

VOL. I



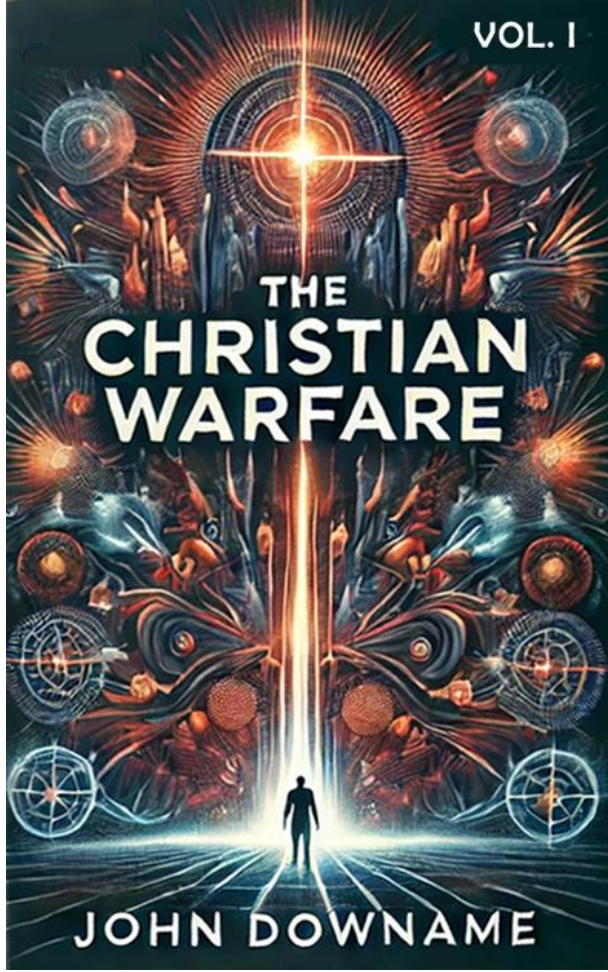
THE
**CHRISTIAN
WARFARE**

JOHN DOWNNAME

VOL. I

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This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas.

Further revision and editing done by Monergism.

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Published by Monergism Books

P.O. Box 491

West Linn Oregon 97068

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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My sincere apologies in advance where such errors occur. As the Puritan Edward Leigh once said "If thou findest faults and Errata in the book, let love cover them, for to err (as the Satirist saith) is the sad privilege of mortality, and he (of all men) erreth most, who challengeth a privilege from error." Also, the symbol <H&G>, when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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PREF. I. EDITOR'S NOTE.

To all concerned readers, greetings in the glorious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I would like to bring to your attention a small preliminary regarding this text. “The Christian Warfare” by John Downame, is a four-part series consisting originally in four separate volumes or publications. About 25 years after publishing the first volumes in the series, Mr. Downame published a complete collection of these four volumes, into a single volume, (having gone through a few editions individually,) and added a further expanding of some of his points. Unfortunately, at this time, the time and resources to OCR or transcribe, edit, correct, and publish the last, and most complete edition of Mr. Downame's “Christian Warfare” are not available. Instead, the effort has been made to make available, what God has so graciously made available to us, and that is a further correction and proofing of the original four volumes which made up “The Christian Warfare,” that have been hand-transcribed by EEBO-TCP and updated by Project Puritas. This will allow at the present, this much obscured text, to be given new life and put into the hands of readers, even if it is not the

complete, last, and fully expanded edition. Even with that, the first editions collectively total over 1,000 pages. So, there is still much wisdom and edification to be gleaned as we wait until the day the larger edition can be republished. Lord Willing, we will be releasing each volume as its own work. May this work bless and enrich your walk with Christ.

S.D.G.

Monergism.

PREF. II. TO THE GODLY, ZEALOUS, AND SINCERE PROFESSORS OF GOD'S TRUE RELIGION.

Sir John Scot, Sir Thomas Smith, and their ladies; Master Robert Chamberlain esquire, and Mistress Anne Chamberlain his wife, his well-beloved and most respected friends: J. D. wisheth the fruition of all the true comforts of this life, and eternal happiness in the life to come.

Manifold (right Worshipful) and most dangerous are the temptations and assaults of our spiritual enemies, whereby they labor to hinder the salvation of God's elect, and to increase the greatness of their hellish dominions, by withdrawing (if it were possible) God's servants from their subjection and allegiance, and making them their slaves and perpetual vassals. To this end they take indefatigable pains, going continually about seeking whom they may devour; sometimes like roaring Lions, compelling by violent force, and sometimes like old Serpents, alluring and deceiving with treacherous policies. Neither do they rest in the time of our rest, but waking and sleeping they set upon us, one while enticing us to swallow the poison of sin, with the sugared baits of worldly vanities, and another while driving us into their snares of perdition, with the sharp pricking goads of misery and

affliction. Before us they set carnal pleasures, deceiving riches, and vain honors, to allure us to come into the broad way that leadeth to destruction: and behind us they hold the three-stringed whip of loss, shame, and punishment, to keep us from going back, and to hasten us with winged speed to run forward in this hellish journey. Neither do they greatly care what path we choose in this common way of perdition; whether the spacious way of security and presumption, or the strait path of horror and desperation, whether the toiling way of insatiable covetousness, or the soft fair way of bewitching pleasures, whether the open way of worldliness and atheism, or through the hidden thickets of hypocrisy and dissimulation: in a word they regard not in what way we walk, so we go forward in the ways of sin, for though they seem diverse and contrary one to another, yet they have all the same end, meeting together in hell and destruction.

And howsoever they cannot with all their malice, power and policies attain unto their desires, by bringing God's elect and faithful ones to perdition and endless misery; because God their heavenly father who hath taken upon him their protection, frustrateth all their subtle policies with his all-seeing wisdom, and withstandeth all their might with his almighty power, yet do they exceedingly with their assaults and temptations, foil, vex and trouble them; by working in some, forgetfulness of God and of themselves, security, and careless recklessness; and turmoiling others with horrible fears, desperate doubting, and bitter agonies. Whereby it cometh to pass, that the one sort securely go on in sin, forgetting the end of their creation, redemption, and holy vocation, unto which God hath called them, until with Solomon they have found in the end of their worldly delights, nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit: and the other are so affrighted, astonished, and continually tormented with doubting's, fears, and the

continual assaults of their spiritual enemies, that they go mourning all the day long, pining away in grief and anguish of mind, till at last they grow weary of their lives, thinking their souls an intolerable burden to their bodies, and their bodies to the earth. The consideration of which lamentable and too miserable effects, as it shall move all Christians to stand upon their guard, and to arm themselves with the spiritual armor, that they may not be overcome of their temptations, and fall into these great mischiefs: so should it move God's faithful ministers (whose duty it is, not only themselves to walk in the ways of righteousness, but also as spiritual guides to lead others with them) in discharge of their conscience before God, and in Christian commiseration and compassion towards their brethren, to use all good means both by speaking and writing, whereby they may be preserved and freed from these snares which their spiritual enemies do lay to entrap them; by beating down with the cannon-shot of God's threatening's, the high forts of their proud presumption, and rousing them out of the deep slumber of reckless security; as also by raising up and comforting those that mourn in Zion, stooping, yea lying groveling under the heavy burden of their sins. The which howsoever it is performed by many, in respect of their several charges committed to them; and some also have briefly touched some points in writing, which concerned the comforting and raising up of their private friends: yet not any (that I know of) have in our language largely and generally handled these controversies, and spiritual conflicts between the Christian and the enemies of his salvation, for the common good of the whole Church. And therefore having with Elihu long waited to see if those who were more ancient, better experienced, and more richly furnished with God's gifts and graces than myself, would undertake this work, which is to God most acceptable, and to his saints and children so profitable and

necessary: at length after others long silence, I resolved to speak, and no longer to conceal such true comforts as God hath revealed unto me; to the end that hereby I might relieve and comfort those who are poor in spirit, and humbled in the sight of sin; or at least by offering willingly to this use my small mite, I might give an occasion unto others better able, to unlock and open their rich treasuries, that they may bestow upon their poor brethren their great talents and gifts of better value. The which my labors as I did not rashly undertake them, so I have not suddenly finished them; for almost three years since I purposed to take this work in hand, which I have now by God's assistance finished; but at the first (I confess) I intended not that it should come in to public view; but only (as others before me) propounded as the end of my labors, the comforting and raising up of a most faithful servant of God, and my most dear friend, who hath bound me with many benefits to the performance of all Christian duties. But afterwards finding it to grow to such a volume that it was too great to pass in a written copy, and hoping that that which was profitable for one might be beneficial unto many, at length I resolved to make my labors public by committing them to the press.

The principal things that I propounded to myself in this treatise are these; first and especially I endeavor to comfort those who are afflicted in conscience, in the sight and sense of their sins, by offering unto them certain assurance, that their sins are remitted, and that themselves are elected to eternal life, in the state of grace, reconciled unto God in Christ and received in his love and favor. Secondly, I labor to lead the Christian in an even course, unto the haven of eternal happiness; that he may not run aside, neither on the right hand, and so falling upon the rocks of presumption make shipwreck of his soul, nor yet on the left hand, and so

plunge himself into the gulf of desperation. Wherein I have purposely and advisedly avoided their practice, who scatter their consolations they know not where, to be applied they care not by whom; whereof it cometh to pass that those that are most secure and presumptuous arrogate them, to whom they do not appertain; and those that are afflicted and humbled dare not appropriate them to themselves, because they are delivered indefinitely to all, without all caution or any condition, whereby they might be restrained rather to them than any other in whom sin yet liveth and reigneth. Wherein they resemble negligent physicians, who having made a good medicine for a sick man, do not give it unto him, but cast it carelessly into some corner, whether the sick patient in respect of his faintness and weakness is likely never to come: which being found and greedily drunken up by those who have no need of it, instead of doing them good doth turn to their bane and utter destruction. Lastly, I have desired to give solid and substantial consolations, which are firmly grounded upon God's undoubted truth, and such infallible reasons as cannot be gainsaid; and have withal delivered the conditions, upon which they are to be received, and the undoubted signs and marks of those, to whom of right they appertain; to the end that those who find these things in themselves, may not doubt to apply them to their wounded consciences, whereby they may be soundly cured and thoroughly comforted; and that those who find no such condition observed by them, nor any such sign or mark in them, may be debarred from participating of these consolations, which would nourish in them security and presumption: and contrariwise examining themselves according to these rules, and finding no correspondency between themselves and them, may hereby be awakened out of their lethargy of security, and attaining unto a sight and sense of their miserable estate may never be at rest, till by using all good

means for this purpose, they may find these marks and signs of their election, vocation, justification, and sanctification in them, that so they may boldly and fitly apply unto themselves these comforts and consolations as rightly and truly appertaining unto them. All which my labors I thought good to dedicate unto your worships, partly because I desired to give this testimony of my true thankfulness, for those manifold benefits which from some of you I have received, and of mine unfeigned love which I bear to you all, for your virtues and approved godliness; and partly because I thought none fitter to whom I might commend this discourse of the Christian Warfare, than yourselves who are old experienced soldiers in fighting these spiritual battles, and therefore have judicial feeling and sensible apprehension, of those things which I have written and commended to your patronage. Now the Lord our God who is the fountain of all goodness, and the sole giver of all true consolation, increase in you more and more the gifts and graces of his sanctifying spirit, and so fill your hearts with all sound spiritual comfort, and the joy in the holy Ghost, that you may through the course of your whole lives, cheerfully go forward in the profession and sincere practice of his religion and true godliness, and after this life may receive that crown of righteousness, which is prepared and laid up for you in his kingdom of eternal glory. Amen.

Your Worships in the Lord most assured,

John Downname.

BOOK I.

**IN TREATING OF THE POWER AND POLICIES OF
OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES, AND OF THE MEANS
HOW WE MAY WITHSTAND THE ONE AND DEFEAT
THE OTHER.**

CHAP. I. THAT ALL THE GODLY ARE ASSAULTED WITH THE SPIRITUAL ENEMIES OF THEIR SALVATION.

The Apostle having shown the mystery of our salvation and the causes thereof for the confirmation of our faith in the three first chapters of his Epistle to the Ephesians, and afterwards in the other chapters having set down diverse duties both generally belonging to all Christians, and also particularly appertaining to men of sundry conditions, that he might move them to repentance and amendment of life; in the next place like the Lord's Sentinel doth discover and give us warning of the approach of mighty enemies, willing us to arm ourselves at all points in our own defense, and courageously to stand under the standard of Christ Jesus, that we may be continually in readiness to endure the encounter, chap. 6:10,11, &c. Whereby he giveth us to understand, that as soon as we seek for assurance of salvation in Christ, and endeavor to serve the Lord in a holy and a Christian life, we are to prepare ourselves for a combat, unless we would suddenly be surprised; for the spiritual enemies of our salvation banded themselves against us as soon as we have given our names unto God, and taken upon us the profession and practice of Christianity, which are the

livery and cognizance of our heavenly Lord and Master. And this is manifest by the example of God's children from time to time, who although they lived in peace and security before they were entertained into God's family, yet no sooner were they admitted to be of God's household servants, but Satan and the world have raged against them, laboring both by inward temptations and outward fury, either to withdraw them from God's service by flattering enticements, or utterly to destroy and overthrow them by open violence. No sooner had Abel offered a sacrifice of sweet smelling savor unto God, but Satan stirreth up Cain to become his butcher: whilst Moses was contented to be reputed the son of Pharaoh's daughter he enjoyed all prosperity, but as soon as he joined himself to God's people and Church, Pharaoh seeketh his life: as long as the Israelites worshipped the Egyptian Idols, they sat by their flesh-pots in peace, and quietly enjoyed the fruits of the land; but as soon as they made but a motion of serving the Lord, the King stirred up by the devil, doth rage against them with more than barbarous cruelty: whilst Paul persecuted the Church of God, Satan did not so much trouble him either outwardly in body or inwardly in mind; but no sooner was he truly converted to the faith and preached the Gospel, but presently he setteth his wicked imps on work to take away his life, which the Lord not permitting, he moveth them to persecute him by imprisoning, whipping, and stoning him; and not content with these outward afflictions, he sendeth his messenger to buffet him, that he might be no less vexed inwardly in mind then outwardly in body. Yea he spared not our Savior Christ himself, but as soon as he began to show himself to be the son of God and redeemer of mankind, in performing the duties of his calling, then especially he bendeth all his force against him, he tempteth and assaulteth

him forty days together, and taking the foil himself, he stirreth up his wicked instruments to persecute him, and at length to take away his life.

Whosoever therefore resolve to be God's servants, must make account to be his soldiers also; and whilst with Nehemiah's followers, with one hand they perform the works of their callings and Christianity, they must with the other hand hold their weapons to repel their spiritual enemies, who continually labor to hinder the Lords buildings: for no sooner do we become friends to God, but presently Satan assaulteth us as his enemies; no sooner do we receive the Lord's press money and set foot into his camp, but Satan advanceth against us his flags of defiance, laboring both by secret treachery, and outward force, to supplant and overcome us.

Here therefore is instruction for secure worldlings, and consolation and encouragement for God's children. Worldly men in stead of fighting the Lord's battles, spend their time in chambering and wantonness, in lusts and uncleanness, in Music and dalliance, in surfeiting and all voluptuousness, in covetousness and idleness, as though there were no enemy to assault them, and as if Satan were some meek lamb and not a roaring lion ready to devour them; so that good Moses coming near them cannot hear the noise of them that have the victory, nor the noise of them that are overcome, but the noise of singing and merriment, for they are not fighting the battles of the Lord of hosts, but solemnizing a Sabbath to the golden Calf, sitting down to eat and drink and rising up to play. The spiritual Canaanites are quite forgotten, and they remember not the blessed land of promise, whereunto like pilgrims they should be travailing, but make this world, this wilderness of sin, the place of their joy and delight. In a word, they flourish in their outward states, and never in their minds feel any vexation of Satan's temptations. And what is the cause of all this? If you ask them they will say, that they

have such a strong faith and peace of conscience, that Satan's temptations have no power over them; neither were they ever troubled with any of his encounters. And not content with these brags of their own happy estate, they censure and condemn God's children, accounting their state most desperate who are molested with Satan's temptations, and go mourning under the burden of sin all the day long; supposing either that they are in Satan's power, and have more grievously sinned then other men, or that they are mad and frantic so to vex themselves with such needless sorrow. But let such men know that of all others their state is most dangerous, for they are grievously sick, and have no sense of their disease, their wounds are so mortal that they deprive them of all feeling; they are assaulted, yea taken prisoners whilst they sleep soundly in security, and discern not the approach of the enemy. *Non ergo repugnant quia se impugnari ignorant*: They make no resistance because they are ignorant of the assault. And what can be more dangerous than to have the enemy approach and lay hands on us before we be aware? But this is the state of those men: for as one saith, *Tum maxim impugnantur cum se impugnari nesciant*: They are most assaulted when they feel no assault. Let them know, that they are not the Lord's soldiers but the devils revelers, and therefore he fighteth not against them because they are his friends. For there was never any of Christ's soldiers in the Militant Church which have not been exercised in this warfare; there was never any so strong in faith but Satan durst encounter him, even the Apostles, yea Adam in the state of innocence, yea our Savior Christ himself; there were never any so constant in the course of Christianity, but the world hath sought to draw them out of the right way by her baits of prosperity, or to force them to sin by threatening adversity; there were never any that have had in them one spark of God's spirit (Christ excepted) who

have not felt it assaulted and often foiled by the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and they are contrary the one to the other, as it is, Gal. 5:17. Yea the Apostle Paul himself when he was most sanctified, saw another law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, leading him captive to the law of sin, as appeareth, Rom. 7:23.

It is not therefore their strength of faith, but their carnal security which so lulleth them asleep in the cradle of worldly vanities that they cannot discern this fight; it is not their peace with God nor the peace of conscience which makes them thus quiet, for there is no (such) peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isa. 57:21, but it is a peace which they have made with Satan, a covenant with death and an agreement with hell, as the Prophet speaketh, Isa. 28:15. When the strong-armed man Satan (quietly) keeps the house, the things that he possesseth are in peace; but when a stronger than he cometh to dispossess him, he will never lose his possession without a fight; and we cannot choose but feel the blows in so sharp an encounter. Luk. 11:21. If a man never enter the field to fight against Satan, or if at the first encounter he yield himself prisoner, and be content to be tied in the pleasing fetters of sin, it is no marvel that he doth not rage in his conscience, when as already he is in his captivity ready to perform all those works of darkness wherein he employeth him; but if when Christ the redeemer is preached unto them by his Ambassadors, they would show any desire of coming out of his thralldom, surely this spiritual Pharaoh would never lose their service but by force and compulsion, neither can so strong a man be forced but we must needs feel the conflict. While the prisoner lieth in the dungeon, loaded with bolts and tied in chains, the keeper sleepeth securely, because he knoweth he is safe; but if his bolts being filed off and his chains loosed, he have

escaped out of prison, then the Jailor beginneth to bustle and pursueth him speedily with Hue and Cry: so whilst Satan holdeth us imprisoned in the dark dungeon of ignorance, loaded and tied with the heavy bolts and chains of sin, he is reckless and secure; but if our Savior by his Ambassadors in the preaching of the word, loose and unburden us of these chains and bolts, and by the light of his spirit so illuminate the eyes of our understanding, that we see the way out of Satan's dungeon of ignorance, and so escape out of his captivity, then he rageth against and pursueth us as Pharaoh did the Israelites, that either he may bring us back again into his bondage, or else destroy us, if we make resistance. Lastly they feel not any fight between the flesh and the spirit, because the flesh wholly ruleth them, and like a flood which hath a clear current carrieth them wholly into a sea of sin without any stop or resistance, and therefore no marvel they feel not this fight, when the spirit which is one of the combatants hath no force nor residence in them.

