and servants in Jesus Christ, we do here offer unto thee the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and do laud and magnify thy great and glorious Name, for all thy mercies and favors vouchsafed unto us; especially because thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, yea so loved us, that thou hast, of thy mere

grace and free good will, even when we were strangers and enemies, given unto us thy Best-beloved and only Son, to work the great work of our Redemption, and by his death and precious blood-shed to deliver us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, and to free us from everlasting death and condemnation, that we might be heirs through him of eternal glory and happiness in thy Kingdom. We praise thee also for the free covenant of grace and salvation which thou hast made with us in him, whereby thou hast assured us of the remission of our sins, our reconciliation with thee, and of endless happiness in the life to come; and for confirming this covenant unto us, by annexing thereunto the seals thy Sacraments, that thereby our weak faith might be strengthened and increased, and we more and more freed from doubting and incredulity. We thank thee (holy Father) for renewing this thy covenant with us this day, and for confirming our union with Jesus Christ our head, and one with another, by giving unto us his precious body and blood, as the Spiritual food of our souls, whereby they are nourished unto everlasting life. O Lord our God, it is thy great mercy, that thou nourishest our mortal bodies with food that perisheth, but how wonderful is this thy bounty and goodness, in that thou feedest our souls with this bread of Life that came down from heaven, and with this food that endureth to life eternal!

If thou shouldest permit us but to gather up the crumbs that fall from thy Table, we must needs acknowledge, that it were a favor far above our deserts; O then how should we admire and magnify thy mercy and bounty, in vouchsafing such vile and unworthy wretches, this high and holy privilege, to be feasted at thine own Table, not with ordinary cheer, but with such spiritual and divine delicacies, even the precious body and blood of thine only dear Son, whereby he becometh one with us, and we with him, even as thou, holy Father, and he are one, in that holy and happy union. O that our narrow hearts were enlarged, that we might in some measure apprehend this thine infinite and incomprehensible goodness! O that being cold in themselves, they were warmed and inflamed with the fire and flame of this divine love; that with the lively sense and feeling of it, we

might be moved to return love for love, and express it by our fervent zeal and endeavor in all things, to please and glorify thee throughout the whole course of our lives and conversations! Which because it is not in our own power, O thou the rich fountain of all grace and goodness, inspire and inflame our cold and frozen hearts with the beams of thy love, shed abroad in them by thine holy Spirit, that we may love thee with unfeigned love, and contemning all things in comparison of thee, may long and labor after nothing so much, as to enjoy thee in this life by grace, and the presence of thy blessed Spirit, and by full and perfect vision and fruition in the life to come. To this end, gracious God, bless unto us thine holy Ordinances and means of our salvation, and by the inward assistance of thy good Spirit, make them powerful and effectual to the attaining of those ends, for which thou hast given, and we received them. Let us find hereby our union with Christ strengthened and confirmed, by feeling the Spiritual life and sap of grace derived unto us, and increased in us, from this root of righteousness, not only for our further assurance of our justification, but also for the perfecting of our sanctification, and the strengthening of us unto all Christian duties of a godly life.

Let us by this Spiritual food of our souls, find ourselves nourished and enriched with all saving graces, especially let us feel our weak faith confirmed and increased, that we may, without wavering, be persuaded of all thy gracious promises made unto us, and effectually apply unto ourselves Jesus Christ and all his benefits, seeing thou hast not only offered them in thy Word and covenant of grace, but also sealed, and thereby fully assured them unto us by thy seals the Sacraments. Give us grace, that we may approve this faith to be true and lively, by bringing forth plentiful fruits of it in repentance and newness of life; bewailing our sins, because they have pierced our Savior; and fearing to offend thee for the time to come, seeing thine exact Justice would not suffer them to go unpunished, when thine only and dear Son did bear them upon his Cross. Let us not by sin, hazard our souls again to death for the wages of worldly vanities, seeing to redeem us from them, our Savior and surety paid unto thy Justice the inestimable price of his precious blood; but being freed