Secondly, God's children who continually feel the assaults of their spiritual enemies, and see the breaches which are made in their souls with the continual battery of their temptations, may receive no small consolation hereby, when as they consider that all who profess themselves God's servants, and resolve to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness are thus tempted and tried. For the Dragon is wroth with the woman (that is God's Church) and her seed which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, as is Rev. 12:17, and like a roaring lion seeketh their destruction, because they have renounced him, and fight under the standard of the Lord of hosts whom he maligneth: and hence it is that whilst we live without sense of sin, we eat and drink and take our ease without disturbance, but after we make any conscience of our ways and endeavor to serve the Lord, then Satan casteth against us the fiery darts of

his temptations, and we feel many conflicts between the flesh and the spirit, with which the worldly man is never troubled. So that when we are thus tempted and assaulted by Satan, the world, and our corrupt flesh, it is a strong argument to persuade us that we are entertained for God's soldiers, and have received the press money of his spirit; for Satan's kingdom is not divided, neither doth he fight against those who are his friends and servants, but against those who wage war against him and fight under the Lord's standard. True it is, that when his servants have committed such abominable and grievous sins, as have made deep wounds in their seared consciences, whereby they are awakened out of their sleepy lethargy of security, then Satan filleth them with horror and despair, that he may keep them from true repentance, when he can hide from them their sins no longer; and the Lord in his just judgment, and for the example of others, doth suffer Satan to begin in them the torments of hell in this life; but if he can by any means hide their sins and keep them quietly in his kingdom, he will never vex them. And hence it is that whereas one perisheth through despair, many thousands perish through presumption and security. Let all those therefore who feel the burden of their sins, and are vexed with the continual assaults of their spiritual enemies comfort themselves; for hereby they have assurance that they are members of the Church militant, into which none but soldiers are entertained, and that now they begin to be God's friends and servants when as Satan opposeth himself against them.

CHAP. II. WHY GOD SUFFERETH HIS SERVANTS TO BE EXERCISED IN THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT OF TEMPTATIONS.

But here it may be demanded, why the Lord will suffer his servants to be thus tempted and assaulted, whereas the wicked are free from such conflicts. I answer, first for his own glory, for whereas our enemies are strong and mighty and we weak and feeble, hereby is the Lord's omnipotent power manifested to all the world, by whose assistance such impotent wretches conquer and subdue such furious and puissant enemies.

Secondly, God suffereth his children to be tempted, that so those spiritual graces which he hath bestowed upon them may the more clearly shine to his glory. For who can know whether they be God's golden vessels before they be brought to the touchstone of temptation? Who could know the faith, patience and valor of God's soldiers, if they always lay quietly in garrison and never came to the skirmish? Who could feel the odoriferous smell of these aromatical spices, if they were not punned and bruised in the mortar of afflictions? For example, who would have discerned Abraham's faith, David's piety, Job's patience, Paul's courage and constancy, if they had been never tempted, which now to the glory of God shine to all the world?

And as the Lord suffereth Satan and his imps to try his children for his own glory, so also for their spiritual and everlasting good: for first hereby he chastiseth them for their sins past, and recalleth them to their remembrance, that so they may truly repent of them. And this cause Job speaketh of: Job. 13:26. Thou writest (saith he) bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

Secondly, hereby he manifesteth unto us our secret and hidden sins, which the blind eyes of our judgment would not discern, if their sight were not quickened with this sharp water of temptation. For so long as we live in peace, our secure consciences never summon us to the bar of God's judgment; but when we are roused up by temptation, we enter into a more straight examination of ourselves, and search what secret sins lie lurking in the hidden corners of our hearts, that so we may repent of them and make our peace with God, without whose assistance we can have no hope to stand in any temptation.

Thirdly, the Lord hereby preventeth our sins to come: for when we have experience, that the most sharp weapons, which Satan useth to inflict deep wounds in our consciences, are our sins; this will make us most careful to abstain from them, least thereby we strengthen him for our own overthrow. And as these temptations of Satan are in this regard so many bridles to restrain us from sin; so also they are so many pricks to let out the wind of vain glory, wherewith like bladders we be puffed up, as we may see in the example of Paul, who lest he should be exalted out of measure through the abundance of revelations, received a prick in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. 2 Cor. 12:7.

Fourthly, the Lord suffereth Satan to assault us, that we may hereby come to the fight of our own weakness and infirmities, when we have received

many foils; and learn to rely upon his help and assistance in all our dangers; for so proud we are by nature, that before we come to the fight we think that we can repel the strongest assaults, and overcome all enemies which oppose themselves against us by our own power; but when we see ourselves vanquished and foiled with every small temptation, we learn to have a more humble conceit of our own ability, and to depend wholly upon the Lord. And this end is set down, Deut. 8:2, and 13:3.

Fifthly, the Lord permitteth Satan continually to assail us with his temptations, to the end we may continually buckle unto us the whole armor of God, that we may be ready for the battle. For as those who have no enemies to encounter them, cast their armor aside and let it rust, because they are secure from danger; but when the enemies are at hand and sound the alarm, they both wake and sleep in their armor ready for the assault: so, if we should not continually skirmish with our spiritual enemies, we would lay aside the spiritual armor; but when we have continual use of it, both day and night we keep it fast buckled unto us, that being armed at all points, we may be able to make resistance that we be not surprised at unawares.

Lastly, by this conflict the Lord strengtheneth and increaseth all his graces in us: for as by exercise the strength of the body is preserved and augmented, and in short time decayeth through idleness and sloth; so the gifts of God's spirit, faith, affiance, hope, patience and the rest languish in us, if they be not exercised with temptations. For tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, as it is, Rom. 5:3,4,5. For when once we have been tempted and tried, and the Lord hath mercifully delivered us from the temptation, afterwards being so assaulted we patiently endure it, hoping for the Lord's assistance, believing and assuring ourselves that the Lord who hath

delivered us will again deliver us, as it is, Psal. 27:9. Moreover, when we see the great need of the graces of God's spirit, this will be a strong motive to entice us to a careful use of all good means whereby we may attain unto them, whereas if we were free from this spiritual conflict, we should not so clearly see nor apprehend the use and necessity of them.

CHAP. III. ARGUMENTS WHEREBY WE MAY BE ENCOURAGED TO ENTER INTO THIS SPIRITUAL CONFLICT.

And thus have I shown that all that will be God's servants must fight his battles against his and our spiritual enemies, and the causes why the Lord presseth us to this service; now that we may go courageously into the field, let us consider of some reasons and motives which may make us resolute and valiant. The first is the justness of our cause. For though soldiers be never so strong and well furnished, yet if their consciences tell them that they fight in a bad quarrel, it will much abate their courage, and make them cowardly and timorous. But our cause is most just, and our war most lawful, for God who is justice itself hath proclaimed it by his Heralds the Apostles. So Eph. 6:10. Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the assaults of the devil, &c. And, Jam. 4:7. Resist the devil and he will fly from you. And, 1 Pet. 5:8. Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour: 9. Whom resist steadfast in the faith.

Secondly, the cause of our war is of great weight, as namely for the glory of God and our own salvation; for in all Satan's skirmishes, he seeketh to impeach God's glory with false imputations, and to bring us to utter destruction. And this may appear by his first conflict with our mother Eve, Gen. 3:4,5; where he accuseth God of a lie, who is truth itself; and of impotency and envious disdain, saying, that the cause why he did forbid them to cate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was not (as he had said) because they should die, but because he knew that when they should eat thereof, their eyes should be opened, and they should be as God's knowing good and evil. Where first he seeketh to dim the beams of God's glory by accusing him of a lie, and to persuade them that he was not omnipotent, seeing that he was not able to hinder them from being God's, if they tasted of this fruit: lastly, that he therefore forbad them to eat thereof, because he envied them so glorious an estate. And secondly, he laboreth to destroy our first parents both body and soul, by tempting them to disobedience and the transgression of God's commandment: and therefore our Savior Christ, John. 8:44, doth very fitly join these two together, saying, that he was a liar and a manslayer from the beginning. A liar, in that he falsely accused God of lying; a manslayer, because he did it to this end, that he might murder our first parents and all their posterity both body and soul. So that you see that the end of Satan's fight is to dishonor God and destroy us, and therefore if we have any regard of God's glory (which should be more dear unto us then our own souls) or any respect of our own salvation, if we would not treacherously betray them both by our slothfulness or cowardice into the hands of God's and our enemy; let us valiantly enter the field, and never cease our courageous fight till we have obtained a full victory.

The second reason to move us to undertake this fight is the profit which will accrue unto us thereby: for if the getting of some bootie and prize, or the receiving of some trifling pay will move the soldiers of earthly Princes to undergo all dangers, and with wonderful peril of life to fight even at the Cannons mouth; how much more should the stipend of our heavenly king move us to fight this combat how terrible soever it seemeth to flesh and blood? For first that is truly here verified, *Pax belli filia*, Peace is the daughter of war, neither can we sooner enter the field to fight against these enemies, but presently we shall have peace with God, and soon after the fruit thereof the peace of conscience. Whereas if we betray God's cause to Satan and our souls to sin, well may we be lulled asleep in carnal security, but we shall never enjoy this peace with God and peace of conscience: for there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Isa. 57. And whosoever have taken this treacherous truce with Satan, shall find that he will break it for his best advantage, if not in the whole course of their lives, yet at the hour of death when as they shall be able to make no resistance.

Secondly, if we fight against these enemies and valiantly overcome, the Lord hath promised to give us to eat of the tree of life which is in Paradise, and the Manna that is hid, and that he will write our names in the book of life, Rev. 2 and 3, that is, he will in this life bestow on us all his spiritual graces, and in the life to come replenish us with such joys as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, 1 Cor. 2:9. Let us therefore strive that we may overcome, *Nam brevis est labor, premium vero aeternum*: Our labor is but short, but our reward shall be eternal. On the other side, if we consider Satan's pay which he giveth unto his soldiers, we shall find that it is nothing but the pleasures of sin for a season, and in the end everlasting death and destruction of body and soul: For the wages of sin

is death, as it is, Rom. 6:23. Who therefore is so slothful and cowardly that would not be encouraged, to fight the Lord's battles against our spiritual enemies, with such promises made by him who is truth itself and cannot deceive us? Who is so desperate and fool-hardy as to fight under Satan's banner, seeing the pay which he giveth is everlasting death, and utter confusion?

The third reason to move us to this fight, is the honor which will accompany this victory: for if earthly soldiers will purchase honor with the loss of life, which is nothing else but the commendation of the Prince, or applause of the vain people; what hazard should we not undergo in fighting the spiritual combat, seeing our grand Captain the Lord of hosts, and infinite multitudes of blessed Angels look upon us and behold our combat, whose praise and approbation is our chief felicity? What peril should we fear, to obtain a crown of glory which is promised to all that overcome, and to become heirs apparent of God's kingdom? On the other side, the shame and confusion of face which shall overtake them who cowardly forsake the Lord's standard and yield unto Satan, when as they shall not dare to look the Lord in the face whose cause they have betrayed, should serve as a strong motive to encourage us to the fight.

The fourth reason to persuade us, is the necessity of undertaking this combat. There is no man so cowardly that will not fight when there is no hope in flight, no mercy to be expected in the enemy, no outrage and cruelty which will not be committed. But such is our enemy that we cannot possibly flee from him, his malice is irreconcilable, his cruelty outrageous, for he fighteth not against us to the end that he may obtain sovereignty alone, abridge us of our liberty, spoil us of our goods; but he aimeth at our death and destruction of body and soul: if therefore we so carefully arm

ourselves against earthly enemies, who when they have done their uttermost rage can but shorten a miserable life, how much more carefully should we resist this enemy, who seeketh to deprive us of everlasting life, and to plunge us into an ever dying death?

Secondly, this fight is necessary, because in our Baptism we have taken a military sacrament, and promised faithfully unto the Lord, that we will continue his faithful soldiers unto the end, fighting his battles against the flesh, the world and the devil. There we have given our names unto Christ, to whom we owe ourselves and lives by a double right, both because he hath given them unto us, and also restored them the second time when we had lost them. There we are put in mind of his bloodshed for our redemption, which should encourage us to fight courageously, that we may be preserved from falling again into the cruel slavery of sin and Satan.

Thirdly, unless we fight this spiritual combat, and in fighting overcome, we shall never be crowned with the crown of glory: for it is not given unto any to triumph, who have not fought valiantly and subdued their enemies. The everlasting peace of God's kingdom is not promised to such cowards as never entered the field, or being entered have presently yielded themselves to be the captives of Satan: but unto those that fight courageously and gloriously overcome. If any man (saith the Apostle) strive for a mastery, he is not crowned except he strive as he ought to do, 2 Tim. 2:5. So the Apostle James, chap. 1, ver. 12, pronounceth the man blessed that endureth temptation; for when he is tried (or rather as the words are, when by trial he shall be found approved) he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Whereby it appeareth, that none are crowned unless they strive as they ought, and therefore much less they which strive not at all; that none are blessed but those who are tempted, and

being tempted endure the temptation; that first we must be tried, and by trial approved, before we can receive the crown of life.

Lastly, we may be encouraged to this fight by certain hope of victory, for we fight under the standard of Christ Jesus, who alone is mightier than all our enemies that assault us. If we did indeed regard our enemies strength and our own weakness only, we might well be discouraged from undertaking this combat, but if we look upon our grand Captain Christ, whose love towards us is no less than his power, and both infinite, there is no cause of doubting, for he that exhorteth us to the fight, will so help us that we may overcome; *Deficientes subleuat and vincentes coronat*: When we faint he sustaineth us, and crowneth us when we overcome. He hath already overcome our enemies to our hand, and hath cooled their courage and abated their force. He hath bruised the serpents head, so that he shall not be able to overcome the least of his followers, well may he hiss against them, but he cannot hurt them, for his sting is taken away. Satan was the strong man who possessed all in peace, but our Savior Christ who was a stronger than he, coming upon him hath overcome him, and taken from him all his armor wherein he trusted and divided his spoils, Luk. 11:21,22. We fought against mighty enemies and great potentates, Eph. 6:12, but our Savior hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them upon the cross, Col. 2:15, and so through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, that he might deliver all them which for fear of death were all their life subject to bondage, as it is, Heb. 2:14,15. He was indeed a mighty prince of this worldly Canaan, but our good Joshua hath subdued him, and hath left nothing for us to do who are his soldiers and followers, but to tread in his neck in token of victory. But we alas are faint-hearted, like unto

rather the first borne of Gideon, Judge. 8:20,21, for though our Savior Christ hath conquered these our spiritual enemies, and hath put the sword of his spirit into our hands, wherewith we might also vanquish them, yet we are afraid to draw the sword, because we are but fresh water soldiers and white livered; and therefore we had need to encourage ourselves, not only by looking on the victory of our chief Captain, but also on the conquest of our fellow soldiers, who were weak and frail like our selves. So likewise Christ hath overcome the world, and willeth us to be of good comfort, seeing we shall be partakers with him in his triumph, if we will join with him in his fight, John. 16:33. And though our flesh be a treacherous enemy and stronger to us then the spirit, yet so we will fight against the lusts thereof we shall be sure of victory, for he will assist us with his holy spirit, and therewith enable us more and more to mortify this old man and body of sin. Well may we take a foil in this spiritual combat, but the Lord will raise us up again; For though we fall, yet shall we not be cast off, because the Lord putteth under his hand, as it is, Psal. 37:24. And the Lord hath promised, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will give the issue with the temptation that we may be able to bear it, as it is, 1 Cor. 10:13, and he that hath promised is faithful and true, yea truth itself, and therefore he will be as good as his word. Though therefore Satan encounter us with all fury, let us not be faint-hearted, but courageously endure his assaults, and so in the end the victory will be ours: for if we resist the devil he will fly from us, Jam. 4:7, if we fight the Lord's battles valiantly, the God of peace shall tread Satan under our feet shortly, as it is, Rom. 16:20. For the promise of bruising the serpents head made by the Lord, Gen. 3:15, doth belong not only to Jesus Christ our head, but also to all those who are members of his body.

Let us not therefore fear to fight against beaten and conquered enemies, slothfully pretending our weakness to withstand these sons of Anakim, for as one saith: *Nemo hic non vincet nisi qui vincere noluit*: Everyone shall be a conqueror who desireth the conquest. For if we will be the Lord's soldiers, he will not suffer himself to be so much disgraced, as to let us be overcome by his mortal enemies. He hath armed us himself with his own armor, and sent us out to fight his battles, and therefore he will not have us vanquished, being fortified with his strength, for so should himself be overcome in us, and his weapons would be esteemed weak and insufficient. Yea he hath engrafted us into his own body, and we are lively members thereof, and therefore let us never think that all the power of hell shall be able to overcome us: for what head can with patience suffer his sound members to be pulled from his body, if he be able to defend them?

CHAP. III. OF THE MALICE OF OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMY SATAN.

And so much concerning the reasons which may encourage us to undertake this combat; now we are to speak of the spiritual warfare itself, wherein (as in all other wars) we are to consider of our preparation to the conflict, and the conflict itself. In our preparation we are first to consider of the state, quality, and condition of our enemies, and of our means how we may withstand and overcome them.

Concerning the first, in an enemy who proclaimeth war against us we are to consider two things: first of his will, and secondly of his power. For if he have will to hurt us and no power, he is not to be greatly regarded; if power and no malicious and irreconcilable will, he is not so much to be feared, but if his power be great and puissant, and his will malicious, then is it time to look about us, and to muster all our forces, that we may be ready to endure the encounter.

First therefore concerning the will of our grand and arch enemy Satan, if we consider thereof aright, we shall find that it is most maliciously bent against us, so that there is no hope of truce or reconciliation with him,

though we could find in our cowardly hearts to labor and sue for a dishonorable peace with God's and our enemy. For his malice is not newly conceived but inveterate, even as ancient within a few days as the world itself, and much more durable; for the world shall have an end, but Satan's malice to mankind is endless, because the cause thereof, namely the love and favor of God toward the faithful (whose estate he doth envy and malign, himself being eternally reprobated) shall be endless and eternal. And this appeareth in the example of our first parents, who were no sooner placed in the garden of pleasure, and possessed of Paradise, but Satan being almost burst with envy to see their happy estate, never rested till he had disgorged his malice, and dispossessed them of that happiness which they enjoyed. Neither doth he less malign and hate those who being fallen in Adam are raised up in Christ, and have the fee simple of everlasting glory, purchased by Christ's merit, assured unto them by the spirit of God and a lively faith. And hence it is that the Lord knowing Satan's malice towards his children, and that whether he fawneth or frowneth, he always seeketh their destruction, hath proclaimed open wars between us, Gen. 3:15, that we may always stand upon our guard, and not be surprised at unawares; that also we may not entertain a thought of peace, though Satan offer it on whatsoever conditions: for what peace can there be between the children of God and the children of Belial, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, seeing God himself from the beginning hath put enmity between them?

But as the malice of Satan is inveterate, so also it is mortal and deadly, not to be satisfied by offering a small injury, by taking away our goods and good name, or afflicting us with sickness, no not by taking away our lives; for nothing will satisfy him but our final destruction of body and soul. And

this his malice is lively deciphered unto us by diverse names which are given him in the Scriptures. For he is called Satan, that is an adversary, still ready to cross us in all our suites which we make unto God, as he did Joshua the high Priest, Zech. 3:1. He is called an enemy, Matth. 13:39, and that a malicious one; for where Christ the good husbandman soweth wheat, there he soweth tares, that is, hypocrites amongst true professors; to the dishonor of God, the discredit of the Gospel, and the reproach of the true professors thereof.

And least we should think that he is some mild natured enemy who will be satisfied with some small revenge, he is called a murderer and a manslayer, as though this were his profession and occupation. And least we should imagine him to be one lately fallen to this trade, our Savior telleth us that he hath been so from the beginning, so that like an old hangman he is fleshed in blood and cruelty; and therefore seeing we can hope for no mercy at his hands, let us so much the more courageously oppose ourselves against him.

But for as much as the most savage man hath some relics of humanity left in him, therefore the holy Ghost compareth him to beasts, that we may expect nothing from him but brutish cruelty; as first to a lion, yea a lion roaring after his pray, who is so hungry and ravenous, that he desireth nothing more than to seize upon that which he pursueth, 1 Pet. 5:8. Now who would not be most careful to keep himself out of the paws of such a ravenous beast? Or if he were encountered by him, who would not resist him if he had any hope of victory?

But in truth Satan is far more cruel then the roaring lion, who (if we may give credit to histories) spareth those that fall down flat before him; whereas if he should get us at such advantage, he would proudly trample us

under foot, and make us sure forever rising; and therefore least we should look for any mercy at his hands by submission, the holy Ghost calleth him the great red dragon, Rev. 12:3, which beast beareth such natural malice to mankind, that he devoureth them not only for hunger; but also for sport or hatred, in satisfying whereof he taketh great delight; such a beast is our enemy, who is so fleshed in blood and cruelty, and so overcarried with malice and hatred, that he esteemeth it his chief sport and pastime to destroy us. Yea he is far more dangerous, for the other rageth but against the body, this against both body and soul; that beast we may easily avoid, but it is impossible to flee from this winged Dragon, and therefore there is no other means to escape his fury, but by arming ourselves strongly, and fighting valiantly till we have put him to flight.

And thus you see Satan's malice joined with cruelty and raging violence, which he useth when he hath any hope of surprising us by assault; but if he find us strongly fortified with God's graces, and at all points armed with the complete armor of a Christian, if he perceive that we are hedged in and fenced on all sides (as he speaketh of Job, chap. 1:10) that is, guarded and protected by God's almighty and all ruling providence, so that he hath no hope of overcoming us by assault and force, then he showeth no less malice and more subtlety in seeking our destruction, by fawning upon us, and alluring us to sin, by offering the baits of honor, pleasure and commodity, that so he may make entrance as it were by a postern gate, and subdue us while we are abandoned of the Lord's assistance, and disarmed of our spiritual weapons, whereby we should make resistance. And thus he dealt with our first parents, who being enticed to sin, and also yielding to the enticement, and so being deprived of God's protection and the breast-plate of righteousness, were laid open to those deadly wounds which he inflicted

on them. For as soon as they had tasted of the forbidden fruit, they perceived their nakedness, and therefore covered themselves with fig leaves, too weak an armor to repel the fiery darts of Satan. Thus he disarmed the Israelites, by tempting them to worship the golden Calf, so that Moses saw that they were naked, that is, disarmed of God's favor and protection, Exod. 32:25. And this his policy he taught his servant Balaam, who when he could not curse them whom God had blessed, gave this cursed counsel to Balak, that the Moabitish women should entice the Israelites to commit with them first carnal and then spiritual whoredom, knowing that to be the only means to bring God's curse upon them. As we may see if we compare Num. 25:1,2; with the 31:16; and Rev. 2:14. And thus also this wild boar would have broken down the hedge which defended Job, by tempting him to blaspheme God. And thus our subtile enemy Simon-like enticeth us with deceiving allurements, even with our own hands to break down the wall of our defense, and to make an open passage for whole troupes of sins to enter and surprise us, whilst we (overcome with a false joy) glut and make ourselves drunk with the cup of voluptuous pleasures, and lie snorting in the dead sleep of carnal security, not so much as once dreaming of our approaching ruin and destruction.

And hereof he hath the name of tempter given him, yea he is not only called a tempter, but, the tempter, because he is a tempter of tempters, and as it were a tempter by profession, Matth. 4:2, 1 Thess. 3:5. The consideration whereof should make us most careful to withstand all his temptations, whereby he allureth us unto sin. For if we yield unto them, he will surely disarm us of God's favor and protection, and so deadly wound our souls when he hath made them naked. There is no wise man will put off his armor and cast away his weapons in the presence of his cruel enemy,

though he persuade him thereto with many flattering speeches and fair promises; and shall we let Satan disarm us, because he allureth us thereto, by promising some unlawful profit or vain pleasure, especially seeing we know him to be an enemy no less treacherous then malicious?

But as he is a tempter to entice us unto sin, so also he is our accuser after that we have sinned, requiring of God that he will execute his justice upon the offenders who have deserved punishment. Of this there need no further proof then his own testimony, Job. 1:7, where he professeth that he had been compassing the earth about; like a promoter to spy out faults, that he might inform against the offenders. But because we will not rest in his testimony, who is the father of lies, we will add thereunto another of undoubted authority: for Rev. 12:10, it is said, that the Saints rejoice, because Satan, who was the accuser of their brethren, was cast down, which accused them before God, day and night. So that Satan can spare no time, from accusing us for sin, but that which he employeth in tempting us thereunto, or in inflicting those punishments which God permitteth him to lay upon us. Whereby we may perceive the malice and treachery of our enemy, who though he be the chief cause which moveth us to sin, yet himself is the first that accuseth us for it, and that incessantly. Which may serve as a strong argument to make us wary of our ways, least falling into sin, we give Satan occasion to insult over us, and to prefer bills of inditement before our heavenly Judge, whose exact justice will not let sin go unpunished. If there were a promoter continually prying into all our actions, who were most maliciously disposed against us, and ready to inform of all our misdemeanor unto the Magistrate, how fearful would we be to do anything which would bring us within the compass of the law? But such an informer continually observeth all our behavior, even in our secret

chambers; who will not fail to accuse us even of those sins which he himself hath tempted us unto: and therefore seeing this malicious blab still prieth into our actions, this should be of more force to withhold us from all sin, then if all the world did look upon us.

But he is not only an accuser, but a slanderer also, and thereof he hath his name δῖάβολος. If therefore he can spy but an appearance of evil in us, he will not stick to say, that we have or will commit that evil which he suspecteth us of, for he will wrest and misconstrue all we do to the worst sense, and make of every molehill a huge mountain. Thus wrongfully did he slander Job, that he served God for that end for which Demetrius served his Goddess, namely for advantage, because he preserved him and blessed all he had; affirming that if he would take away his goods, and a little afflict his body, he would blaspheme him to his face, Job. 1:10. And this also teacheth us to look warily to our actions, abstaining not only from evil, but also from all appearance thereof, as the Apostle exhorteth, that so we give not to our malicious enemy the least advantage.

Neither is Satan only an accuser and slanderer, but also an executioner or hangman, ready with all alacrity and savage cruelty to inflict that punishment the which the Lord adjudgeth us unto, as we may see in the history of Job; and this also showeth unto us the extreme malice of our enemy, which maketh him to forget that glorious state wherein he was created, and with all willingness to execute so base an office.

By all which appeareth that our enemy Satan is most malicious, yea maliciousness itself, as he is called, Eph. 6:12, that is, the father and author of all malice and envy, who laboreth might and main to dishonor God and work our destruction. The consideration whereof should rouse us out of our carnal security (whereby men behave themselves, as though either they had

no enemy at all, or else such a gentle natured one, that they may have peace with him at their own pleasure) seeing there is no hope of peace and truce, unless we can be content to live in his thralldom to our utter destruction: for whomsoever he keepeth as his prisoners in this life, he will at the hour of death and judgment bring out to execution.

Let us therefore oppose against Satan's malice, Christian resolution; steadfastly purposing and endeavoring to continue our fight in resisting Satan to our lives end, how troublesome soever it seemeth to flesh and blood. For seeing there is no truce to be hoped for, nor to be desired if it were offered, by reason of the enmity which is between us and our enemy; seeing his malice is so inveterate and mortal, that there is no mercy to be expected, but all barbarous and raging cruelty; seeing also we fight the Lord's battles, who hath assured us of victory in the end: This should make us so resolute, that though we be foiled, wounded, and as it were beaten down on our knees, yet we should never yield, but make resistance even to the last gasp. For what more honorable death then to die in fighting the Lord's battles? What death more profitable, seeing by dying we shall overcome and obtain a final victory over all our enemies, and receive the crown of glory, everlasting happiness, promised to all those who fight valiantly in this combat unto the end?

CHAP. V. OF THE STRENGTH OF OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMY SATAN.

And thus have I shown the malicious will of our enemy; let us now consider of his power. For though he be most malicious, yet if he wanted power to execute his malice, we might well contemn him, and rest secure, making no great preparation to resist his weak assault. But with our enemy it is far otherwise: for as his will is most maliciously bent to hurt, so is he strong and mighty to effect his will. And this his power and ability to execute his will, consisteth partly in his strength, and partly in his skill and warlike policy, whereby he employeth all his strength to his best advantage. His strength may be considered both in himself and in his aides. In respect of his own strength he is very mighty, so that if the Lord permitteth him he is able to raise the winds, stir up tempests, bring down fire from heaven, and utterly destroy us in a moment. And this his strength the holy Ghost expresseth, by comparing him to things most strong, either in the sea or on the land, that so we may be more careful to arm ourselves against him. He is compared to the great Leviathan or Whale, Isa. 27:1, whose invincible force is described by the Lord himself, Job. 41. He is compared to a lion,

yea to a roaring lion, 1 Pet. 5:8, which ravenously hunting after his pray hath his force redoubled with his hunger. And also to a great red Dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, whose strength is so great, that with his very tail he drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth, Rev. 12:4, that is, he vanquisheth and subdueth many in the visible Church which make some profession of religion, but in their lives deny the power thereof. And this his strength is so much the more dangerous, by reason of his mortal malice and deadly poison which he casteth out of his mouth in great abundance.

And least we should contemn this brutish might, which a weak man may with policy defeat, therefore he is compared to a strong-armed man, Luk. 11:21, who keepeth in peace all that he possesseth. And least we should despise him because he is but one, the holy Ghost telleth us that he is a mighty prince, not of one land or country, but of the whole world, John. 12:31, who therefore hath infinite multitudes at his commandment, neither is there one of these princes alone, but huge multitudes of them; and therefore the holy Ghost speaking of them useth the plural number, saying, that we fight against principalities, against powers, and against the worldly governors, &c. Whereas therefore the holy Ghost doth call him the strong man, Satan, and the devil in the singular number; he would not have us to conceive that there is only one, but it is partly to note the chief of the kingdom of darkness, according to that, Matth. 25:41. Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. And in this sense he is called Beelzebub the prince of devils, Matth. 12:24. And partly to intimate unto us their great consent and agreement in seeking the destruction of mankind; for though they be a huge multitude, yet they

combine themselves together, as if they were but one, in seeking our destruction.

Otherwise the Scriptures evidently show us, that there is not one alone, but many to assault us. Matth. 12:45. One spirit taketh unto him seven more, and they all enter into one man. Mark. 16:9. It is said that Christ had cast out of Mary Magdalen seven, that is, many devils. So Luk. 8:30, there is mention made of a man possessed with a whole legion, that is, with a huge multitude. So that as our enemies are powerful in strength, so are they in numbers numberless, enow to beset us all, on all sides and in all places, and therefore our fight must needs be dangerous: which danger the Apostle aggravateth, by telling us that they are the princes of darkness, and therefore as well able to assault us in the night as in the day, which sight of all other is most terrible, when we cannot see our enemies, and therefore cannot tell on which side to defend ourselves. Secondly, he telleth us that we wrestle not with enemies of flesh and blood like unto ourselves, but with spiritual wickedness's, which are most dangerous; because being spirits they can with incredible swiftness pass from place to place which are far distant, and therefore the more fitly take all advantages, either in assaulting us at their pleasure, or withdrawing themselves when they find resistance; being spirits they can lie secretly in ambushment, even in our bedchambers, and so surprise us when they find us most reckless and secure, for we cannot discover them before we feel their assaults. Thirdly, he telleth us that they are in high places, to note unto us that they have gotten the advantage of the upper ground; and therefore the fight must needs be dangerous, when our enemy fighteth against us from an high place or fort, we standing so low that we are scarce able to reach him. But because earthly things cannot sufficiently show the power of our enemy Satan, therefore he is called the

god of this world, 2 Cor. 4:4, to note unto us, that in respect of worldly strength and human resistance, he is after a sort omnipotent, that is, able to do what he list, if he were not restrained by God's divine power, who alone is omnipotent, and overruled by no superior.

And thus you see the puissant power of this our spiritual enemy; but though he were strong, yet if withal he were a dastard and void of courage, he were the less to be feared; but as he is very strong, so also he is exceeding desperate and audacious, for there was never man that lived, whom he durst not encounter, yea and that after (by God's assistance) he had taken many overthrows. Though David were a most holy man and according to God's own heart, yet he assaulted him, and gave him diverse foils, by tempting him to adultery, murder, and in pride of heart to number the people. Though Job was by God's own testimony the justest man on earth, and therefore the best armed with the breast-plate of righteousness, yet Satan durst encounter him as long as God would suffer him. He resisted Joshua the good high Priest, Zech. 3:1. He buffeted Paul the chosen vessel of the Lord, 2 Cor. 12:7. Yea so venturous he is, that he assaulted our first parents in the state of innocence, when they were armed with free will, and might if they would have resisted his temptations. Nay, so desperately audacious is this our enemy, that he durst encounter our grand Captain Christ Jesus, who was God and man able to destroy him with a word of his mouth; and that not once but many times, after he was shamefully foiled and overthrown: yea so insolent and fool-hardy he is, that he did not only assault him here on earth when he was in the shape of a servant, and whereas in respect of his outward state he might have some hope of prevailing; but also he wageth war against him in heaven, sitting at the right hand of his father in all glory, power and majesty, when as he hath no

appearance of hope to prevail, but is most sure that he shall have the overthrow. And this appeareth, Rev. 12:7. And there was a battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, but they prevailed not, &c. Where by Michael we are to understand Christ himself, for he only is the prince of Angels; and this name signifying such a one as is equal with God almighty, can agree to no other but unto Christ alone. And by the Dragon we are to understand Satan, as appeareth ver. 9, who fought against our Savior, though he prevailed not. If therefore he durst encounter the most valiant soldiers that ever fought the Lord's battles, yea if he durst set upon our Savior Christ himself; then surely there is no doubt but that he hath courage enough to set upon us who are weak and feeble, altogether unable in ourselves to make resistance.

Seeing therefore our enemies are so puissant in strength, so innumerable in multitude, so dangerous and so audacious, let us shake off all security, and continually stand in readiness to endure the encounter: for what folly is it for us with secure worldlings to contemn, and make no reckoning of such enemies? Seeing every one of us must resist a huge multitude; seeing we which are weak and feeble are to withstand those which are strong and mighty; seeing we which are flesh and blood must enter combat with those which are spiritual wickedness's, principalities, powers, and princes of darkness; seeing we who are cowardly and fearful must sustain the encounter of those who are desperate and audacious; lastly, seeing we have in ourselves no advantages against them, and they want no advantages against us: let us not therefore foolishly contemn such puissant enemies, but with all care and diligence let us arm ourselves against them, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling, as the Apostle exhorteth, Phil. 2:12.

But as we are not securely to contemn these enemies: so we are not faintly to yield unto them, nor cowardly to despair of victory. For as all those which securely contemning them never stand upon their guard, are most sure to be surprised and overthrown; so whosoever arm themselves against them, and enter into the spiritual combat with a desire to overcome, shall most certainly obtain victory: for though their power be great, yet it is not infinite, and that which they have, it is not from themselves but from the Lord, who so curbeth them with his all-ruling providence, that they are not able to go one jot further then he looseth out the rains; as it plainly appeareth both by examples and testimonies of Scripture. Though Satan were most maliciously disposed against Job, so that he did with all extremity execute that which God suffered him to do, yet he could not go one jot further then his commission, he could not touch his substance till the Lord had said, All that he hath is in thy hand, Job. 1:12. And therefore not prevailing against him by depriving him of his goods and substance, he cometh again to the Lord to have his commission enlarged, Job. 2:1, and then having gotten authority to afflict his body, yet could he not touch his life, because the Lord had not given him so much liberty. Though Saul were a wicked man, yet Satan could not hurt or vex him, till the Lord sent him, 1 Sam. 16:14. And hence it is that he is called the spirit of God, ver. 15, and chap. 18:10, because he is God's slave and wholly at his appointment. So he could not deceive the false prophets of Ahab, till he had gotten license of the Lord, 1 King. 22:22. Nay, so far is Satan from having absolute authority and power over the faithful, that it is limited and restrained in respect of the meanest creatures; for a whole legion of devils could not so much as enter into one heard of swine, till by earnest entreaty they had obtained leave of our Savior Christ, Luk. 8:31,32. And therefore much less can they prevail

against any of God's children, seeing the very hairs of their head are numbered, Matth. 10:29. Well may Satan malign us and earnestly desire our destruction; well may he seek to sift us like wheat, as he did Peter; but our Savior Christ maketh intercession for us, so that our faith shall never fail, Luk. 22:31.

This also is manifest by plain testimonies. Jude 6, it is said, that the Lord hath reserved the wicked angels in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. 2 Pet. 2:4. God spared not the Angels that had sinned, but cast them down into hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept unto damnation. So, Rev. 20:2. Satan is said to have been bound by the Angel of the Lord for a thousand years, so that he could not stir till the Lord suffered him to be loosed. By all which the holy Ghost noteth unto us, that Satan is no more able to do us hurt, then a malefactor who being bound hand and foot is cast into a deep dungeon, or then a band-dog which is fast tied up in strong chains, till the Lord looseth him and giveth him leave.

But here some man may object, that Satan is said in the Scriptures, to resist God and to oppose himself against him, and even to fight a battle against our Savior Christ himself and his blessed Angels, Rev. 12:7. I answer, that this resistance and fight dependeth on God's permissive providence, neither could he so much as stir against God, if he did not suffer him. He is indeed most maliciously disposed against the Lord, and by this his malice is stirred up to do those things which he thinketh most displeasing in God's eyes: but because the Lord chaineth and curbeth him in with his omnipotent power, he is only able to do those things that God permitteth him, and, will he, nill he, he is constrained to obey his Creator and to be at his commandment.

Seeing therefore Satan's power is restrained by the omnipotent power of God, this may serve as a strong reason to strengthen our faith in the assurance of victory; especially considering that the Lord is not only omnipotent in power, but also in respect of his will most ready to aide and support us in all our conflicts. For he hath promised us, that we shall not be tempted above our power, for he will give a good issue to the temptation, though the beginning and middle are dangerous and troublesome, 1 Cor. 10:13. He hath promised, that if we will but resist the devil, we shall put him to flight, Jam. 4:7. Though therefore in ourselves we are very weak, yet God will assist us in this combat, which as well concerneth his own glory as our good, and being armed with his power, the gates of hell cannot prevail against us. Well may the Lord suffer us to take a foil, that thereby learning to know our own weakness, we may the more carefully rest on his power, and more earnestly crave his assistance, but then he will raise us up though we be never so feeble; for the more apparent our infirmities are, the more clearly will the omnipotent power of the Lord shine unto all the world, when by his help we have obtained victory.

Would we therefore resist Satan's force and strength? Then let us not go armed in our own power, for we are so weakened with sin and corruption, that we are not able to withstand his least assault; but despairing in our own ability, let us rely ourselves wholly on the Lord: for we are strengthened with all might through his glorious power, as it is, Col. 1:11, and though in ourselves we are able to do nothing, yet we are able to do all things, through the help of Christ which strengtheneth us, as it is, Phil. 4:13. Of ourselves we are not able to endure the least encounter of our spiritual enemies, but yet if we trust in the Lord, he will give us victory through Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15:57. And hence it is that the Apostle preparing us for this spiritual

combat, doth exhort us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the assaults of the devil, Eph. 6:10,11. If therefore we would be safely protected from the fury of Satan's power, let us not oppose against it our own strength, for then surely we shall be overcome, but let us rely ourselves on the almighty power of God, professing with the Prophet David, Psal. 18:2, that the Lord is our rock and fortress, and he that delivereth us, our God and our strength, in him will we trust, our shield, the horn of our salvation and our refuge. Let us with him call upon God which is worthy to be praised, and so shall we be safe from all our enemies, ver. 3.

In like manner, when we consider of the infinite number of our enemies, which daily assault every one of us, let us thereby be awakened out of the slumber of careless recklessness, and be stirred up to stand upon our guard more carefully: but yet let not this discourage us from the fight, because there are many to one, for the Lord is with us whilst we fight his battles, and therefore what mattereth it who oppose themselves against us? Rom. 8:31. The Lord will fight for us, therefore let us hold our peace, Exod. 14:14. The battle is not ours but God's, and therefore let us not be afraid of this great multitude, as it is, 2 Chro. 20:15, for the greater the number is which fighteth against us, the more will the Lord glorify himself in our victory, the greatness of his power shining so much the more clearly in the weakness of the means, and our infirmities serving as a foil, to make the riches of his omnipotency and glory appear more glorious. So that the Lord standing on our side, it is not material how many wicked spirits assaults us; if he take upon him our preservation, we need not care though the whole power of hell seek our destruction. But if such be the frailty of our faith, that we would oppose number against number, let us consider that if we will

fight the Lord's battles, he will send as many blessed Angels to our aid and rescue, as there are wicked spirits which assault us; for the Angels of the Lord pitch their tents round about them that fear him, and deliver them, as it is, Psal. 34:7. So that if the Lord open our eyes, as he did the eyes of Elisha's servant, we shall plainly perceive that there are more with us then against us, 2 King. 6:16,17.

So when we consider that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness's, this should make us labor that our care and diligence may countervail the disadvantage which we have in the fight. But we are not to be discouraged hereby from entering the combat: for though we be but flesh and blood, yet the spirit of God dwelling in us, can easily discern and defeat all Satan's ambushments; for light and darkness are to him alike. And whereas Satan can with great agility give the assault and retire back for his best advantage, God's spirit far excelleth him, for he is present in all places at all times; so that Satan can no sooner offer to strike, but God's spirit is ready to defend; no sooner can the devil tempt, then the Lord enableth us to endure the temptation. And though Satan fighteth from high places, and so taketh the advantage of the upper ground, yet let not this dismay us in our fight, for there is one higher than he who laugheth him to scorn, and maketh frustrate all his enterprises.