from sin, let us become his servants that hath redeemed us, serving him in the duties of holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. And as we have professed ourselves to be of thy Family, by taking upon us and wearing thy livery, so let us adorn our profession, and glorify thee our Lord and Master, by having the light of our Christian conversation shining before all men; in all things behaving ourselves as it becometh thy children and servants. Let us have our Lord's death in remembrance, until he come; not only that it may stir us up to unfeigned thankfulness unto thee, for giving thy Son, and to him, for giving himself unto us and for us, but also that it may be as a shield of proof, to arm us against all our spiritual enemies, thy wrath, the curse of the law, Satan, death, sin and condemnation, that they may never prevail against us. Let us also, as we have in this holy communion professed ourselves members of the same body, approve ourselves to be indeed so, by performing all duties of love towards one another, both in relieving those that want, and forgiving those who have offended us. Finally, we beseech thee (dear Father) to enable us by thy grace and holy Spirit, that we may perform our vows and promises which we have made unto thee, especially in the time of preparation before we came to thy Table; and seeing in the sense and feeling of our wants and weaknesses in thy Spiritual graces, required to the worthy receiving of the Sacrament, as knowledge, faith, repentance and charity, we were displeased with ourselves, and promised that we would endeavor to have them increased and strengthened for the time to come; good Lord, we beseech thee, give us grace to perform what we have promised, and to labor carefully and conscionably in the use of all good means, for the enriching of our souls with these and all other saving graces of thy sanctifying Spirit, that so also we may bring forth the fruits of them in our godly and Christian lives, to the glory of thy blessed Name, and the comfort and salvation of our bodies and souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XII. A Prayer for the Sick.

Most glorious and mighty God, who art righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works; most just in all thy Judgments, and infinitely gracious, and merciful towards thy children in Jesus Christ, even in thy chastisements and Fatherly corrections; who art the Author of health and sickness, and hast in thy hand the issues of life and death. For as much as thou hast commanded us to call upon thee, as at all times, so especially in the time of trouble and affliction, and hast encouraged us hereunto by thy most gracious promise, that thou wilt hear and help us, that being delivered, we may glorify thee. We thy poor humble servants, in obedience unto this thy Commandment, and in confidence of this thy promise, do here in the Name and mediation of Jesus Christ, humbly prostrate ourselves before thee, acknowledging and bewailing our manifold and grievous sins. For we were not only conceived and born in sin, and thereby so defiled in all the powers and parts of our souls and bodies, that we have been disabled unto all good duties, and made prone to all wickedness; but we have also from this bitter root of original corruption, brought forth continually those cursed fruits of actual transgressions, by breaking all and every of thy Commandments in thought, word and deed, from the beginning of our lives, unto this present hour: And that not only in the days of our ignorance, whilst we continued the vassals of Satan, and when as sin reigned and ruled in us, and we performed unto it voluntary and cheerful obedience, as unto our King and Sovereign; but even since thou hast graciously called us out of the kingdom of darkness, and hast wrought in our hearts some desires to serve thee: we have often rebelled against thee, and for the base hire of worldly trifles, have been allured to commit many sins, not only through frailty and infirmity, but even against our knowledge and consciences; contrary to our general vow in Baptism, and many special promises which we have made unto thee upon sundry occasions. And although thou hast given unto us our Being, and preserved us in it by thy special and good providence, and hast redeemed us by the death of thy dear Son, out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, that we might worship and serve thee, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives; yet, Lord, we humbly confess, that we have been too forgetful of these inestimable mercies,

neglected the duties of thy service, and spent the greatest part of our lives in pursuing worldly vanities.