Lastly, when we consider that our enemy is desperate and audacious, we are not to cast away our spiritual weapons and forsake the field, but let it rather serve as a strong motive to make us arm ourselves with Christian resolution: for seeing Satan is so audacious and venturous in the assault, surely we should be as valiant and bold in giving him the repulse; if he be desperate in seeking our destruction, it behooveth us to be resolute in seeking our preservation, seeing this much more concerneth us then the

other him; especially considering that though we take many foils, and be often beaten down with the violent blows of his temptations, yet in the end we shall have assured victory. And why therefore should Satan show more resolution when he is sure to be vanquished, then we who are sure of the victory, if we do not cowardly yield?

CHAP. VI. OF SATAN'S AIDES: AND FIRST OF THE WORLD.

And so much concerning Satan's strength, being considered in himself. But besides himself he hath the aide of other enemies to supplant us, who though they do not make so terrible a show, yet they are no less dangerous, and all these are led under the conduct of two Captain Generals, the World and the Flesh.

By the world I understand impious carnal and unbelieving men, with all their baits and enticements unto vanity, and all their discouragements, afflictions and miseries wherewith they hinder God's children in travailing the path of righteousness which leadeth to God's kingdom. This wicked world, the devils darling and chief champion, doth assault us on both sides; on the right hand it encountreth us with prosperity, offering us the bait of pleasure, that thereby it may allure us to swallow the hook of sin; it casteth before us the golden apples of riches, that by stooping down to gather them, we may be hindered in running the Christian race, and so lose the goal and garland of everlasting glory; it tempteth us with the honors and glory thereof to dishonor God, and to fall before Satan, worshipping him by our

sins; in a word, it promiseth whatsoever our corrupt minds desire, if we will live in sin, and turn aside out of the narrow path into the broad way, which leadeth to destruction. And how prone we are to listen to these Sirens songs, it is but too manifest by lamentable experience: for doth not our first love wax cold, and our former zeal of God's glory freeze as soon as the world fawneth upon us, and quencheth in us the heat of God's spirit, by casting on us the waterish vanities of pleasures, honors and riches? Do not hereby religious servants become irreligious masters? And young saints in show, old devils in truth? Do we not see that as soon as Demas hath embraced the world, he forsaketh Christ? Yea that Peter himself denieth his Master, when he hath basted himself by the fire of this wicked Caiaphas? Are there not many who have been forward professors in the time of their adversity and want, which cast off the cloak of their profession as soon as the warm sun of prosperity hath shined upon them? Is there not many amongst us who in the time of affliction could not be enforced by torments to profane God's name, by swearing an idle oath; or his Sabbaths by following their pleasures, or by doing the works of their callings; and yet the same men after they have fallen into wicked company, who have enticed them by their words and evil examples to taste of the world and the vanities thereof, will not stick to swear with the swearer, and follow their pleasures on the Lord's Sabbath with the most profane? So hard a thing it is to resist the world when it fawneth on us.

But how hard soever it seemeth to flesh and blood, yet must we oppose ourselves against this enemy also: for without a fight we can never obtain victory, and without victory we shall never receive the crown of glory. And to the end that we may be provoked to fight against the world and the vanities thereof, we are to know, that though it fawn upon us, yet it is our

mortal enemy; though it flatteringly profess itself our friend, yet in truth it fighteth against our souls under Satan's banner, for he is the prince thereof, John. 12:31, though it have honey in the mouth, yet there is deadly poison in the tail, for the end thereof bringeth destruction; though it offer us many pleasing things to allure us, yet they are but baits which entice us to come within the compass of Satan's nets of perdition. Let us consider, that though it maketh a show, and seemeth a pleasant place like the paradise of God, yet it is a Sodom of sin, which one day the Lord will destroy with fire and brimstone: and therefore let us with righteous Lot haste out of it, never turning back with a desire to enjoy the vanities thereof, for the world wholly lieth in wickedness, as it is, 1 John. 5:19. Let us remember that it is impossible to serve God and this Mammon, Matth. 6:24, to love the world and God also: For if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him, 1 John. 2:15, and as the Apostle James telleth us, The amity of the world is enmity with God: and whosoever will be a friend of the world, maketh himself the enemy of God, Jam. 4:4. Neither let us desire the love of the world, for it loveth those only which are her own, as for those whom Christ hath chosen out of it, those the world hateth: nay therefore hateth them because Christ hath chosen them, as it is, John 15:19.

Let us remember it will be to small purpose to enjoy these worldly pleasures of sin for a season, and in the end plunge ourselves into everlasting death; that the worlds music is but the Sirens song, which allureth us to make shipwreck of our souls on the rocks of sin, and while it tickleth the ear it woundeth us to the very heart; that though the cup which it offereth be of gold, and the drink sweet in taste, yet it is deadly poison in operation; for they that drink thereof are so lulled asleep in pleasures and security, that they never awake out of their spiritual lethargic; or if they do,

yet like Sampson, without strength to resist the spiritual Philistines, after the world (like Delilah) hath lulled them a while in her lap of carnal pleasures. Let us remember, that they who drink of this cup of voluptuous vanities, must afterwards drink of that cup spoken of, Psal. 75:8, that is, the cup of God's wrath; and shall be tormented in fire and brimstone for evermore, as it is, expounded, Rev. 14:10. Let us remember that the worlds chief good is uncertain in getting, and momentary and mutable in the possession, it being every day ready to leave us, or we to leave it. Lastly, let us remember that for this short, inconstant, and vain joy, we lose an eternal weight of unspeakable glory, and plunge ourselves into grievous and endless misery. What therefore will it profit us to gain the whole world, and lose our own souls, as our Savior speaketh, Mark. 8:36.

And if we have these meditations continually running in our minds, then shall we easily stop our ears at the first hearing of this Sirens song; then shall we constantly go forward in our pilgrimage towards our heavenly home: and though honors stand before us, riches on the one hand, pleasures on the other, alluring us to enter into the broad way which leadeth to destruction; yet shall we not forsake the straight path which leadeth unto life everlasting, how unpleasant soever it seemeth to flesh and blood.

But if the world cannot thus prevail, then doth she turn her, smiles into frowns, her allurements into threats, her beds of pleasures, into miseries and afflictions, her glorious offers of honors and riches, to proud menacing's of poverty and ignominy; all which being terrible in the eyes of flesh and blood so far prevail with some, that they move them to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; and being weary in travailing through this desert and unpleasant wilderness unto the land of promise, they desire to return back into the bondage of the spiritual Pharaoh, that they may quietly

sit by the flesh-pots of Egypt, and glut themselves with the cucumbers and melons of carnal pleasures: that is, they choose rather to walk in the broad way which leadeth to destruction, because it is delightful, than in the narrow way which leadeth to everlasting life, because they must pass through the briars of affliction and thorns of tribulation, before they can receive the crown of glory; they prefer the pleasures of sin for a season, before the recompense of reward, which God hath promised, even the eternal joys of the kingdom of glory. So unpleasant a thing it is for flesh and blood to deny it self, and to take up the cross and follow Christ.

Yet though the world be far more terrible to look upon when it frowneth, then when it fawneth, yet is it far less dangerous. For oftentimes this poison of adversity is so tempered and corrected with those wholesome preservatives of faith, hope, patience and humility, that in stead of killing us, it doth but purge away our corrupt humors of sin; though the world whip us, yet thereby it correcteth us, and makes us better; though it burn us in the fire of afflictions, yet it doth not consume, but rather refine us from our dross; though like a stormy wind it shaketh us, yet in stead of blowing us down, it causeth us to take more deep root in all virtue and goodness: in a word, as it playeth the schoolmaster in scourging us, so also in instructing and teaching us to know God, and to know our selves; to know the vanity of the world, and to labor after a more permanent felicity.

Notwithstanding, howsoever by the grace and blessing of God, adversity (the worlds churlish son) oftentimes worketh these good effects; yet in itself it is a temptation, and that a strong one, to draw us from God, by causing us to murmur and repine: yea as Satan said of Job, to curse God to his face, to envy all who seem unto us more happy then ourselves, to despair of God's mercy, and to use unlawful means, that thereby we may better our estate.

And therefore it behooveth us to arm ourselves against the violence of this enemy also, least building our houses upon the sands of security they be overturned, when the winds of afflictions and floods of adversity and persecution blow and beat against us. And to this end we are to remember, first, that these fatherly corrections are evident testimonies to assure us that we are not bastards, but God's dear children, whom he gently chastiseth, that we may not be destroyed with the world; that now Christ hath chosen us out of the world, seeing the world hateth us; that now we are the friends of God, when the world (Satan's eldest son) becometh our enemy: for so long as we are of the world the world loveth us, for it loveth her own. Secondly, let us continually remember the recompense of reward, and then shall we with Moses voluntarily choose rather to suffer adversity with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches, than the treasures of Egypt, as it is, Heb. 11:25,26. Then shall we endure to be tried and purified in the furnace of afflictions, if we know that after we are found to be pure gold, the Lord will lay us up in his treasury of everlasting happiness. Lastly, let us remember, that eternal blessedness is promised to those that mourn with a godly sorrow, and eternal woe denounced against those who pamper themselves with worldly delights. Matth. 5:4. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. So ver. 10. Blessed are they which suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Luk. 6:21. Blessed are ye which hunger now, for ye shall be satisfied: blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. And ver. 25. Woe be unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger: woe unto you that now laugh, for ye shall wail and weep. And lest the tediousness of our troubles should discourage us, or the weight of them press us down, the Apostle telleth us, that they are but light

and momentary, causing notwithstanding unto us a far most excellent and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. Why therefore should this little spot of foul way, cause us to stand still, or go out of our course, which leadeth to everlasting happiness? And thus much shall suffice to have spoken here of this enemy for our present purpose, referring the Reader for a more full discourse to the second and third parts of this Christian Warfare.

CHAP. VII. OF THE FLESH, AND THE STRENGTH THEREOF.

And so much concerning the world. The second enemy which assisteth Satan against us is the flesh, which is that inborne traitor which we nourishing in ourselves, doth open a gate in our souls, into which Satan and the world may easily send whole troupes of temptations to enter and surprise us. By the flesh we are not to understand the body alone and the flesh thereof, but that corruption of nature which hath defiled both body and soul, being spread and mixed with every part of both, even as the light is mingled with darkness in the twilight or dawning of the day; whereby we are made prone to all sin, and ready to entertain all temptations, which promise the satisfying of any of the lusts thereof. This secret traitor conspiring with Satan and the world to work our destruction, doth entertain and further all their temptations; it fighteth and lusteth against the spirit, it rebelleth against the law of our minds, and leadeth us captive to the law of sin, it hindereth us from doing the good we would, and maketh us commit the evil which we hate, as it is, notably set down, Rom. 7. So, Gal. 5:17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these

are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would.

This enemy the holy Ghost in the Scriptures deciphereth by diverse names; for it is called the old man, the old Adam, the earthly, carnal, and natural man, the sin which is inherent and dwelleth in us, the adjoining evil, the law of the members, the lusts of the flesh which fight against the soul; by all which is signified our corruption of nature, which is derived from our first parents, whereby we are made backward unto all good, and prone unto all evil, unapt to entertain any good motions of God's spirit, but most ready to receive and embrace all the suggestions and temptations of the world and the devil, as the wax the print of the seal, or the tinder, fire. And this the Apostle James showeth, chap. 1:14, Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own concupiscence and is enticed: 15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. So that as Satan is the father, so the flesh is the mother of sin, which receiving Satan's temptations as it were into a fruitful womb, doth conceive, nourish, and bring forth sin, which no sooner is borne, but like a deadly stinging serpent, it bringeth death to body and soul, unless the poison thereof be overcome and taken away by the precious blood of Christ.

And thus you see what the flesh is, and how it conspireth with Satan in seeking our destruction, whereby appeareth the treachery and dangerousness of this our enemy. The treachery thereof is hereby manifest, in that being in outward show a dear friend, and more near than an alter idem, another self, it notwithstanding aideth Satan to our own overthrow. So as we may complain with David, Psal 41:9. My familiar friend whom I trusted, which did eat my bread, hath lift up the heel against me. For this Judas which daily followeth us, and eateth, drinketh and sleepeth with us,

doth betray us into the hands of those enemies who seek our life; and that, when it seemeth lovingly and kindly to kiss us.

And as it is, most treacherous, so also most dangerous, and hard to be overcome, for as much as it is, in ourself, and the greatest part of ourself, and therefore we cannot forsake it, unless we forsake ourselves; we cannot fight against it, unless we raise intestine and civil wars in our own bowels; we cannot vanquish it, unless we subdue ourselves; and if we seek to run away from it, we might as easily flee from our own shadows, yea from ourselves, for we carry it in our own bosoms. How hard therefore is this enemy to be overcome? How dangerous and irksome must this fight needs be, wherein ourselves must be enemy to ourselves? So that we cannot obtain the victory, unless we be overcome; we cannot be sure of life, unless we mortify and kill our greatest part; we cannot sustain our selves, but we nourish our enemy; we cannot famish our enemy, but we ourselves shall pine with hunger. Who would not think the estate of those citizens to be most dangerous, who being besieged by foreign forces, harbor amongst them more traitors which are hourly in readiness to open the gates and betray the city into their enemies hands, than true subjects and loyal citizens to stand in their defense? But this is our case, we are besieged with foreign forces, the world and the devil; and we nourish in us secret traitors, even the flesh, with whole legions of the lusts thereof, which are continually ready to open the gates of our souls, even our senses of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, whereby whole troupes of temptations enter and surprise us.

The consideration whereof should make us most watchfully to stand upon our guard, and to use such Christian policy to withstand our enemies, and prevent their treacherous attempts, as true-hearted citizens would use in the

like case; who if they were besieged with foreign forces, and knew that they harbored traitors, who sought all opportunities of betraying their city into their enemies hand, they would if they were strong enough lay hand on them, draw them to the place of judgment, condemn and put them to death; but if they found them too great and strong a party, then they would use all good policy to make them weaker, by depriving them of their food and provision, weapons, armor and munition, and all other means wherein consisted their chief strength; and then they would set upon them being thus disabled, and proceed in the course of justice before mentioned: so we being in continual danger to have the city of our souls sacked through the treacherousness of our flesh, must, if we be strong enough and powerful through God's spirit, mortify, kill, and abolish the flesh, and the lusts thereof; but if we find the spirit weak and the flesh strong, we are to disable it by fasting and watchfulness in prayer, by withdrawing from it the food with which it is nourished, that is, voluptuous pleasures and worldly delights, but especially being weak in ourselves, we are to implore the aide and assistance of God's spirit, whereby we may be strengthened and enabled to subdue and mortify the lusts of the flesh, which rebel and fight against our souls, being assured by God's merciful promise, that if we ask and desire his spirit, he will give it us, Luk. 11:13, and having the spirit of God to assist us, we shall be sure of victory.

But if in stead of mortifying and taming the flesh and the lusts thereof, we pamper them like Epicures with all voluptuous delights; we shall but strengthen our enemies to cut our own throats: if we delicately bring up this servant, which we should use as a slave, at length it will be not only as our son, but a tyrannous Lord and master, which will bind us hand and foot in the fetters of sin, and cast us into the prison of hell. What folly therefore is

it to nourish and arm our enemy to our own destruction? But of this enemy I have written at large in the fourth part of my Christian Warfare, unto which I refer the Reader who desireth to be better informed of this enemy, and to be instructed in the manner whereby he may resist and overcome him.

CHAP. VIII. OF SATAN'S POLICY.

And thus much of the flesh, which is the second enemy that joineth with Satan in working our destruction; and thus much also concerning the first part of our enemies power, which consisteth in the strength either of himself or of his aides: now we are to consider of the second part, which consisteth in his warlike policy and skill, in employing this his strength to his best advantage.

If our enemy had great strength, and yet wanted policy, he might the more easily be resisted, and the sooner vanquished; for strength without wit is like a giant without eyes. But as our enemy is exceeding strong, so is he also no less subtle and politic, in employing all his strength to his best advantage; and therefore as in regard of his strength he is called in the Scriptures a lion, and a mighty dragon; so in respect of his subtlety and wiliness he is called a serpent, yea an old serpent, which being the subtlest of beasts, hath his craft redoubled by his age and experience, Rev. 12:9, and hereof he is called in the Scriptures, δαιμόνιον *quasi* δαήμων, to signify unto us his great knowledge.

No marvel therefore though Satan should be an expert soldier, seeing he is not only of wonderful strength, but also of great knowledge by creation; which though in respect of good things it was much decreased by his fall, yet in sleights and stratagems it is much increased by his long experience from the beginning of the world, even almost six thousand years; which is sufficient to make one wise that is by nature foolish and simple, and therefore much more Satan, who is by nature very politic; being also a spirit, and hereby fit to dive as it were into the secrets of nature, and with incredible swiftness to pass from place to place, ready to intrude himself into all companies secretly, and to learn the nature, qualities and dispositions of all men, against whom he fighteth. And though he cannot know our thoughts directly and certainly, for this is proper to God alone to be the searcher of hearts, yet he hath such intelligence from our affections, lusts, inclinations and outward actions, that he can shrewdly guess at them, if he do but a while keep us company, and see our disposition and conversation. So that we cannot give Satan the least advantage, but he is ready to take it and make use thereof to our overthrow; we can lay no plot against him but he discerneth it, and is ready to prevent it. And therefore in this respect our state is like the king of Arams, 2 King. 6:12, for Satan our enemy knoweth all our counsels and consultations which we take and hold in our most secret chambers.

And thus you see what Satan's policy is: against which we must oppose no less wisdom and skill, if we will have the victory. Whereas therefore we are foolish by nature, or wily to beguile ourselves; that wisdom which we have naturally being worldly and carnal, which is enmity against God, Rom. 8:7, and therefore more fit to betray us into the hands of our enemy, than to defend us from him; it behooveth us to go out of ourselves into the

Lord's treasury of wisdom, and there to furnish us with such spiritual saving wisdom, as shall be fit to oppose against the subtle policy of our spiritual enemy. That is, we must continually hear and meditate in God's word, which will make us wise and skillful in descrying all Satan's stratagems, and also in preventing them being discovered. For howsoever in the dark night of ignorance and error we may easily fall into his ambushments, yet the light of God's word shining unto us, will plainly disclose them to the eyes of the most simple.

But besides this theoretical wisdom seated in the understanding, there is also a practical or operative wisdom required in God's word, which showeth itself in our affections and actions. And it consisteth in the fear of the Lord, that is, true godliness and sincerity of heart. Of this Job speaketh, 28:28. The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. So Psalm. 111:10. The fear of the Lord is the head or beginning of wisdom. And Prov. 28:7, he is called a wise son which keepeth the law. So that our chief wisdom consisteth in the fear of the Lord, and in a godly endeavor of performing obedience to the Lord's commandments.

If therefore we would attain unto such spiritual wisdom that we may resist our spiritual enemy, we must be conversant in hearing and reading the word of God, meditating therein with the Prophet David both day and night; and withal we must by all means seek the fear of the Lord, laboring to lead our lives in a constant course of true godliness. And though we are full of infirmities, yet at least let us have a holy endeavor to perform service unto God, in truth, uprightness, and integrity of heart. And so we may assure ourselves that though we be never so simple and foolish by nature, yet shall we be wise enough to withstand and overcome our spiritual enemies: for the Lord who is wisdom itself will direct us in our ways, and he also will so

infatuate this cursed Achitophel, and turn his wisdom into foolishness, that we shall never thereby be hurt or circumvented.

But on the other side, though we be never so wise in carnal wisdom, and though our heads be a storehouse of politic stratagems, yet if we neglect God's word, and voluntarily give ourselves over unto sin and disobedience, we shall be so besotted with folly, that Satan will easily deceive and circumvent us. An example whereof we have in our first parents, who though they were more wise by creation than ever were any living (Christ excepted) yet when they cast the word of God behind their back, giving more credit to Satan's suggestions, and withal transgressed God's commandment; their wisdom was turned into ignorance and folly, and they became an easy pray to their malicious enemy. And whereas they thought by that means to have gone beyond the Lord in policy, and to have obtained a far greater measure of knowledge and glory, they were in steed thereof besotted with folly, and overwhelmed with ignominy and shame, by being made the bondslaves of sin and Satan. And thus also the heathen neglecting the true worship of God, and giving themselves to idolatry, became fools, whilst they professed themselves very wise, as the Apostle witnesseth, Rom. 1:22, for the Lord destroyeth the wisdom of the wise, and casteth away the understanding of the prudent, as it is, 1 Cor. 1:19.

Seeing then our chief wisdom consisteth in the study of God's word, and in uprightness of heart, integrity, Christian sincerity and simplicity, and in a holy care of performing obedience to God's will, let us therefore continually meditate in God's word, and with the Prophet David make it our counselor, Psal. 119. And whensoever Satan doth assault and tempt us to sin, let us have recourse to this our counselor the word of God, there inquiring whether that whereunto we are tempted be lawful or no; and if it tell us that

it is a sin, let us with all care and conscience avoid it: for though Satan lay over it never so fair a gloss, and entice us to the committing thereof, by offering unto us the greatest pleasures, riches and honors of the world, yet let us assure ourselves that he thereby seeketh to circumvent us; and to purchase worldly vanities, he enticeth us to sell our souls; and therefore in Christian wisdom let us avoid his stratagems.

CHAP. IX. OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR DESCRIBED, EPH. 6.

And thus have I shown the nature and quality of our enemy against whom we must fight; both in respect of his will, and also his power, consisting in his strength and policy; and also I have shown some means which in our preparation against him we must use carefully, that we may withstand him; namely, by opposing against his malicious will, Christian resolution; against his strength, the omnipotent power of God's might; against his subtle policy, Christian wisdom, consisting in the knowledge of God's word, and true integrity and simplicity of heart.

Now we are to speak of the last means which we are to use in our preparation immediately before our combat; that is, we are to arm ourselves against the encounter: and to this end (because we are but fresh-water-soldiers and of small experience) let us take the counsel and advice of the Apostle Paul, one of God's chief champions and expert soldiers, as he setteth it down, Eph. 6:11-14, &c. where first he describeth the quality, and as it were the metal of our armor; in which respect he telleth us, that we must put on the armor of God which is spiritual, and that our weapons and

armor must not be carnal. For being of this nature, though they were never so strong, they were to no purpose, seeing our enemy is spiritual; neither do we wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness's, as it is, Eph. 6:12. In vain therefore it were with the Papists to seek to defend ourselves with holy water, or Crucifixes, or rags and relics of Saints, from the violent assaults of this our enemy; or else with desperate hacksters to trust in our sword, buckler and spear: for well is that verified of this spiritual Leviathan, which the Lord speaketh of the earthly Leviathan, Job. 41:17,20. When the sword doth touch him, he will not rise up, and he laugheth at the shaking of the spear. And therefore when we are to encounter this great Goliath, we are to lay aside the carnal weapons of Saul, which are altogether unfit for a Christian, serving rather to burden and so hinder him, than to defend and further him in this spiritual combat; and we are to go against him in the name of the Lord, strengthened in the power of his might, putting on us the armor of God, that is, such divine and spiritual armor as the Lord hath given and appointed us to use. For it is not sufficient that we prepare us this armor, if we let it lie by us, or suffer it (as it were) to hang upon the walls, there to rust without use; but we are to put it on, and keep it fast buckled unto us both night and day, that we may be always in readiness to endure the assault of our enemies.

Neither is it enough that we put on one piece of the armor, and like young soldiers leave off the rest for lightness sake, or else through fool-hardiness to show needless valor; we must not put on the helmet of salvation, and leave off the breast-plate of righteousness; nor take unto us the girdle of verity and the shield of faith, and cast away from us the sword of the spirit, but we are to put on the whole armor of God, and like valiant soldiers, who mean indeed to stand to it, we are to arm ourselves at all points in complete

armor of proof, which will keep us from fleeing, and our enemy from overcoming. For if we take none of the Christian armor, or but some of the lightest parts, if we take the shield of faith, and leave behind us the breast-plate of righteousness, we shall either desperately fight and be overthrown in the battle, or else cowardly run away and forsake the field. But on the other side, if we buckle unto us the whole armor of God, we shall not need to flee away for fear, being so well defended; nor to doubt of victory, for we shall surely overcome; the Lord having given, and we having received this armor to this end, as the Apostle noteth unto us in these words; that you may be able to stand against the assaults of the devil, or his treacherous ambushments, as the word here used, signifieth. So that the Lord hath given us this armor, and we put it on, to the end that we may be enabled to resist Satan; and therefore seeing it is armor of God's own making and bestowing, we may assure ourselves that he will not suffer his workmanship and gift to be so much disgraced, as that Satan should pierce thorough it and wound us. For the Lord knoweth the force of Satan's darts, and bullets of temptation; and he hath made his armor high proof; and therefore strong enough to repel all the battery of Satan's suggestions.

And that we may be the rather stirred up with all care and diligence to provide and buckle fast to us the armor which he after describeth, he showeth the necessity thereof, by describing the dangerousness of our enemies, who being not flesh and blood, but principalities, powers, worldly governors, princes of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness's, which are in high places, cannot possibly be resisted by our own strength and means. And (therefore) for this cause he willeth us to take unto us the whole armor of God, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, that is, the time of temptation, which is therefore called the evil day, partly because

therein Satan tempteth us unto evil, and partly because it is a time of trouble, adversity and affliction, when Satan sifteth us with his temptations. And thus the evil day is taken Psal. 41:1. The Lord will deliver him in the evil day, that is, (as our translation also reads it) in the time of trouble. And thus also it is used Eph. 5:16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil, that is, full of troubles and afflictions. And therefore Beza doth translate in this place, *tempore adverso*, the time of adversity. By which we learn not to esteem our spiritual fight as a May-game, but as a time of trouble and adversity, wherein we are assaulted by mighty enemies, and oftentimes foiled and wounded; and therefore we must not voluntarily run into temptations, seeing the time of them is evil and full of trouble; but rather fervently pray unto the Lord that he will not lead us into temptation, considering our own weakness and our enemies power; or if it please him to make trial of us, that he will not suffer us to fall therein, but that he will deliver us from evil, for as much as the kingdom and power and glory is his alone, and therefore he is of power sufficient to save and deliver us.

But as we are not securely to rush into the field of temptation against our spiritual enemies, so we are not when our enemies sound the alarm to battle and assault us, cowardly to cast down our weapons and to run away: for the Apostle would not take away from us true valor and Christian fortitude, but carnal security and recklessness; and therefore though our enemies be mighty, and the time of temptation full of trouble, yet he biddeth us not to cast off our armor and to run away, wholly despairing of victory, but he exhorteth us for this cause, to take unto us the whole armor of God, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, and having finished all things may stand fast; that is, having put our enemies to flight and obtained the victory, we may like conquerors stand last in the field, as it were triumphantly

insulting over them; whereby he intimateth thus much, that if we will take unto us the whole armor of God, how weak soever we be in ourselves, yet shall we be enabled to resist our spiritual enemies in the evil day; and not only so, but also obtain victory and triumph over them.

And therefore he willeth us not to be dismayed, neither with our enemies power, nor our own trouble, but to stand to it, saying, ver. 14. Stand therefore: by which word he intimateth unto us diverse duties: first, as in the camp every man hath his place appointed him, and his proper colors under which he is to keep him; so all Christian soldiers have their stations, that is, their vocations whereunto they are called of God, within the limits whereof they are to contain themselves: and these are first their general calling whereby they are entertained into the Church militant, which is God's camp or army, where they are to fight under the standard of their captain Christ: and secondly their special callings, whereby there is appointed to every member of the militant Church, a certain standing, and particular and proper duties and functions which he is to execute, as it is, in the armies of earthly princes. First therefore we must contain ourselves within our general vocation and station, that is, we must keep us in God's army and camp, the Church militant: for as those straggling soldiers who depart from the army and range abroad to forage, or get some bootie, are easily vanquished by their enemies; so those who depart and make an apostasy from God's Church, to gain or retain their pleasures and worldly preferments, are easily overthrown, falling into Satan's ambushments. And secondly, everyone is to contain himself within the limits of his special vocation, and to keep his peculiar standing appointed him by God: for as there is nothing more pernicious to an army than disorder, when as some intrude themselves into others place, as when the common soldier will be an

officer, the Lieutenant Captain, and the Captain, General of the army; so nothing is more hurtful to the Church militant, than when disorderly one usurps another's place and office, as when the Ministers will be Magistrates, and the Magistrates Ministers, and when the common people usurp the office of them both. Secondly, when as he biddeth us stand in our places, he restraineth us from two extremes: the one, that we do not willfully thrust ourselves into the combat of temptations before we be assaulted, and so as it were run out of our standings to seek an enemy: and secondly, that when we are assaulted we do not flee away, but stand to it valiantly and endure the violence of the assailants. Lastly, he exhorteth us to watchfulness and painful diligence, for we must not drowsily and securely lay us down and give ourselves to sleep, nor yet sit idly as though we had nothing to do; but we are to stand upon our guard, and to watch continually, that we may always be in readiness to withstand the assaults of our enemies; otherwise if we sleep in security, they will suddenly set upon us and surprise us at unawares.

CHAP. X. OF THE PARTICULAR PARTS OF THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR: AND FIRST OF THE GIRDLE OF VERITY.

And thus the Apostle having taken away all reckless security and foolhardiness, and also strengthened us with true valor and Christian fortitude, in the next place he describeth the armor of God which we are to buckle unto us. Where first we are generally to observe, that we are not curiously and scrupulously to search out the reason why such and such virtues are likened to these or those pieces of armor: as for example, why he calleth truth a girdle, righteousness a breast-plate, faith a shield, &c. for it was not the Apostles purpose so exactly to fit the similitudes, as may appear, 1 Thess. 5:8, where he indifferently ascribeth the name of breast-plate both to faith and charity, by which here he understandeth righteousness; but only briefly and generally to show what virtues and graces of God's spirit are most necessary for a Christian, wherewith he may be enabled to resist his spiritual enemies, continuing his former allegory taken from wars. But let us come to the armor itself, which is both defensive and offensive: the first part is the girdle of verity. The word here used signifieth a broad studded belt used in wars in ancient times,

wherewith the joints of the breast-plate, and that armor which defended the belly, loins and thighs were covered. And by this, truth is resembled: whereby some understand the truth of religion and of the doctrine which we profess, others understand hereby truth and uprightness of heart, or the integrity of a good conscience, whereby we perform all duties of religion belonging to God and our neighbor in simplicity, without all hypocrisy and dissimulation. But because both are notable and necessary parts of our Christian armor; I see no reason why we may not take it in both senses, seeing the Apostle doth of purpose set down under these metaphorical words, the chief virtues and graces wherewith we are to arm ourselves against our spiritual enemies. First therefore here is required truth of our religion which we profess: and secondly, that we profess it truly, that is, with upright and simple hearts.

For the first: it is the foundation upon which all other duties to God or man are to be built; for if they be not grounded on God's truth, but devised by man's brain, they are but human dotages which the Lord will not accept; neither is it to any purpose that we show ourselves earnest and forward in religion, unless it be true and consonant to God's word. For as the faster that those travail which are out of the way, the further they are from their journey's end; so the more earnest and forward that we are in travailing the bypaths of error, the further we are from God's kingdom: and therefore Satan careth not greatly whether we be of no religion or of a false religion, whether we worship no God at all, or a false God, or at least the true God after a false manner, whether we perform no duties unto God, or such as being not agreeable to God's truth are abominable unto him. First then we must contain all our actions within the compass of God's word, and whatsoever we profess and practice, it must have his ground and warrant

from this truth, if we will be accounted true members of God's militant Church, which is therefore called the pillar of truth, 1 Tim. 3:15, because contemning all errors and doctrines of men, it faithfully keepeth the truth of God's word. And as soldiers were girt about with that strong and broad studded belt, wherewith their loins were strengthened, and so enabled to sustain the fight without weariness; so we are to compass ourselves about with truth, whereby we may be strengthened when as we know that we fight in a just quarrel; neither shall we easily be deceived with Satan's temptations and false suggestions, if we be girt about with the girdle of verity. And hereby appeareth the necessity of this piece of armor: for seeing Satan is a liar from the beginning, it behooveth us to be compassed about with truth, that the bright beams thereof may discover and disperse all the foggy mists of Satan's errors and lies.

But it is not sufficient that we profess the truth, unless it be in truth, that is, in integrity and simplicity of heart, without all hypocrisy and dissimulation. For how glorious soever our profession even of the true religion be before men, yet it is abominable in the eyes of God, if it be not in truth and from an upright heart, but counterfeit and hypocritical. Whatsoever duties and good works we perform, though never so excellent in themselves, yet are they not acceptable in God's sight, if they be not joined with integrity and simplicity. For example, prayer is a notable part of God's worship; but if we do not call upon God in truth, but with feigned and deceitful lips, that we may have the praise of men, our prayers are odious and Pharisaical, Matth. 6. Thanksgiving is an excellent duty, but if with the Pharisee we give thanks rather to boast of our gifts, then to show true thankfulness to the giver, we shall not be approved of God. Giving of alms is a work acceptable unto God, for it is a sacrifice wherewith he is well

pleased, Heb. 13:16, but if they be not given in simplicity of heart, but in hypocrisy, that we may be seen of men, it shall have the hypocrites reward, Matth. 6. In a word, this truth and simplicity of heart is so necessary, that without it, whatsoever we do it is not regarded; for God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, John. 4:24. According to that, Josh. 24:14. Fear the Lord, and serve him in uprightness and in truth. Which if we perform, our service of God will be acceptable in his sight, though performed in great weakness, and mingled with many imperfections: otherwise, though we offer thousands of rams, and whole rivers of oil, that is, omit no outward cost and labor in God's worship, yet will it be abominable in his eyes, Mic. 6:7,8. Let us therefore with our Savior pray unto God, that we may be sanctified with his truth, that not only whatsoever we do may be grounded on God's truth, but that we may do it in truth and uprightness of heart.

CHAP. XI. OF THE BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND GOSPEL OF PEACE.

The second part of our armor is the breast-plate of righteousness; whereby we are to understand a good conscience, true sanctification and a godly life, which also we are to put on according to the example of our grand Captain Christ. Isa. 59:17. He put on righteousness as a habergeon, and a helmet of salvation upon his head. And then shall not Satan's darts pierce us, so long as we are armed with a good conscience, and a godly and innocent life. Yea as long as our breasts and hearts are armed with righteousness, though our other members fall into sin, our wounds shall not be mortal: for as the breast-plate doth defend the breast and vital parts of a soldier, so the study and holy endeavor of a Christian to live in righteousness and true sanctification, doth so arm his mind, that Satan cannot deadly wound the heart with any of his temptations. True it is that the Saints do receive wounds and foils, when as Satan hath drawn them to commit sin, but they are not wounded at the heart, because they do not sin with full consent of will; for they allow not that which they do, neither do they what they would, but what they hate, and they delight in the law of

God concerning the inner man, when the flesh leadeth them captive to the law of sin. And hence it is that Paul saith he did not transgress God's law, but sin that dwelled in him, Rom. 7:17. And the Apostle John affirmeth, that they who are borne of God sin not, 1 John. 3:9, and that they who are in Christ sin not: and that whosoever sinneth is of the devil, ver. 6-8. Not that God's children are exempted from all sin, but because they sin not with the full consent and swinge of their will; and when they do fall, their hearts are defended with the breast-plate of righteousness, that is, with a holy endeavor and desire of serving God. David, a man according to God's own heart, may be a notable example hereof: for even after he was endued with the knowledge of the truth, and had this godly endeavor of serving God, he notwithstanding fell grievously many times, and was wounded often with Satan's darts; but his wounds were not mortal, neither did they pierce the heart, because he was armed with the breast-plate of righteousness; for he kept God's law in his heart, and it was sweeter than honey unto his mouth, he meditated therein, and sought after it continually, as appeareth, Psal. 119. Would we therefore be preserved from the deadly wounds of Satan's darts of temptation? Then let us study and labor after true holiness, let us keep a good conscience; and howsoever we fall often through infirmity, yet let the heart always be armed with the breast-plate of righteousness, that is, with an earnest desire and holy endeavor of serving God; and so shall Satan never mortally wound us.

But on the other side, if we once lay aside the breast-plate of righteousness, not so much as endeavoring to serve the Lord in holiness of life, but embrace sin with full consent of will, we shall lay our breasts open and naked to all Satan's thrusts, yea and as it were put swords in his hands wherewith he may wound and murder us: for until we disarm ourselves, and

put weapons into the hands of Satan by our sins, he cannot hurt us; as we may see in the example of our first parents, who whilst they continued in their righteousness and integrity, Satan could not offer them any violence by assault and force, and therefore he allured them to entertain a treacherous parley, wherein having enticed them to disarm themselves of this breast-plate of righteousness, by willful transgressing God's commandment, he inflicted on them deadly wounds, piercing them through to the very heart, and so like Joab whilst he seemed lovingly to embrace them, he did most treacherously stab them. The consideration whereof should make us repel most carefully all Satan's temptations, whereby he enticeth us to sin; but especially let us never be allured to put off the breast-plate of righteousness, and then though Satan wound our souls with sin, yet his wounds will not be mortal so long as we do not fall into sin with full consent of will, but through infirmity; in the meantime loathing the sin which we commit, and delighting ourselves in the law of God, in respect of the inner man: for though we fall, yet the Lord will raise us up by unfeigned repentance, so that though sin dwell in us, yet shall it never reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof.

CHAP. XII. OF THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.

The third part of our Christian armor is, that we have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; where he alludeth to the custom of soldiers in former times, who going into the field, strongly armed their legs and feet with leg-harness, war-greaves or buskins, to preserve them from the injury of the weather, the piercing of briars, thorns, and such other things as might hurt them in their way as they marched, and from the violence also of their enemies blows when they were encountered; for all which uses the Gospel serveth in our spiritual warfare: for they who are armed with the true knowledge thereof, and are assured of the merciful promises therein contained, they will walk and march valiantly in the ways of godliness and Christianity, though they are full of the briars and thorns of afflictions and persecution; preferring the rebuke of Christ before the riches of Egypt, because they have an eye to the recompense of reward, which they shall receive at the end of their journey. And this maketh them little to regard the foulness and unpleasantness of the way; and though Satan trouble them in their march, setting upon and assaulting them, yet they

easily resist the fury of his temptations, and go on forward in the profession and practice of Christianity, if they be armed with the knowledge of the Gospel of peace; for it is therefore called the Gospel of peace, because it bringeth peace to our souls, not only as it is the ambassage of God, whereby we being reconciled unto God, have peace with him, from the assurance whereof we have the peace of conscience, but also because if we be armed therewith, we shall obtain a final victory over our spiritual enemies, after which shall follow everlasting peace, which shall not so much as be disturbed with the attempts of any enemies.

But it is not sufficient that we know and believe this Gospel of peace, unless we be always prepared to make confession and profession thereof, though thereby we incur worldly shame, losses, afflictions and persecution. And this the Apostle signifieth, by telling us that our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; that is, as those who are well shod are in readiness to go through rough and unpleasant ways: so those that are endued with the knowledge of the Gospel, must always be in readiness to make profession thereof in the midst of affliction and persecution. For as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth he must confess unto salvation, Rom. 10:10. And this is that which the Apostle Peter requireth of us, 1 Pet. 3:15. That we do not only sanctify the Lord in our hearts, but also that we be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. But if we lay aside this armor, we shall be as unfit to travel in the afflicted way which leadeth to God's kingdom, as those soldiers who are barefoot be unfit to march through ways which are full of briars and thorns; neither shall we be ready to make confession and profession of our faith in the time of persecution and trouble, but rather to slide back into a general apostasy from all religion,

unless we be confirmed and comforted with the sweet promises of the Gospel, made to those who suffer affliction for Christ's sake, namely, that if we confess him before men, he will confess us before his father in heaven, Matth. 10:32. That whosoever shall lose his life for Christ's sake and the Gospels, shall save it, Mark. 8:35. That whosoever shall forsake houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife and children, or lands for his names sake, shall receive an hundred fold more, and shall inherit everlasting life, Matth. 19:29.

CHAP. XIII. OF THE SHIELD OF FAITH.

The fourth piece of the Christian armor which the Apostle exhorteth us above all to put on, is the shield of faith, which of all other parts is most necessary, because how weak soever it be in itself, yet it doth defend and protect us against all the temptations of Satan; for he that putteth on faith, doth put on Jesus Christ also, it being a property inseparable of faith, to apply unto us Christ Jesus and all his benefits, that is, his merits and righteousness, and everlasting life itself. And this will be not only a glorious garment to cover our deformity out of God's sight, to preserve us from the heat of God's wrath, and to obtain the everlasting blessing of our heavenly father, but also it is armor of proof to defend us from the violent assaults of our spiritual enemies. Let us therefore take unto us the shield of faith, that we may also put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle exhorteth us, Rom. 13:14, for having him we shall want nothing, which may either defend ourselves or offend our enemies; the Lord himself will be our shield and buckler, and therefore it will be impossible for our foes to prevail against us.