These, these (dear Father) have been for the most part the subject of our thoughts, the object of our desires, and the chief marks, at which we have aimed in our most earnest endeavors. And so have we in our understandings minded earthly things, in our hearts affected them with such longing desires, and with all our strength pursued them in all our works and actions, as though we had no better hopes, and had forgotten that we are pilgrims on earth, and Citizens of heaven. As for the duties of thy service, we have often, through this eager pursuit of worldly vanities, forgotten and neglected them; and often have performed them with much coldness and formality, weakness and weariness, dullness and drowsiness of heart and spirit, whilst our minds and affections have been distracted and carried away, and our devotion and zeal cooled and quenched, by our over-much minding and loving of earthly things. And though thou hast allured us to perform unto thee more sincere and cheerful service, by promising to give us the rich wages, and free reward of heavenly happiness; yea for the present hast encouraged us hereunto, by multiplying upon us many temporal blessings; as health, strength, peace, plenty, food, apparel, and such like: yet we have abused these benefits, by taking occasion thereby to go on in our sins with greater security, and have been made by them more negligent in thy service. And therefore (O Lord) it were just with thee, if thou shouldst deprive us of them all, turning our strength into weakness, our health into sickness, and all our peace and comfort into tortures of body, and troubles of mind. But (dear Father) deal with us, not according to our deserts, but according to thy wonted mercies in Jesus Christ. And seeing the end of thy chastisements is not destruction, but salvation; not to punish our sins, for which thy Son hath fully satisfied thy Justice by his all-sufficient sufferings; but to bring us to repentance: we most humbly beseech thee, to give unto us a true sight and sense of them, unfeigned sorrow, and a perfect hatred of them, and a full resolution to leave and forsake them for the time to come, and to serve thee in the contrary duties of holiness and righteousness all the days of our

lives. And thus returning unto thee by unfeigned repentance (O Lord) we beseech thee turn unto us, and be reconciled unto us in Jesus Christ. Forget and forgive our manifold and grievous sins, whether of omission or commission; of frailty and infirmity: or those which we have wittingly and willingly fallen into; and wash them all away in the blood of thy Son, that they may never be imputed unto us, either in this world, or in the world to come. Seal also our pardon unto us in our hearts and consciences, by the gracious testimony of thy holy Spirit, and thereby sanctify us thorough-out in our souls and bodies, that being freed from the guilt, punishment, and corruption of all our sins, we may be found unblameable and without spot in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Replenish our empty souls with all sanctifying and saving graces, and strengthen us unto the performance of all Christian and holy duties, with all zeal, cheerfulness and uprightness of heart. More especially, we humbly entreat thee to extend thy grace and favor unto this thy sick servant, and sanctify this thy fatherly chastisement unto him, that it may be an effectual means of increasing his sanctification, and furthering his eternal salvation. And seeing by sickness, thou puttest us in mind of our approaching end, and by death, summonest us to appear before thee in Judgment: O Lord, give him grace, to prepare himself against the day of death, that he may be ready to render up his accounts, when thou shalt call him to give up his reckoning, and so with joy and cheerfulness may commend his soul and body unto thee, as into the hands of a faithful Savior, who wilt crown them both with joy and glory. Let him continually endeavor to suppress the power of death, and to take away the sting of it, by mortifying the flesh, and the lusts thereof. Give him grace to renew his covenant with thee, by renewing the condition of it, which is, embracing thy promises by a lively faith, and bringing forth the fruits thereof by unfeigned repentance. Let him confess his sins, bewail and forsake them, resolving to amend his life, if thou shalt prolong his days. Comfort him with the comforts of thy Spirit, and as his bodily griefs abound, so let thy consolations abound and exceed them. Give him patience to endure what thou inflictest, and tempt him not above his

power, but either lessen his griefs, or increase his strength. Moderate and mitigate his bodily pains, with the inward feelings of thy love, peace of conscience, and joy in the holy Ghost. If it will stand with thy glory, and his salvation, prolong his days, and restore his health, that he may yet again praise thee, as for all thy mercies, so especially for his recovery; and bless unto him all means of physic and diet, which are fit for this purpose. And being raised from his bed of sickness, give unto him a right use both of thy fatherly chastisements, and of thy gracious deliverance; that by the one, he may be moved to fear thee, and to hate sin, having tasted the bitter fruits of it; and by the other, to love and glorify thee, who hast heard his prayer in the day of his tribulation, and by them both, to serve thee with greater zeal, and with more earnest endeavor then ever heretofore. Hear us, dear Father, and answer us graciously in these our suits, even for Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with thee and the holy Spirit, we acknowledge to be due, and desire to give all glory, praise and thanksgiving, both now and for evermore. Amen.

But if the sick party be a child, and so not capable of the outward and ordinary means of salvation, then pray for him after this manner:

More especially, we humbly entreat thee, to extend thy grace and favor unto this thy sick servant; and seeing thou art not only the God of the faithful, but also of their seed, and lovest and tenderest not only the sheep of Christ, but even the tender lambs; we earnestly beseech thee, make good thy gracious Covenant with this thy weak and sick servant. And because he is not capable of outward means, supply graciously the defect of them by thine holy Spirit. Unite him thereby unto Jesus Christ, that becoming a lively member of his body, he may be made partaker of his righteousness, death and obedience, for his justification, and so he may stand righteous in thy sight. Free him from the guilt and punishment of all his sins, and sanctify him in his soul and body, that either he may be fit to glorify thee on earth, or to be glorified by thee in heaven. If it be thy blessed will, restore him to his health and strength again, that he may live to be a comfort unto his friends, and a profitable instrument to set forth

thy glory in the Church and Common-wealth; but if thou art purposed to put an end to his days, so fit and prepare him for thy Kingdom, as that he may live with thee eternally in glory and immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If the party be irrecoverably sick, or ready to depart out of this world, then we may, instead of praying for his restoring to health, make, in his behalf, these following petitions:

And seeing (O Lord) thou hast smitten thy sick servant (as we conceive) irrecoverably, and doest now purpose to put an end unto the days of his pilgrimage; we most humbly beseech thee, to prepare him for thine own Kingdom. Wean his mind and affections from the world and earthly vanities, where he is but a stranger, and fix them wholly upon spiritual and heavenly things, as it becometh a Citizen of thy Kingdom. Let him earnestly desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, seeing that is best of all, and let him long after the vision and fruition of thee, in whose presence is fullness of joy for evermore. To this end (O Lord) reveal thyself unto him more clearly than ever heretofore, that seeing thy beauty, goodness and excellency, his heart may be thoroughly inflamed with thy love. Give him, even whilst he liveth, an entrance into thy Kingdom, not only by the assurance of faith and hope, but also by letting him have a lively taste of those heavenly joys, which thou hast prepared for him. Moderate his griefs and pains, that they may not hinder his soul from mounting aloft in divine contemplations; and secretly whisper unto his heart sweet comforts by thy Spirit, when as he is, through weakness, insensible of outward consolations. In flame his heart with fervent love towards thee and his brethren; yea even his enemies for thy sake, that he may be assured, that his sins are forgiven of thee; because thou givest him grace to forgive all men. Strengthen him against the temptations of all his spiritual enemies, and manifest thy power in his weakness, by giving unto him a full and final victory over them. Frustrate the malice of Satan, defeat his policies, and confound his power, that he may not prevail against him in this last conflict. Arm him against the fear of thy wrath and severe justice, by assuring him that Christ hath

appeased the one, and satisfied the other. Comfort him against the fear of death, by persuading him, that Christ's death hath swallowed it in victory, pulled out the sting thereof, and made it harmless; yea exceeding profitable, as serving now for a passage to glory and happiness; and by strengthening him, to apply unto himself these consolations, by a lively faith. Wean his heart from worldly cares, that they may be no distractions to hinder him in his heavenly journey; and let the assurance, and taste of immortal joys, take away all loathness to leave earthly comforts. Set a guard of thy blessed Angels about him, and let them serve as thy Messengers and Ministers, to convey his soul, as soon as it is separated from his body, into thy Kingdom, that it may be there crowned with glory and immortality. Finally, we beseech thee, give us all here present, a holy use of these examples of our mortality, that thereby our hearts being weaned from the world, we may make it our chief business to prepare ourselves against the day of death and Judgment, that so we may with joy and comfort appear before thee, when thou shalt be pleased to call us to give unto thee an account of our Stewardship. Hear us, we beseech thee, in these our suits and supplications, for thy Son, and our Savior, Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with thee, and thy holy Spirit, be ascribed all glory and praise, power and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

XIII. A Prayer for Children.

O Almighty God, and my most gracious Father in Jesus Christ, I humbly confess, that I am a most wretched sinner, and altogether unworthy to be in the Covenant of grace and salvation: For I was not only conceived and born in sin and corruption, whereby thy glorious Image was defaced in me; but I have added thereunto many actual sins, by breaking thy Commandments, in thought, word and deed; whereby I have deserved thy just anger in this life, and eternal death in the world to come. But seeing thou hast vouchsafed to receive me into thy Covenant, of thy free mercy, giving me the sign thereof, the