But let us consider further of the excellency and necessity of this shield of faith, which appeareth by the virtue thereof, in repelling all the fiery darts of Satan. The Apostle saith, that thereby we may quench his fiery darts, alluding to the custom of soldiers in ancient time, who maliciously poisoned their darts, whereby the bodies of those who were wounded were so inflamed, that they could hardly be cured, or eased of their raging and burning pain. And such darts are all Satan's temptations, whereby we are wounded with sin; for if they be not repelled and quenched with the shield of faith, they will inflame our lusts to sin, and one sin will inflame our hearts to another, till there be kindled in us a world of wickedness. And this we may see in the example of David, who after that he gave himself to idleness and sloth, and so was pierced with one of Satan's fiery darts, it presently inflamed his heart to commit adultery, and having given place to that, he was provoked to murder; so that if we admit one of these fiery darts, they will inflame us to receive another, and so our burning wounds will torment our consciences, and most hardly admit of any cure.

And therefore it behooveth us to take unto us the shield of faith, whereby we may quench these fiery darts. But why doth the Apostle use this improper speech, seeing the shield doth not quench, but repel the darts that beat upon it? I answer, partly to show the nature of our enemies temptations, namely, that they are fiery, mortal, raging, and pernicious (as before I said) and partly to set forth a double virtue of faith; for first thereby we repel and beat back his temptations, and so resist him steadfastly in the faith, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Pet. 5:9. And secondly, if Satan's darts have pierced and wounded us, faith also doth cool the scorching heat of sin, by applying unto us the precious balm of Christ's blood, so that our wounds are not mortal unto us, though mortal in themselves, if they were not cured by

this sovereign salve of sin, which being applied by faith, doth ease the burning torments of our evil consciences, and preserveth us from all danger of death. The first of these virtues is signified hereby, in that he calleth faith a shield, which repelleth Satan's temptations, as the shield doth the darts that are cast against it: the second by the word (quenching) namely, that as water quencheth the fire, so faith quencheth the fiery darts of Satan's temptations, as is aforesaid.

Lastly, we are to note that he calleth Satan the wicked one, to show unto us that he is the father and author of all wickedness and sin, both by sinning himself, and provoking others to sin by his temptations. And therefore he is called the wicked or evil one both here and Matth. 6:13. But deliver us from the evil one. So Matth. 13:38. The tares are the children of the wicked one, as also John. 8:44.

CHAP. XIII. OF THE HELMET OF SALVATION.

The fifth piece of our Christian armor is the helmet of salvation, which is so called by a metonymy of the effect, because it bringeth salvation to them that wear it, for we are saved by hope, as it is, Rom. 8:24, which we are to understand by the helmet of salvation, as appeareth, 1 Thess. 5:8, where he exhorteth us to put on the hope of salvation for a helmet. As therefore soldiers when they go into the field put on their helmet, that thereby they may defend their head, which is their chief part, from the cruel blows of the enemy; so we being to fight the spiritual battle, must put on hope both of victory, and the glorious crown belonging thereunto, and so shall we never turn our backs when we are assaulted, seeing by the Lord's assistance we do assuredly hope for victory, and through his mercy and the merits of Christ do expect after our combat is finished, the garland of everlasting happiness, promised to all that overcome. For though Satan assault us on the one side, by offering unto us the riches, honors and pleasures of the world, that thereby he may entice us to sin, and so yield ourselves his captives, he shall not prevail against us, if we be armed with

this helmet of salvation: for as no man in his right wits would sell his certain interest unto a goodly inheritance for a bright shining counter; so much less will any man, who is not stark mad, sell his assured hope of the eternal kingdom of glory, by yielding himself the slave of sin and Satan, to purchase for the present the worlds counterfeit shining excellencies, which are in truth but mutable, or at least momentary vanities. And though he assault us on the other side with afflictions, crosses and persecutions as he did Paul, yet we will with him, for the hope of Israel, be content to be bound in the chains of misery and affliction. For the heaviest cross will seem tolerable, yea an easy yoke and a light burden, to those who do expect and hope for a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory; neither can the straight way and the narrow gate discourage those, that in the end of their journey assuredly expect a palace of pleasure and never fading felicity. But on the other side, if we do not put on this helmet, we shall not dare to lift up our heads in the day of battle: for as those who are encouraged with hope of victory and the spoil ensuing, do fight valiantly; so those who are quite forsaken of hope, do forsake also the field, and casting down their armor and weapons, do either run away, or cowardly yield unto the enemy.

CHAP. XV. OF THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

And so much for the defensive armor which we must put on; that which followeth is both defensive and offensive, fit to defend ourselves, and repel and foil the enemy. The first is the sword of the spirit, the word of God. This the Apostle calleth the sword of the spirit, because it is a spiritual and not a carnal weapon, which the spirit of God himself hath as it were tempered, made, sharpened, and put into our hands, to repel our spiritual enemies whensoever they assault us. If therefore we would defend ourselves and drive back Satan, we must not only buckle unto us the defensive armor before spoken of (for he that standeth altogether upon defense, standeth upon no defense) but we must take unto us the sword of the spirit, wherewith we may repel and deadly wound our spiritual enemies. Wherein we are to imitate the example of our chief Captain Jesus Christ, who though he was able to have confuted Satan by other arguments, or to have confounded him by the omnipotent power of his deity, yet as he suffered himself to be tempted in all things like unto us, so he used also the same weapons, which he hath appointed us to use in this spiritual combat of

temptations, to the end that we might be taught how to handle them, having his example for our imitation, and also may conceive assured hope of victory, considering that our Captain subdued Satan with the selfsame weapons.

Whensoever therefore we are assaulted by Satan, let us draw out the sword of the spirit, that we may defend ourselves, and give him the foil, as being the most fit weapon for this purpose: for if Satan seek to blind the eyes of our understanding with ignorance, that thereby he may lead us as it were hoodwinked into sin, the word of God is a lantern to our feet, and a light unto our paths to discover Satan's dark illusions and secret ambushments, and to guide our feet in the way of peace. If he seek to deceive us with his lies, and to seduce us into errors; the word of God is the touchstone of truth, by which we discern the pure golden verity from the drossy conceits of human inventions; and the subtle delusions of Satan's probable falsehoods, from the undoubted certainty of God's infallible truth. If he transform himself into an angel of light, God's word doth pull off his vizard, and maketh him appear in his own likeness: if he come upon us like a roaring lion to devour us, it protecteth us from danger, and maketh us strong enough to withstand his violence.

Seeing therefore this weapon is so excellent, let us most highly esteem it, and manfully use it whensoever Satan doth assault us and tempt us unto sin. For example, when he enticing us to commit sin, doth extenuate and mince it as though it were but a May-game and a trick of youth which God regardeth not; let us draw out the sword of the spirit, saying, it is written, that all they are accursed who continue not in all that is written in the book of the law to do it, Gal. 3:10, that they who live according to the flesh,

cannot please God, Rom. 8:8, that the burden of sin cannot be light, seeing it pressed out of Christ himself a bloody sweat, &c.

On the other side, if he aggravate the heinousness of our sins, to the end he may draw us into despair of God's mercy; let us say, it is written, I will not the death of a sinner (saith the Lord) but that he repent and live, Ezek. 18:23,32. And, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15. And that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Matth. 9:13, John. 3:16. If he tempt us to the love of the world, and to the service of this unrighteous Mammon; let us answer him, that it is impossible to serve two masters of such contrary disposition, as it is written, Matth. 6:24. That if we love the world, the love of the father abideth not in us, 1 John. 2:15. That the amity of the world is enmity against God, Jam. 4:4. Contrariwise, if renouncing the world, and endeavoring to serve the Lord in uprightness and in truth, he seek to draw us from our integrity, by threatening afflictions and persecution; we are to strengthen ourselves and resist him with the sword of the spirit, remembering that they are blessed which suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Matth. 5:10. That all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 1 Tim. 3:12. That whosoever loseth anything for Christ's sake, shall receive in recompense a hundredth-fold more, and have everlasting life to boot, Matth. 19:29. If he tempt us to the neglect of God's word, we are to tell him, that all Christ's sheep hear his voice and follow him, John. 10:27. That whosoever is of God heareth God's words, John. 8:47, that they who know God hear his ministers, whereas he that is not of God heareth them not, 1 John. 4:6. And if he object that we cannot hear it without great labor and cost, we are to remember, that whosoever is a wise

Merchant fit for the kingdom of God, will rather sell all he hath to buy this precious pearl, than be without it, Matth. 13:44,45,46.

On the other side, if he tempt us to content ourselves with the bare hearing thereof, neglecting obedience thereunto, we are to tell him that not the hearers of the word, but the doers thereof shall be justified, Rom. 2:13, that they who are hearers of the word and not doers also, do deceive themselves, if they think hereby to have any assurance of eternal life, Jam. 1:22. That not everyone who saith Lord, Lord, (that is, maketh a goodly profession of religion) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of the father who is in heaven. Matth. 7:21. So when he tempteth us to pride, we are to say unto him, Satan I may not yield unto thy temptation, for it is written; God resisteth the proud, but giveth his grace to the humble, 1 Pet. 5:5. If he tempt us to covetousness, we are to resist him, saying, it is written, that the desire of money is the root of all evil, 1 Tim. 6:10. If to carking care, we are to tell him, that the Apostle exhorteth us to cast all our care on the Lord, for he careth for us, 1 Pet. 5:7. If to unthrifty misspending of God's gifts, and careless consuming of our estates, we are to tell him, that he that provideth not for his family, is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. 5:8.

And thus may we repel the violence of all Satan's temptations and give him the soil, if we will take unto us the sword of the spirit, and skillfully use the same in the fight; for it is not sufficient that we have this sword lying by us, nor to be able to show the goodness thereof in discourse, if in the mean time we never draw it out to fight the spiritual combat, but let it rust in the scabbard; but we must always have it ready for the combat, and (as it were) naked in our hands, that we may strike home, and cut off all the temptations of Satan, and the lusts of our own flesh when they do assault us. And to this end we must be skillful in the use thereof: for though a man

have an excellent weapon, yet if he know not how to use it, it will little help him either to defend himself or offend his enemy: so if a man have this two edged sword of God's word, and have no skill to rule it, he will strike flat-long and not cut, and sometime wound himself instead of hurting his enemy; yea so politic a warrior is Satan, against whom we fight, that if we be not skillful in the use of this sword, he will turn the edge and point thereof against ourselves, and so instead of defending us, it will, like the sword of Goliath, be ready for the enemy to cut off our own head. And therefore it behooveth us to come into God's school continually, that there we may learn how to use and handle this sword of God's word so cunningly, that we may resist Satan in all his assaults, and give him no advantage in the fight. Otherwise he will use it to our own overthrow; for if he durst fight against our Savior Christ with his own weapon the word of God, whose knowledge was exquisite and without measure, saying, It is written; how much more busy will he be in using it against us, who have not attained unto the least part of his skill?

Whereby appeareth first the carnal recklessness of many men, who, as though there were no enemy to assault them, have not this weapon in their houses at all, or if they have, yet they bestow more time in profane exercises, than in study how to use the sword of the spirit for their own defense; or at least trusting to their own skill as sufficient in itself, they seldom come to the Lord's school, where they might learn to use the weapon of God's word for their best advantage. Secondly, hereby appeareth the wicked practice of the enemies of God's truth, who take from God's people this sword of the spirit, which the Lord hath given unto all for their defense. Neither doth the Apostle in this place exhort only the Clergy to take this weapon, but all Christians whatsoever, who are assaulted with

their spiritual enemies: but they notwithstanding conspiring with Satan to work the overthrow of God's Church, deprive them of the use of the sword of the spirit, the word of God, and so betray them into the power of Satan, being able to make no resistance, when their chief weapon is taken from them.

CHAP. XVI. OF PRAYER.

The last and chief means whereby we may both defend ourselves and offend our enemy, is fervent and effectual prayer, which the Apostle exhorteth us to use, Eph. 6:18. And pray always with &c. The necessity and profit of which exercise is exceeding great in this spiritual combat, because thereby we do obtain all our strength to fight, and victory also over our enemies. For first we cannot endure the least assault of Satan by our own strength, unless we be armed with the power of God's might, as before I have shown. And the Lord's assistance, whereby only we can overcome, is obtained by earnest and effectual prayer, according to that Psal. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble; so will I deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. And our Savior prescribeth us this means to free ourselves from temptation, or at least from being overcome by them, by craving the Lord's assistance, saying, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Matth. 6:13. So he exhorteth his disciples unto prayer, lest they should enter into temptation. Luk. 22:40,46. Secondly, we cannot obtain the spiritual armor (before described) by any means of our own, but those

graces of God's spirit are his gifts, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth, Jam. 1:17, and therefore are to be begged at his hands by earnest and effectual prayer, we having his gracious promise, that if we ask we shall receive, Matth. 7:7. And our Savior hath assured us, that whatsoever we ask the father in his name, he will give it us, John. 16:23. And to this his promise he addeth his commandment in the verse following, saying, Ask and you shall receive. Yea, if we do but truly desire the holy Ghost, the Father will give him unto us, Luk. 11:13. And he cometh not alone, but bringeth with him our spiritual armor, even all his graces fit for to arm us in the spiritual combat, against all the assaults of Satan and his assistants.

But whereas these graces are in this life but weak and imperfect in us; our truth being mixed with will-worship and hypocrisy, the purity of our conscience being stained with our corruption; our knowledge of the Gospel but in part, and shadowed with the veil of ignorance; our faith mixed with doubting, and weakened with incredulity; our hope shaken from our ankerhold, when the promises of God are delayed; and whereas we also are unskillful to use this spiritual armor for our best advantage; therefore it behooveth us after we have armed ourselves at all points, not to trust altogether in our armor, but to have our recourse unto our grand Captain Christ Jesus, acknowledging our own weakness, and desiring his aide and assistance, that being armed with his power, we may obtain a glorious victory over our spiritual enemies. And as Moses joined with Joshua's sword his own effectual prayer, which was of far greater efficacy; for when he held up his hands in prayer, Israel prevailed; but when he fainted, Amalek had the upper hand: so we being to fight against the spiritual Amalekites, are not wholly to trust in our spiritual weapons, but we are to

implore continually the Lord's assistance by hearty prayer, assuring ourselves that if we lift up our hands and hearts unto God, we shall in the end obtain a full victory; but if we faint, the spiritual Amalek will prevail against us. Whilst our minds lie groveling on the earth, it is an easy matter for these spiritual wickedness's to overcome us, seeing they fight against us from high places; but if we lift up our hearts in prayer unto God, our minds and souls shall be as it were transported into heaven, which is a tower of strength, into which our spiritual enemies cannot approach. Whensoever therefore we are assaulted by Satan, let us lift up our souls into heaven by effectual prayer, and so we shall be out of his reach.

Now that our prayers may be effectual, there are diverse conditions and properties required in them by the Apostle in this place. First, that we pray continually, which also our Savior Christ enjoineth us, Luk. 18:1. And Paul also, 1 Thess. 5:17, not that we must neglect all other exercises and do nothing but pray; for there is a time to hear the word, to do the works of mercy and of our callings; but his meaning is that we be always ready to pray upon all good occasions: especially in the time of temptation this duty is required, according to that, Psal. 50:15. And therefore the Apostle saith not, that we must pray, in every particular time and season, but, in every fit time when just occasion and opportunity is offered. Seeing therefore in the time of temptation we do especially need the Lord's help; therefore, that above all other is the opportune and convenient time wherein we are to implore the Lord's assistance. Where by the way the stinted prayers of the popish rabble, which they restrain to set hours is confuted, for the Apostle willeth us always to be in readiness when any fit occasion is offered.

The second thing required, is, that we pray with all manner of prayers and supplication. The former word here used is *προσευχή*, which signifieth the

earnest desiring of any good thing: the other is δέησις, which is the deprecation of some evil; so that whether we want anything that is good, or would be delivered from anything which is evil, we must have recourse unto God by prayer, that we may obtain the one and avoid the other; but more especially when we feel the want or weakness of any part of the spiritual armor, the graces of God's spirit, we are to beg them at God's hand, that so we may be enabled to stand in the encounter; and when we apprehend the extreme malice, joined with the great power and cunning policy of our spiritual enemies, we are earnestly to pray that the Lord will not lead us into temptation; or if he do, yet that he will not suffer us to fall therein and to be overthrown. And these our prayers must not only be public in the Church, but also private in our chambers; neither must we be always begging these benefits at God's hand, but having obtained them, we must be as ready to give him thanks, and to ascribe the glory of all unto him, who is the author and bestower of all virtue and grace which is in us; and so calling upon God with all manner of prayer, he will be continually ready to assist us in our spiritual combat.

The third thing required, is, that we pray in or by the spirit, for the word here used may signify both. First therefore we must pray in the spirit; to which is required first that we pray with understanding; in which respect the ignorant Papists offend, who pray in an unknown tongue; and the ignorant Protestants also, who though they pray in their own language, yet know not the sense and meaning of that they speak.

Secondly, that we pray with attentive minds, joining our hearts with our tongues, and thoughts with words, to which is opposed the prayer of the lips alone, when as we draw near unto God with our mouths, our hearts in the meantime being far from him, as it is, Isa. 29:13. Which kind of prayer is

odious and abominable unto God: for what more gross discord than when the tongue and heart disagree from one another, which should be tuned in unison? And as the carcass being severed from the soul is presently corrupt and stinketh; so the prayer of the lips being severed from the prayer of the heart, which is the life and soul of it, is but a dead carcass of prayer, and stinketh in God's nostrils.

Thirdly, that we pray with a pure conscience and faith unfeigned, lifting up pure hands to God, without wrath or doubting, as it is, 1 Tim. 2:8, to which is opposed prayer proceeding from a polluted conscience, when as men live in their sins without any true sorrow for those which are past, or any sincere purpose to forsake them in the time to come; which prayers must needs proceed from an heart full of incredulity, seeing they have no promise in the word whereupon they may ground their faith: nay, contrariwise it is said, that God heareth not sinners, John. 9:31, that is, such as go on in their sins without repentance, having no purpose of heart to leave and forsake them.

And thus you see what it is to pray in the spirit, which we cannot perform, unless we pray through and by the spirit of God, which helpeth our infirmities, and teacheth us to pray as we ought, yea itself maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed, as it is, Rom. 8:26.

The fourth thing required is watchfulness; which duty is required jointly with prayer in many places. Our Savior three times joineth them together, saying, Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, Matth. 26. And the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 4:7 saith, Now the end of all things is at hand: Be ye therefore sober and watching unto prayer. As though he should say, your enemy the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, and therefore it behooveth you at all times like valiant and careful

soldiers, who are still in danger to be assaulted by their enemies, to be sober and watch, as it is, 1 Pet. 5:8, but now more especially seeing the end of all things is at hand, for Satan knowing that his time is but short, will redouble all his forces to work our destruction, even as soldiers will most fiercely assault a town, when as they cannot long lie at the siege, either by reason of winter drawing on, or the approaching of new forces to relieve the town or raise the siege. Seeing therefore Satan redoubleth his force and care in working our destruction, let us redouble our care and watchfulness in seeking to prevent his force and malice. For if Satan watch continually that he may murder us, shall not we be watchful in withstanding his assaults? He is continually in arms to overthrow us, and shall not we watch night and day in our Christian armor, that we may defeat his forces and obtain victory?

Now this our watchfulness is partly of the body, and partly of the soul. The bodily watching is the abstaining from natural sleep, to the end that we may give ourselves unto prayer; when as with David we water our couch with tears, Psal. 6:6, and call upon God not only in the day, but in the night also, as it is, Psal. 88:1. And when as even at midnight we rouse up ourselves to give thanks unto God for his mercy and benefits, as it is, Psal. 119:62. The watchfulness of the soul is when as we do not sleep in our sins, being rocked in the cradle of carnal security, but shake off our drowsiness by unfeigned repentance, rising up to newness of life. And to this watchfulness the Apostle exhorteth us, Eph. 5:14. Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light, &c. for we are dead in our sins, till Christ by his spirit mortify them and revive us, raising us up to newness of life, as it is, Eph. 2:1. Though therefore we take our rest and sleep in that measure which nature requireth, yet let us not sleep as do

other, (to wit, in carnal security) but let us watch and be sober, as it is, 1 Thess. 5:6, because in this respect it is time that we should arise from sleep, for the dark night of ignorance is past; and the bright sun-shine day of the Gospel is come, let us therefore cast away the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light: So that we walk honestly as in the day: not in gluttony and drunkenness, neither in chambering and wantonness, nor in strife and envying: but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, taking no thought for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof, as it is, Rom. 13:12,13,14.

And this is the Christian watch which we are to join with prayer: but as I would not have us put our whole confidence in the spiritual armor, so much less in our own care and watchfulness; for we must rely ourselves upon God only, desiring him to watch over us while we sleep; but yet with the Lord's assistance we must join our endeavor, and not drowsily and sleepily receive his aide: and as the godly husbandman expecteth the fruits of the earth from the blessing of God, and yet notwithstanding useth all pains, care and diligence in plowing, harrowing and sowing his ground; so we are to seek deliverance from the force and malice of our spiritual enemies of God alone, but yet we are to join our good endeavor carefully and diligently, using all the good means which are ordained of God for this purpose.

The fifth thing required is perseverance in prayer: for it is not sufficient to pray earnestly and fervently for a spirit, but we must continue therein, expecting the Lord's leisure. And unto this we are exhorted, Rom. 12:12, continuing in prayer. So the Prophet David persuadeth to expect and wait for the Lord, and to be strong in continuing constantly in our course, and then in the end God will comfort our hearts, Psal. 27:14. And the Apostle Paul willeth us to pray incessantly, like importunate suitors who will have no nay, though they receive many denials. To this duty our Savior

encourageth us by the parable of the unrighteous Judge, who though he neither cared for man nor feared God, yet was moved through importunity to do the poor widow justice; and therefore our heavenly father will much more grant the importunate suites of his elect, especially having bound himself thereunto by his most gracious promises. True it is that the Lord doth many times defer to grant the prayers of his children, as though he heard or regarded them not; when as in truth he never delayeth any of their lawful suites, unless it be to this end that he may thereby either convey unto them greater benefits than they desire, as when he giveth spiritual graces instead of earthly benefits; or else that thereby he may move them to pray more fervently, and so exercise and increase their faith, hope and patience; or that he may show these his graces to the praise of his glory who hath bestowed them, both to others and the parties themselves; or that he may move us more thankfully to receive and highly to esteem his benefits, after by long suite we have obtained them, which we would not so greatly regard if he bestowed them at the first motion. A notable example hereof we have in the Canaanitish woman, both for our comfort and imitation, Matth. 15. To whose prayers our Savior Christ gave (as it seemed) no ear; and when he did take notice of her suite he giveth her a double repulse, first by telling her that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and when this would not move her to surcease her suite, he useth a more bitter denial, telling her that it was not fit to take the children's bread and to cast it to whelps: but when she was not hereby discouraged, nor her faith extinguished, but rather of a spark increased to a great flame, at the last she doth not only receive what she desired, but also was sent away with great commendation. But wherefore did not our Savior grant her petition at the first hearing? Surely not that he grudged her suite, or was loath to entertain

it, but to the end that he might make her more earnestly implore his help, and manifest to all the world her singular faith; and lastly, that she might be an example to us for our imitation, both to encourage us in asking of God the supply of our wants, and also to persevere in prayer, though at the first God seemeth not to regard us, yea though we receive diverse repulses and many discouragements: which if we perform we shall have a notable testimony of a true faith, when as we can patiently abide the Lord's leisure, though he do defer his help, for he that believeth, will not make haste, as it is, Isa. 28:16, and in the end we shall be sure to obtain our godly and honest desires, if not as we would, yet as it shall be most for our good, and withal eternal blessedness. For the Lord is the God of judgment; and blessed are all they that wait for him, as it is, Isa. 30:18.

When therefore we are assaulted by our spiritual enemies, and ready to faint in the combat of temptations, let us call upon the Lord for his assistance, that we may be freed from danger and delivered from them; and if the Lord do seem to defer his help, and suffer us still to bear the brunt of the battle, after we have many times implored his assistance, yet let us not be discouraged, but constantly persevere in prayer, assuring ourselves that the Lord will either free us from the temptation, or else give us strength to endure and overcome it: for he hath promised that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but that he will give a good issue to the temptation that we may be able to bear it, and he is faithful and true of his word: as it is, 1 Cor. 10:13. It may be that the Lord will not quite free us from the skirmish of temptation, though we have often desired it of him, either because he would further try our Christian valor, and exercise our faith, or restrain us from sin, especially spiritual pride, to which we are too too subject; as we may see in the example of Paul, who being buffeted by

the messenger of Satan, besought the Lord thrice that he might depart from him: but the Lord answered, that his grace which he bestowed on him was sufficient, and that his power was made manifest in the Apostles weakness, as appeareth, 2 Cor. 12:8,9. Now the cause why the Lord would not altogether release him, was, that he might be humbled hereby, the prick of the flesh letting out the wind of vain glory, which would have puffed him up, by reason of the multitude of revelations which he had received. Let us not therefore send for the Lord's assistance (as it were) by post; and prescribe the Lord a time with the Bethulians, wherein if we be not relieved we will faint and cowardly yield: for that which the Prophet speaketh from the Lord concerning the vision, may fitly be spoken of the Lord's aide and help; Though it tarry, watch; for it shall surely come and not stay, Hab. 2:3.

The last thing required in our prayers, is, that we do not only pray for ourselves, but also for all the Saints. For we are fellow members of the same body, we are fellow soldiers which fight under the same Captain Jesus Christ, and consequently their victory is our victory, and their foils are our foils. As therefore soldiers do not only stand upon their several guards, but join their forces together, whereby it cometh to pass, that they who being scattered might easily be overcome, having united their forces are irresistible; so we are not only to stand upon our own defense, but to join in prayer with the whole Church militant, and then shall not our spiritual enemies stand against us: for of the prayer of one righteous man availeth much, being fervent and effectual; of what efficacy and power are the prayers of all the righteous joined together?

And thus have I described the Christian armor, which every man is to put on before he enter into the combat with our spiritual enemies: amongst all which there is not any piece appointed for the back, to note unto us that we

must never retire, but manfully stand to it even in the face of our enemy. For if we resist Satan, he will flee from us, Jam. 4:7, but if we give ground and betake ourselves to flight, he will pursue us swiftly and deadly wound us; for we have no armor on the back to defend us from the violence of his blows, neither will the Lord protect such faint-hearted cowards as run away from his standard, not daring to trust and rely upon his almighty power and never failing assistance, which he hath promised to all that fight his battles. Seeing therefore there is no safety in flight, and assured victory to those that faint not but endure the brunt of the skirmish unto the end, let us manfully stand upon our guard, neither fleeing nor yielding to our spiritual enemies; for where can we be more safe, than under the Lord's standard? Where can we be more honorably employed, than in fighting his battles? How can our state be more dangerous, than when we flee and Satan pursueth us? How can it be more desperate, than when we yield ourselves captive to Satan to be bound in the fetters of sin, until the sentence of condemnation be pronounced on us in the general sessions at the day of Christ's appearing?

CHAP. XVII. OF SATAN'S STRATAGEMS.

And so much concerning our spiritual armor, as also our preparation to the spiritual warfare; now we are to speak of the battle itself: where first we are to consider of Satan's stratagems, and the manner of his fight; and secondly, of the special conflicts or temptations wherewith he assaileth us. Concerning Satan's stratagems, we are to know that they are many and dangerous; with which he will easily circumvent and overthrow us, if we do not carefully prevent or cunningly avoid them. For first he dealeth not with all alike, neither useth the same weapons to foil everyone, but he observeth the quality and disposition of his enemies, and accordingly he fitteth his temptations, so as they may be most forcible to prevail against them. And to this end he observeth to what sins we are most inclined, either by nature, or by present occasion, and to those he inciteth us, thrusting us as it were down the hill, where we are apt to run headlong of our own accord; and seconding his assault with the aid of our corrupt flesh, which entertaineth willingly his suggestions, and urgeth us violently to yield to his temptations.

So that Satan never striveth against the stream, but useth the tide of our affections to carry us swiftly into a sea of sin.

For example, if he find a man ambitiously affected, then he covereth his hook with the bait of honors: and thus he tempted Abimelech to murder all his worthy brethren, that he might obtain the sovereignty: thus he tempted Joab to stab traitorously Abner and Amasa, that he might still be Captain General: thus he tempted Absalom to usurp the kingdom, though it were by the utter destruction of his own father. And thus he tempted our Savior Christ to worship him, by offering him all the kingdoms of the world, thinking belike that he was inclined to ambition, seeing he professed himself a great King, and had no worldly kingdom in his possession. So in our days he tempteth the ambitious subject to aspire, without just title, to the Crown of their lawful Princes; and those who are Kings already to affect a Monarchy, by usurping wrongfully their neighbor kingdoms: so he tempteth the Spirituality to come by Church-preferments, rather commended by the gifts of the purse than of the mind; and the Laity to buy great offices at so high a rate that they cannot live of them, unless they sell justice by taking bribes to betray the innocent, and their honesty also by using all extortion.

If he find that men are addicted to voluptuousness, then he tempteth them to sin by offering carnal pleasures; and thus he tempted Noah to drunkenness, David to adultery, Solomon to idolatry and all wickedness. And thus now he tempteth some to good fellowship, that is, to spend their whole time in drunkenness, belly-cheer, and all riotous excess and Epicureanism; some to lust, incontineny, and all voluptuous pleasures of the flesh. Or if he cannot bring them to such carnal grossness, he will entice them to use lawful recreations unlawfully, and immoderately spending all

their time in pleasure, which they should bestow in the service of God, by employing themselves in the general duties of Christianity, and in the special duties of their callings.

But if he find that men are given to covetousness, then hath he matter enough to work upon: for as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6:9,10. They that will be rich fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction: for the desire of money is the root of all evil. With this bait he allured Laban to deal churlishly and unjustly with Jacob, and his own children; and to enrich himself by impoverishing them, for whose sake he should have gathered his riches. He enticed Balaam to curse the people whom God had blessed, by offering him money the wages of wickedness. He tempted Gehazi to take the talent and change of raiment of Naaman, selling for this small trifle God's honor and his masters credit. He allured Ahab to murder Naboth, that he might purloin his vineyard, and so purchase the juice of the grape with the blood of his faithful subject. With this bait he enticed Judas to betray his master, selling him for thirty pieces of silver, whose worth could not be valued with many worlds. And hereby also he provoked Demetrius to oppose himself to the preaching of the Gospel, because he would not lose his gain in making silver shrines to the Idol, Act. 19:25. Neither was this argument drawn from profit forcible only in former times, but now also it doth no less persuade to sin. For whom almost doth not Satan catch, or at least entangle in this golden net? Doth he not ensnare as well professors of religion, as professed worldlings, so that in greedy seeking of gain it is not easy to discern the one from the other? Doth he not overcome all sorts and conditions of men, as well those who abound in all things, as those that enjoy little, by proportionating his offers of riches, according to their

several estates; much to those that have much, and little to those that possess little? For he cometh to Princes, and promiseth them huge sums of money, if they will lay intolerable taxations on their subjects, or rob the Church of her livings, that is, God himself of his right. He cometh to Magistrates and Judges, and offereth unto them great bribes, if they will pervert justice, and so putteth out their eyes that they cannot see right from wrong; for, reward blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the words of the just, as it is, Deut. 16:19. If he see one in office covetous, he promiseth great revenues and stately houses, if he will deceive the Prince of their right, and oppress the subject with grievous extortion: and the like offers he maketh to covetous gentlemen, if they will build their houses with the blood of their tenants, and by grinding the faces of the poor, and by enhancing their rents, and increasing their fines to such unreasonable rates, that the poor tenant can scarce with the sweat of his face earn his bread.

Neither doth he angle with this bait in the Court and country only, but he thinketh it fit for the city also: for he cometh to the covetous Merchant, and promiseth him that in such a country he shall have good traffic, if he will dissemble his religion, that is, deny Christ before men: he offereth to the shop-keeper increase of wealth, if he will use false weights and measures, and false lights, or else sell such wares as are neither profitable for the Church nor Common-wealth; or adulterate and falsify his stuff by mixing bad with good; or ask double the price, swearing that it cost him more than afterwards himself is contented to take: in a word, if in buying and selling he will use fraud, lying, swearing and forswearing, he promiseth to make him a rich man, though oftentimes he deceiveth him, for instead of increasing in wealth by these ungodly practices, oftentimes he becomes bankrupt, the Lord laying his curse on those wicked means, without whose

blessing the builder buildeth and the laborer laboreth but in vain, as it is, Psal. 127:1,2. So also he cometh to the Artificer, and telleth him that if he will be rich, he must make sale ware: and what is that? Such as is sleight and altogether unfit for use; as though that were most fit for sale which is sleight and altogether unprofitable. And so common nowadays is this fault, that no greater dispraise can be given, than to say it is sale ware, as though now nothing which is good and substantial were fit to be sold. And with these and such like snares doth Satan entangle those that are covetous, and have set their hearts upon the earthly Mammon; which I have the longer stood upon, because it is a temptation most dangerous; neither doth Satan by any means more easily sack our souls, and spoil us of God's graces, than when he ascendeth by these golden ladders, or maketh a breach in our hearts with these rich bullets.

If Satan see men proud and vain-glorious, then he enticeth them to sin, by offering them gorgeous attire far unfitting their state and callings, and so causeth them to commit a great absurdity: for whereas our Savior Christ saith, that the body is of more worth than raiment, they make their raiment of more worth than their bodies, in other men's judgment, and prefer gay apparel before the health of their souls, in their own estimation; for that they may jet it out in rich attire, they use unlawful means, either by injuring and oppressing their inferiors, or at least by keeping the poor from their right: (for their superfluity of wealth was not given them to spend in such excess, but that they should like the Lord's Almner's relieve the poor with their surplusage) and by both, they wound their souls with sin, and without repentance plunge them into everlasting death.

So also Satan taketh advantage of our complexion and temperature; by tempting the Sanguine to pleasure and lust; the Phlegmatic to idleness and

sloth; the Melancholic to envy and malice; the Choleric man he provoketh to quarrels and brawls, and enticeth him to take revenge by aggravating the injury, and suggesting that it will be great disparagement to put up such a wrong. In a word, Satan carefully observeth to what sin we are most prone by nature, custom or occasion; and to that he eggeth us forward unto which our own lusts lead us, changing his temptations as we change our affection. And therefore the Apostle James telleth us, that whosoever is tempted, is drawn away by his own concupiscence, because Satan never assaulteth us, but he is sure that the flesh will further him in his temptations.

And thus have I discovered Satan's first stratagem, which he useth in tempting us to sin; which if we would withstand and defeat, we are as carefully to observe our own nature and disposition, that we may find to what vices we are most prone, and so with greater watchfulness we may avoid them. For as when a city is besieged, the inhabitants will most strongly man that place, which by nature is most weak and assaultable, because they know that the enemy will give the onset there where he is like to find the easiest entrance: so we being besieged with our spiritual enemies, are most carefully to observe where our souls are weakest to make resistance, and over that part we are to watch with greatest diligence, assuring ourselves that there Satan will plant all his engines of battery, that having made a breach he may enter and surprise us. And because the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and none but God know it, let us summon it often before the throne of God's judgment, and examine it by his law, that thereby we may see our secret corruptions, and after labor to kill and mortify them.

If we find that we be ambitiously affected, we are to use all good means that true humility may be wrought in our hearts, and whensoever (honors

being offered) we are tickled with ambitious and aspiring thoughts, let us suspect that under honor Satan hath hid a hook to catch us. And therefore before we accept it, we are to examine ourselves whether we be fit for so high a place, and whether we can attain thereto by honest and lawful means, and whether the place itself be such, that therein we may glorify God, benefit his Church, and keep a good conscience.

So if we find that we are addicted unto pleasures, we are with all care to study and practice true mortification; and when any pleasures are offered us, we are to look narrowly into them, that we may discern if Satan hath not laid under them a snare to entrap us, either by tempting us to pleasures which are unlawful, or to the immoderate use of those which be lawful; and as we love the salvation of our souls, let us avoid the bait when we see the snare.

In like manner if we find that we are prone to covetousness, let us carefully labor to wean ourselves from this vice, by considering that it is idolatry, and the root of all evil; that the rich (that is, such as set their hearts upon riches) shall as hardly enter into God's kingdom as a Camel thorough a needles eyes; that riches are momentary and mutable, and we mortal, and therefore have no assurance of them for the space of one day. And when any commodity is offered us, we are to look twice on it before we accept thereof, examining whether we may compass it by honest and good means, and without the hurt of our brethren, and then we may take it as sent from God; otherwise we may assure our selves, that how pleasantly soever the bait looketh, yet Satan hath hid under it a deadly hook, and therefore if we swallow the bait the hook will choke us.

And thus also are we to behave ourselves in respect of all other sins, to which we find after due examination we are addicted, if we will be safe

from the devils malice and cunning fury, knowing that where we are most weak, there he will give the most violent assaults.

CHAP. XVIII. HOW SATAN FITTETH HIS TEMPTATIONS TO OUR STATE AND CONDITIONS.

But as Satan fitteth his temptations to our nature and disposition, so also to our state and condition: for this also he observeth, and according to the quality thereof he tempteth us to such sins, as by reason thereof we are most inclinable: and this he doth both in respect of our worldly and also our spiritual estate. In regard of our worldly estate, he observeth whether we are in prosperity or adversity. If we be in prosperity, then he tempteth us to those sins whereunto that estate is most subject, namely to pride and forgetfulness of God, to contempt of our poor brethren, to the love of the world, to coldness in religion, and carnal security; for he will persuade us, how wickedly soever we live, that we are highly in God's favor, otherwise he would not bestow so great and manifold benefits upon us, as pawns and pledges of his love.

If we be in adversity, then he will labor to persuade us to use unlawful means for the repairing of our estates, distrusting in God's all-ruling providence and never deceiving promises. If we be poor, he enticeth us to steal, defraud and oppress our brethren, that so we may become rich by

others spoils. If we have lost anything by thieves or other casualty, he tempteth us to go to witches and wizards, that so we may hazard our souls, which are of more value than the whole world, for the recovery of some earthly trifle. If we suffer any great cross or affliction, he will persuade us that God hath forsaken and hateth us, or else he would not so grievously afflict us; and hereby he moveth us to despair, murmuring and repining against God. Which temptation he findeth so forcible, that he confidently presumed that he could thereby have caused Job to have blasphemed God to his face. Yea he thought it a fit weapon to use against our Savior Christ; for, wanting ordinary means to sustain his hunger, Satan tempteth him to distrust God's providence, and to shift for himself, by turning stones into bread, Matth. 4.

Now if we would withstand Satan in this his cunning practice, we also are carefully to observe our estates, and to arm ourselves against those temptations, to which that estate wherein we live is most subject. In the time of prosperity we are continually to meditate, that whatsoever we have it is the gift of God, bestowed on us not for our deserts, but of his free mercy and goodness, that by the consideration hereof we may be stirred up to true thankfulness, and as often as we look upon the gifts may think upon the giver, and praise his name for his benefits, and employ them to his glory, and the good of our brethren the poor members of Jesus Christ. Let us remember that we are but stewards of these earthly treasures, and therefore must one day be called to an account, and consequently the greater our receipts be, the greater will be our reckoning; that these earthly things are momentary and mutable, and we also mortal, and therefore there is no reason that we should be proud of them, or contemn our brethren who

want them, seeing in an instant they may abound, and we may be stripped of all we possess.

So if we be in adversity, we are to rely ourselves on the Lord's providence, who hath promised to all that depend upon him all things necessary, so far forth as they tend to the salvation of our souls: neither are we to believe Satan when he telleth us that afflictions are signs of God's hatred, seeing there are innumerable examples of God's dear children grievously afflicted, and plain testimonies of Scriptures which prove the contrary, as shall appear hereafter.

In respect of our spiritual estate Satan observeth whether we be mere worldlings or professors. If worldlings, then whether we be notoriously wicked, or civil honest men; those that be notoriously wicked he plungeth headlong into a gulf of all wickedness and outrageous rebellion against God, he tempteth them to Atheism, and to contempt of God's worship and service, to swearing and blaspheming, to the profaning of the Sabbath, and scorning of all religion, to murders, adultery, drunkenness, theft, and all devilish practices, because they are his slaves ready at his appointment to execute all those works of darkness wherein he will employ them. For such men it is but lost labor to show them how they may resist Satan, seeing they take their whole delight in serving and obeying him; and therefore before they be taught how to resist him, they must be persuaded to a desire of coming out of his thralldom, of whom they are taken prisoners to do his will, as it is, 2 Tim. 2:26.

If they be civil honest men, he persuadeth them that it is sufficient if they deal justly and uprightly with their neighbors both in their words and actions; and for God's service consisting in the duties of piety, which is commanded in the first table, that it is enough if they have a good meaning,

though they be utterly ignorant of the principles of religion, and that it is only required of preachers and those that be book-learned, to be able to render an account of their faith; as for them God will have them excused, so they lead an honest life amongst their neighbors, and be not tainted with gross and outrageous sins.