Sacrament of Baptism; and hast sent thy Son Jesus Christ to die for, and by his death to redeem the young as well as the old; I beseech thee, for his sake, to pardon all my sins, and to wash them all away in his most precious blood; to receive me into thy love and favor, and to make me thine own child by adoption and grace. Give me thine holy Spirit to sanctify, rule and govern me; that according to my age and small ability, I may labor to serve thee. Make me daily to increase in grace, as I increase in years; enlighten my mind with the knowledge of thee, and my Savior Christ and his truth. Sow in me the seeds of faith, and let it show itself as soon as I am capable thereof, in repentance and true obedience. Make me loving, dutiful and awful to my Parents and Governors, and let me learn by obeying them in my tender youth, to obey thee in my riper age. Give me grace to hearken to their good admonitions and instructions, and to profit and amend by their reproofs and chastisements. Make me humble, courteous and meek, modest and sober, diligent to please in all good things, and virtuous in my whole course of life, that so I may increase in favor with thee and all good men. And as I beg these benefits at thy hands, so I yield unto thee all humble and hearty thanks and praise, for all benefits, both spiritual and temporal vouchsafed unto me; and namely, for that it hath pleased thee to give me quiet rest and sleep this night past, and hast safely preserved me from all perils and dangers to which my frail life is daily subject. Continue (O Lord) thy love and favor towards me forever; and especially this day take me into thy fatherly protection; preserve me from sin and peril, and grant, that being diligent and industrious in learning such good things as are taught me, I may increase in knowledge, and profit by instruction, in such virtues and good qualities, as are fit for me. O Lord, bless and preserve my father and mother, my brethren and sisters, with all other my kindred and friends, together with thy whole Church: and grant that we may live in thy favor, die in thy faith, and after death inherit the joys of thine everlasting Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom with thee and thy holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

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-- CHAPTER XXII. The last caution is, that our Recreation be a liberal exercise, and not sordid for gain.

-- CHAPTER XXIII. Of the duties which ought daily to be performed at our meals.

-- CHAPTER XXIV. Of diverse other duties which we ought to perform at our meals.

-- CHAPTER XXV. Of the duties which we ought to perform, when we are solitary and alone.

-- CHAPTER XXVI. What duties we ought to perform when we are in company.

-- CHAPTER XXVII. Of Christian conferences, which we must use when we are in company, for our mutual good.

-- CHAPTER XXVIII. Of Christian prudence, which we ought to use in all our conferences.

-- CHAPTER XXIX. Of those duties which concern our works and actions one with another, both out of contracts, and in our buying and selling.

-- CHAPTER XXX. That Governors of families ought to train up those which are under their charge in the duties of godliness.

-- CHAPTER XXXI. Of family duties, which respect wise and religious government.

-- CHAPTER XXXII. How we ought to behave ourselves in the estate of prosperity, that we may thrive in all spiritual graces.

-- CHAPTER XXXIII. How we may rightly use the state of prosperity, so as it may be an help unto godliness.

-- CHAPTER XXXIV. How we ought to behave ourselves in the estate of affliction, so as we may profit thereby in all saving graces.

-- CHAPTER XXXV. Of those Christian duties which are to be performed in the Evening and Night.

-- CHAPTER XXXVI. That we must moderate our sleep, and not spend too much time in sloth and sluggishness.

-- CHAPTER XXXVII. Of those Christian and religious duties which we ought to perform on the Lord's Day, for the sanctifying of it.

-- CHAPTER XXXVIII. That the whole Lord's Day must be consecrated unto him, first, by resting on it from all labor and from sin.

-- CHAPTER XXXIX. That we must sanctify our rest, by consecrating it to the duties of God's service.

-- CHAPTER XL. Of the public duties of God's service on the Lord's Day.

-- CHAPTER XLI. Of such duties as are to be performed on the Lord's Day, after our coming from the Church.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE- Containing in it the properties of a godly life, and of all the duties which are required unto it.

-- CHAPTER I. That all duties universally of a godly life, must be performed in sincerity and integrity of heart.

-- CHAPTER II. Of the means whereby we may attain unto integrity and sincerity.

-- CHAPTER III. That we must join with inward integrity, the service of the body and the outward man.

-- CHAPTER IV. That we must perform universal obedience to the whole will of God.

-- CHAPTER V. Of the properties of Christian and holy duties, which respect their causes efficient and final.

-- CHAPTER VI. Of those properties which respect our hearts and affections.

-- CHAPTER VII. Of the properties which respect the whole man: And first, diligence in all duties of God's service.

-- CHAPTER VIII. Of constancy in the duties of godliness, without remission or intermission.

-- CHAPTER IX. Reasons which may move us to be constant in all Christian duties of a godly life, and the means of it.

-- CHAPTER X. Of our perseverance in all Christian duties of a godly life.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE - Containing in it the helps and means which enable us unto it.

-- CHAPTER I. Of the rules of a godly life, whereby we may be directed in the right performing of all Christian duties. And first, of such rules as respect the causes of it, both principal and subordinate.

-- CHAPTER II. Of the rules of a godly life, which respect the circumstances of it.

-- CHAPTER III. Of the rules of a godly life, respecting the matter, form and substance of it.

-- CHAPTER IV. That we must not content ourselves with a small measure of grace, but labor to grow unto perfection.

-- CHAPTER V. Of the means whereby we may be enabled to lead a godly life: and first, of the ministry of the Word.

-- CHAPTER VI. Of the duties of the people in hearing of the Word; and first, of such as are to be performed in their preparation.

-- CHAPTER VII. Of the second public means of a godly life, which is the administration of the Sacraments.

-- CHAPTER VIII. Of the third public means of a godly life, which is Prayer.

-- CHAPTER IX. Of the private means of a godly life: and first of Christian watchfulness.

-- CHAPTER X. Of Christian watchfulness over the senses, our tongues and actions.

-- CHAPTER XI. Of the ends at which we must aim in the Christian watch.

-- CHAPTER XII. Of the reasons whereby we may be persuaded to keep this Christian watch.

-- CHAPTER XIII. Of the means whereby we may be enabled to keep the Christian watch.

-- CHAPTER XIV. Of Meditation, which is the second private means of a godly life, what it is, and the causes thereof, with the reasons

which may move us to this holy exercise.

-- CHAPTER XV. Of extraordinary Meditation.

-- CHAPTER XVI. Containing answers unto diverse objections made against this exercise of Meditation.

-- CHAPTER XVII. Of the circumstances of Meditation, as the place, time, and gesture of the body.

-- CHAPTER XVIII. Of our entrance into Meditation by due preparation.

-- CHAPTER XIX. Of our progress and proceeding in the exercise of Meditation, and what is required therein.

-- CHAPTER XX. An example and pattern of Meditation, the subject matter whereof is true and unfeigned repentance.

-- CHAPTER XXI. Showing how we must work the former points upon our hearts and affections.

-- CHAPTER XXII. Of diverse special means whereby the point meditated is wrought upon the heart and affections.

-- CHAPTER XXIII. Of the third private means of a godly life, which is consideration and examination of our estate.

-- CHAPTER XXIV. Containing diverse effectual reasons to move us unto this exercise of Meditation.

-- CHAPTER XXV. Of the fourth private means of a godly life, which is, walking daily with God.

-- CHAPTER XXVI. Of the last private means of a godly life, which is, experimental knowledge.

-- CHAPTER XXVII. Wherein is showed, that prayer is a singular means of a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XXVIII. Of reading the Scriptures and other religious writings.

-- CHAPTER XXIX. Of our preparation unto this exercise of reading, and what is required in it.

-- CHAPTER XXX. Of the duties required in the action of reading, that we may profit by it.

-- CHAPTER XXXI. That reading is a notable means to further us in the duties of a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XXXII. The last ordinary means of a godly life, is the choice of our company, shunning the society of the wicked, and consorting ourselves with the godly and Religious.

-- CHAPTER XXXIII. Of extraordinary means of a godly life, and first, of feasting, and solemn thanksgiving.

-- CHAPTER XXXIV. Of the second extraordinary means, which is, solemn fasting.

-- CHAPTER XXXV. Of the parts of a true Fast, or the things wherein it consisteth.

-- CHAPTER XXXVI. Of the arguments and reasons which may move us to lead a godly life; and first, such as respect God's nature, works, and love towards us.

-- CHAPTER XXXVIII. Of two other reasons moving us to a godly life: the one, taken from our effectual Calling; the other, from our free Justification by faith.

-- CHAPTER XXXIX. Other motives arising from those duties which we owe unto God and our neighbors.

-- CHAPTER XL. Of such reasons moving us to the duties of a godly life as respect ourselves.

-- CHAPTER XLI. Other reasons taken from our own profit, and the manifold benefits of a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XLII. Other reasons, taken from those singular privileges, which are peculiar unto those who serve God in the duties of a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XLIII. Of other singular privileges, wherewith God crowneth a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XLIV. Other singular privileges, wherewith God in this life crowneth the godly, which are the fruits and effects of his holy Spirit.

-- CHAPTER XLV. Of four other main privileges, wherewith God crowneth the godly, both in this life and the life to come.

THE SIXTH AND LAST BOOK OF A GODLY LIFE – In treating of the impediments which usually hinder and discourage men from entering into, and proceeding in the Christian duties which are required unto it, and of the helps and means whereby they may be removed.

-- CHAPTER I. Of those impediments which are cast into our way, to hinder us in the duties of a godly life, by Satan the Arch-enemy of our salvation.

-- CHAPTER II. Of worldly impediments which hinder a godly life; and first, such as are public.

-- CHAPTER III. Of such private impediments which the world useth, to hinder us in a godly life, and first, those on the right hand.

-- CHAPTER IV. Of private impediments on the left hand, as afflictions and persecutions.

-- CHAPTER V. Of external impediments whereby the world hindereth us in the duties of a godly life; and first, slanders and derision.

-- CHAPTER VI. Of worldly persecutions, and how we may be strengthened against them.

-- CHAPTER VII. Of the impediments of a godly life, which arise from scandals and offenses.

-- CHAPTER VIII. Of the impediments of a godly life, arising from the flesh: and first, such as arise from the intellectual faculties.

-- CHAPTER IX. Of those manifold impediments of a godly life, which arise from our sinful and corrupt hearts and affections.

-- CHAPTER X. Of impediments arising from our corrupt affections, and first, from carnal hope and presumption.

-- CHAPTER XI. Of the third sort of carnal affections, which are impediments to a godly life; as superstitious scrupulosity, dejection of mind, fear and desperation.

-- CHAPTER XII. Objections against a godly life made by the flesh, answered, and first, such as pretend impossibility and difficulty.

-- CHAPTER XIII. That a godly life is not tedious and troublesome to the regenerate man, but easy and familiar.

-- CHAPTER XIV. That a godly life is not harsh and unpleasant, mopish and melancholic, but above all others, most cheerful and

pleasant, sweet and delightful.

-- CHAPTER XV. Three other objections of the flesh against a godly life, propounded, and answered.

-- CHAPTER XVI. Their objection answered, who allege that their poverty presseth them to such continual labor, that they have no leisure for the duties of a godly life.

-- CHAPTER XVII. Their objection answered, who pretend that their multitude of worldly employments will allow them no leisure for religious duties.

-- CHAPTER XIII. Their objection answered, who excuse their neglect of Religious duties, under pretence that the times and places wherein they live, are full of corruption.

-- CHAPTER XIX. Divers other objections made by the flesh against a godly life, propounded and answered.

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER

-- I. A paraphrase upon the Lord's Prayer.

-- II. A private Prayer for the Morning.

-- III. Another private Prayer for the Morning.

-- IV. A Prayer for the Family in the Morning.

-- V. Another Prayer for the Family in the Morning.

-- VI. A Prayer for the Family in the Evening.

-- VII. Another Prayer for the Family in the Evening.

-- VIII. A Prayer for the Lord's Day in the Morning.

-- IX. A Prayer for the Evening of the Lord's Day.

-- X. A Prayer before receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

-- XI. A Thanksgiving after the receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

-- XII. A Prayer for the Sick.

-- XIII. A Prayer for Children.