But beloved, if we would not be subdued by Satan, let us be most careful in withstanding this dangerous assault: for there is not any one temptation wherewith Satan prevaileth more, than by persuading men to content themselves with a civil kind of honesty, which is destitute of religion and the true fear of God. And to this end let us consider, that civil honesty severed from true piety is but glorious iniquity: for when we have attained to as great a measure thereof, as possibly we can in this age of corruption, we shall come short in diverse duties of many of the Heathens, who have excelled in these moral and civil virtues: and consequently when we are at the best we shall be but honest Infidels and good natured worldlings, if we do not join thereunto the duties of piety. And how goodly a show soever our works make in the eyes of men, yet are they odious in God's sight, if they be not done in knowledge, and grounded on God's word and commandment, but in ignorance and according to our own inventions and the fond conceit of our blind understanding; if they proceed not from the true love of God, which is the only fountain of all acceptable obedience, but from the love of ourselves and other carnal respects; if they be not the fruits of a lively faith, but done in ignorance and infidelity; for, whatsoever is not done in faith, is sin, as it is, Rom. 14:23, and therefore cannot please God, Heb. 11:6. By which we are not to understand an historical faith, whereby we know and are assured that those works we do are commanded in God's word; but a true justifying faith which doth apply unto us Christ Jesus, and all God's

merciful promises made in him. For, that our works may be acceptable before God, there is required first that our persons be acceptable unto him, neither can anything we do please him, so long as we remain his enemies, in which state we are by nature, till we are reconciled in Christ our Mediator, as appeareth, Rom. 5:10. Now unless we have faith, we cannot apply unto us Christ nor his merits and righteousness, by whom only we are reconciled unto God, and consequently we remain God's enemies, who can do nothing pleasing in his sight.

Secondly, the best of our works are imperfect, and mingled with many corruptions, and therefore cannot abide the examination of God's exact justice, till their imperfections be covered by Christ's righteousness, and their corruption washed away with his most precious blood; now Christ and his merits cannot by any other means be applied unto us, but by the hand of a lively faith.

Lastly, if all our works and honest dealing be not done in zeal of God's glory, and referred to this end that God's name may be magnified, they are not acceptable before God: for, the cause why he would have our light shine before men, is, that he our heavenly father may be glorified, as it is, Matth. 5:16, and the main and wherefore we should have our conversation honest amongst the Gentiles and unbelievers, is, that they which speak evil of us, as of evil doers, may, by our good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of their visitation, as it is, 1 Pet. 2:12.

And therefore let not Satan deceive us, in persuading us to rest in civil honesty; for if it be severed from true piety, from saving knowledge, from sincere love of God, justifying faith, and a zeal of God's glory, it will not be acceptable in God's sight; as proceeding from the love of ourselves, and other carnal respects, namely to obtain praise or profit thereby.

And thus Satan dealeth with civil worldlings. But if those which he encountereth be professors of religion, then he seeketh to persuade them, that if they outwardly perform the duties of piety, as the hearing of God's word, the public and private calling upon God's name, the frequent receiving of the Sacraments; if they attain to the knowledge and profession of religion, and can tip their tongues with godliness; then they may live how they list amongst their brethren, neglecting all the duties of the second table, so they outwardly observe the first; for though they be barren of good works, destitute of charity, filled with pride, addicted to covetousness, oppression, and all deceitful dealing, yet they shall be justified by their faith, and approved of God for their outward profession sake. But let such men know that this is a notable stratagem of Satan, to cause us to fall into his secret ambushments to our destruction, which if they would prevent and avoid, let them consider that piety and charitable honesty are two such twins as are borne, live, and die both together, that they are the life and soul of a Christian which cannot possibly be severed; that it is as possible for the good tree to bring forth bad fruit, for the fire to be without heat, and the Sun without light, as it is, for a lively faith to be void of good works, true profession to be severed from holy practice, and justification before God from sanctification and holiness of life before men; that whosoever braggeth of his love to God and loveth not his brethren is a liar, and there is no truth in him, 1 John. 4:20, that though they profess themselves the children of God, yet if they do not the works of righteousness as well as the works of piety, and love their brethren, they are in truth the children of the devil, as appeareth, 1 John. 3:10, that not the hearers of the word, but the doers thereof are justified, Rom. 2:13, that not everyone who saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they who do the will of

the father which is in heaven, Matth. 7:21, that they deceive themselves who look to be saved by hearing the word, if they practice not that which they hear, Jam. 1:22, for instead thereof they shall plunge themselves into deeper condemnation: For the servant that knoweth his masters will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luk. 12:47. And it shall be more easy for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, who had not the Gospel preached amongst them, nor saw Christ's miracles, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida which enjoyed both, Matth. 11:21, for there as he giveth great means of knowledge, there he expecteth great fruits in practice, and as he will be honored in all, so especially in those that come nigh unto him; as it is, Lev. 10:3. Lastly, that the sentence of salvation and damnation shall not be given according to our words and profession, but according to our deeds and the holy practice of the works of mercy and Christianity, which are the inseparable fruits and undoubted signs of true faith. And therefore let not Satan delude us, by persuading us that piety without honesty, profession without practice, faith without works are sufficient for our salvation.

But if they be sincere professors, then he observeth whether they be babes or strong men in Christ; if he find them babes, then he seeketh to abuse their simplicity, by drawing them either into errors and heresies, or at least into blind zeal and superstition. If he cannot so prevail, by reason that the bright beams of the Gospel shining in the preaching of the word do discover his errors and lies, giving light to those that sit in the darkness of ignorance, and in the shadow of death, whereby their feet are guided into the way of peace, then he laboreth to overwhelm them with the burden of their sins, and to plunge them into the bottomless gulf of horror and despair, by aggravating the odiousness of their rebellion, and huge multitudes of their

outrageous transgressions, by setting before them the curse of the law, the vengeance of God due unto them, his infinite and exact justice which must be satisfied, and the unspeakable and endless torments prepared for the damned. But if he cannot aggravate their sins, which in truth they have committed, and make of them such an huge mountain as may serve to overwhelm them, he addeth unto them his own sins, by casting into their minds outrageous blasphemies against God, and such horrible suggestions of impiety, as it will make their hairs to stand on end when they do but think of them, persuading them that they are their own thoughts, and therefore horrible sins, whereas in truth they are but his suggestions, and therefore if we do repel and reject them, they are not our sins but the sins of the tempter: for as it is not our fault if a thief entice us to steal, so we do not entertain his motion, but show our detestation of his sin; so it is not a sin to be tempted, if we presently do repel the suggestion, and do not yield unto the temptation. And this may appear by our Savior Christ himself, who though he were free from sin, yet he was tempted in all things like unto us, and so not free from Satan's suggestions, for he was tempted to diffidence, to tempting God, yea to the worshipping of the devil himself; but resisting Satan's suggestions, he was not guilty of sin. Whose example if we imitate, Satan's blasphemous temptations shall never be laid to our charge; neither is it possible to be free from temptations, although it be possible by God's grace to resist them. But more of this hereafter.

If by this means he cannot overthrow their faith and bring them to despair, then he taketh advantage of their simplicity, by enticing them to commit sins of ignorance. For example, he will tell them that it is lawful, nay expedient to use their Christian liberty, when he tempteth them to licentiousness; and to the end he may more easily deceive them, he will set

a fair gloss upon foul sins, and seek to justify them by God's word, appareling vices in the habit of those virtues which most resemble them. He will tempt to covetousness, under show of frugality, telling them that they who provide not for their family are worse than Infidels; and to prodigality, under the pretense of liberality, alleging that they who sow plentifully shall reap plentifully. He will allure them to tempt God, by neglecting those means which he hath granted them, under the color of affiance in God; and to trust in the means, under the vizard of careful providence. He will tempt them to propound this end of their good works, that they may be saved by them, because God hath promised to reward them; or to neglect good works, as unnecessary to salvation, because faith alone justifieth. Which temptations if we would withstand, we must labor after true saving knowledge that we may discern between virtue and vice, truth and error, that which God hath forbidden as unlawful, from that which he hath commanded as lawful; to this end using diligently all good means which tend to this purpose, as hearing, reading, meditating, and conferring of God's word, that so the clouds of ignorance being dispelled with the light of knowledge, we may discover Satan's delusions and deceits. Otherwise if he deprive us of knowledge, which is the eye of the soul, he may easily seduce us out of the right way into the gulf of perdition.

And thus Satan dealeth with the weak Christian: but if he find those whom he assaulteth strong men in Christ, so that he cannot take any advantage of their ignorance, nor overthrow their faith, then he laboreth to make them wound their conscience, by committing sins of presumption against their knowledge, using the violence of their affections, to abuse their reason and mislead their judgment; the danger of which temptation David well discerning by his own woeful experience, doth earnestly entreat

the Lord to preserve him from presumptuous sins, Psal. 19:13. And thus hath Satan prevailed with so many of God's own children, that he durst therewith assault our Savior Christ himself, by offering him the whole world and the glory thereof, if he would fall down and worship him; that his affections tickled with ambition, might move him to commit this sin for the satisfying his desires. But if he cannot thus prevail, he will transform himself into an angel of light, and tempt them to the doing of a less good, that they may neglect a greater; or that which is in itself lawful and commanded in his due time and place, he will tempt them to perform it unseasonably, when as other duties in respect of present occasion are more necessary; and so useth one virtue or duty to shoulder another, and thrust it disorderly out of its own place and standing. For example, in the hearing of the word he will cast into their minds meditations, in their own nature good and acceptable to God in their due time and place, to the end he may distract their minds and make them hear without profit: in the time of prayer he will not stick to recall to their memories some profitable instructions which they have heard at the sermon, to the end he may disturb them in that holy exercise, and keep them from lifting up their hearts wholly unto God. Moreover, in all his temptations he will allege scripture; but then either he depraveth the place by adding or distracting, as when he allegeth scripture to our Savior Christ, Matth. 4:6. It is written he will give his angels charge over thee, &c. and leaveth out to keep thee in all thy ways, which is expressed in the place he quoteth, Psal. 90:11, because that made quite against him; or if he recite them right, he will wrest the words unto another sense, than the holy Ghost hath written them, that so he may deceive us and lead us into error.

CHAP. XIX. HOW SATAN ALLURETH US INTO SIN BY DEGREES, AND DRAWETH US FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER.

And thus have I shown at large Satan's first politic stratagem, which he useth to circumvent us by fitting his temptations according to our nature and disposition, or our state and condition. A second policy which Satan useth to circumvent us, is this; if he cannot at the first entice us to fall into outrageous wickedness, he will seek to draw us thereunto by degrees, beginning at the least, and so bringing us from that to a greater, till at last we come to the highest step of wickedness: whereby it cometh to pass, that as those who walk to the top of an high hill, whose ascent ariseth by little and little, come to the top without weariness, before they well perceived that they did ascend; so they who go forward in the ways of wickedness by degrees, do without any controlment or check of conscience climb up to the highest top thereof, whence Satan casteth them down headlong into the pit of destruction. For example, if he see a professor of religion which maketh conscience of his ways, he doth not usually seek at first to draw him into heinous sins, unless the cords of his temptations be exceeding strong; but first he allureth him to come into the company of wicked men, by offering

some pleasure or profit, or by occasion of affinity and marriage, joining him if he can with such a yokefellow as will draw him faster back than he can draw her forward in the course of godliness. If he thus far prevail, then he tempteth him to wink at their sins which in conscience he condemneth, that he may still enjoy his pleasure and profit, or continue in their love and favor; then in the next place he moveth him to think them tolerable sins which they commit, and nothing so outrageous as others fall into; and when he hath made this progress, then he enticeth him to taste of sin, which he so sweeteneth with the sugared delights of this vain world that he swalloweth it down without all loathsomeness, and never tasteth the bitterness thereof till the heat of God's spirit do cause it work in his conscience, so as he is never at rest till he have cast it up again by unfeigned repentance. Otherwise if he be not prevented thus by God's spirit, Satan will by this means cause his conscience to swallow and to digest such loathsome sins, which in former times he abhorred to see others commit. And as those who from their infancy are accustomed to take poisons in small quantities do enable their stomachs to digest more, till by long custom and increasing the quantity by degrees, it becometh so familiar to their stomachs, that instead of poisoning them they are nourished thereby, as histories do record of some of the Indian Kings: so Satan enticeth us to swallow down the poison of sin at the first in such small quantity, that our consciences may not be sick thereof: but having well digested the least, he increaseth the measure till by long custom he hath made it so familiar to our consciences, that those sins are even meat and drink unto us, which at the first we loathed as deadly poisons.

Now if we would defeat this policy of Satan, we must continually watch over our own hearts and pull them back when we see that they but incline

unto any sin; we must not lightly esteem of any sin, nor willingly give entertainment to the least wicked thought, for though in itself it be not so heinous, yet it will enlarge our consciences and make room for a greater, till at last we keep open house, ready to receive all wickedness which offereth itself unto us; and as we are careful to avoid the sins themselves, so with as much diligence we are to shun the occasions and means by which we might be drawn, or enticed thereunto. But of this point more hereafter.

A third policy which Satan useth to circumvent us, is to bring us from one extreme to another. For example, when we see the vileness of prodigality, so as we will no longer be possessed of that vice, then will Satan make it as odious as he can, and endeavor to bring us into extreme hatred thereof, that so he may the more easily draw us into the contrary vice of covetousness. If he cannot any longer keep us asleep in sin, by rocking us in the cradle of carnal security, and singing unto us the sweet tunes of God's mercy and Christ's merits, then will he labor to plunge us in despair, by setting before our eyes the heinousness of our sins, and sounding in our ears the thundering threatening's of the law. If he cannot any longer nuzzle us in superstition, and cause us to place all our religion in ceremonies, and in restraining ourselves of the use of things indifferent, he will draw us to the other extreme by moving us to think all ceremonies unlawful, and to practice all licentiousness under pretense of Christian liberty. If he can no longer persuade us to seek for justification by the works of the law to the end we may not rely on Christ's merits and righteousness, he will bring us into utter dislike of this doctrine, by showing us the absurdities thereof, that he may draw us to the other extreme, namely to neglect good works, as altogether unnecessary to salvation because faith alone justifieth. If he cannot hide out of our sight the shining graces of God's spirit by casting

before our eyes the cloud of our sins and corruptions, then he will cause us to look on them through the spectacles of self-love and affection to the end we may imagine them much greater than in truth they are, and so be puffed up in pride, and too securely rest in those gifts we have, not seeking for increase. If he cannot persuade us to diffidence and distrust, he will move us to tempt God upon no necessary occasions: and thus he dealt with our Savior Christ, for first he tempted him to distrust God's providence, and to provide for himself by turning stones into bread; but when he could not so prevail, he moved him to make an unnecessary experiment of his providence and care, by casting himself down headlong from the pinnacle of the temple, whereas there were ordinary means whereby he might descend.

Now the end why Satan useth this policy is, more violently to cast us into one extreme of sin, when with full swinge of will we do avoid the other: as also to make us believe that the latter temptation is the motion of God's spirit, seeing it is clean contrary to the former suggestion of Satan, whereas in truth they are but unlike children of the same father.

The danger of which temptations if we would avoid, we must keep us in the golden mean avoiding both extremes; and because we are ignorant and unskillful in traveling the straight path which leadeth to God's kingdom, and every hour ready to take the byways of error which lead to destruction, let us use the word of God for our guide: and as the Israelites traveling towards the land of promise, were directed by the cloud and pillar of fire, going forward when that went before them, and pitching their tents where that stayed; so let us constantly and boldly travel in our Christian pilgrimage so long as we have the word of God for our direction, not staying where it biddeth go, nor going when it stayeth. Let this be the touchstone to discern

the golden truth from the drossy extremes on either side; let it be the line to lead us out of this labyrinth of errors; let it be the star of Bethlehem to conduct us in our tedious journey unto the place where our Savior Christ is, not now lying in the arms of his mother, but sitting at the right hand of his father in all glory power and majesty. And because we are unskillful pilots in failing the dangerous sea of this tempestuous world, ready to fall upon the rocks while we avoid the sands; let God's word be our card, to direct us to the holy land: otherwise Satan will raise against us such stormy tempests, and contrary blasts of temptations, that our souls will suffer shipwreck upon the rocks of sin, and be drowned in a sea of destruction.

CHAP. XX. OF THREE OTHER STRATAGEMS WHICH SATAN USETH.

A fourth policy which Satan useth to entrap us in his secret ambushments is this. When by the violence of his temptations he cannot altogether restrain us from doing that which is good: then he will tempt us to do good actions to bad ends. In giving of alms he will move men to propound this end that they may be seen of men; in doing of good works, he will tempt them to forget God's glory, and to set before them as their main end of all their good actions, the meriting of heaven; and if men will needs appear virtuous and religious, he will entice them to use outward virtues as a cloak to hide their inward vices, and religion as a fair vizard to cover their foul impiety. And thus he tempteth men to use all outward shows of humility, to the end they may the better disguise their hidden pride and ambition, as we may see in the example of Absalom; and all complements of courtesy and love, as a mask to hide their envy and malice. And thus he allureth men to profess religion, hear sermons, and use glorious speeches, that they may (seeming religious and men of good consciences) have their shoppes the better customed, and their words credited, and so

have the fitter opportunity of deceiving them who for their profession repose trust in them.

A fifth policy whereby he seeketh to surprise us is by tempting men to use wicked means for the accomplishing of good ends, and to do evil that good may come thereof; and thus he tempted Saul to transgress God's commandment in reserving the fat of the cattle to the end he might sacrifice therewith unto the Lord; and Isaac to say that Rebecca was his sister to save his life; and Peter to use dissimulation that he might not offend the Jews. And thus he tempteth men to tell officious and profitable lies for the avoiding of greater evils; he moveth servants to give their masters goods to the poor without their privity or liking, and so to commit theft that they may give alms; he tempteth nonresidents to possess many livings that they may keep good hospitality, and so starve the foul to feed the body; and citizens to use all fraud and deceit that they may provide for their family. Which policies of Satan are exceeding dangerous; for hardly can we escape them both, namely doing good things to bad ends, or using of evil means for the achieving of good purposes: but the more difficult the thing is, the greater must be our care; the more secret and dangerous Satan's ambushments are, the more diligent and watchfulness must we use in avoiding them. In all our actions therefore let us be careful to propound unto ourselves good ends, and use good means for the accomplishing of our honest and godly purposes; for if we neglect the first, we shall bewray our hypocrisy and impiety, if the latter we shall pollute a fair work with filthy tools, and show our diffidence in God in not daring to use those godly and honest means which he hath commanded and commended us, unless we bolster and prop them up by our own foolish inventions, and wicked practices. And whensoever we are moved to propound evil ends of our good actions, or to

use evil means for the accomplishing of good ends, let us assure our selves, that they are not the motions of God's spirit, but the suggestions of Satan, at least so far forth as we are tempted to the evil of the end or means; and therefore we are to purge the wheat from the chaff, the pure gold from the dross, and to do the works of God for those ends, and by those means, which he hath appointed.

A sixth policy which Satan useth, is to take advantage of our virtues to plunge us headlong into vice; for example when we have mortified our sins, and are plentiful in all good works, he taketh occasion thereby to puff us up with pride, and a pharisaical conceit that we are not as other men are; yea if we be so humble that he cannot make us proud of anything else, he will labor to make us proud of our humility. Let us not therefore be reckless and secure, but have an eye to our hearts, even in our good actions: and when we entertain any excellent virtue, let us take heed lest pride thrust in with it, seeing most commonly it attendeth upon virtue, and taketh up his standing where it lodgeth, for we are not quite at liberty, and out of the danger of Satan's thralldom, so long as pride like a jailor attendeth on us.

CHAP. XXI. OF THE MANNER OF SATAN'S FIGHT.

And so much concerning Satan's stratagems and warlike policies: now let us consider of the manner of his fight. In which we are first to observe that it is most cruel and cowardly, for he observeth no complements of true valor, but then most violently assaulteth us when we are least provided; if he cannot prevail when we are waking, he will set upon us while we are sleeping; if he cannot hurt us when we are ready in the field armed with the complete armor of a Christian, the girdle of verity, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit, &c. he will watch a time when he can spy us unarmed, and then he will assail us; if he cannot overcome us in the time of prosperity, when God hath hedged us in with his blessings, as it is, Job. 1:10, then he will watch till we be cast down with some adversity, and then he will lay load on us whilst we are under foot; and whereas all our hope of victory is in the Lord's assistance, he will persuade us to yield unto him, for as much as the Lord is become our enemy.

Now if we would resist Satan, we must so prepare ourselves that he do not hurt us by this his dastardly fight. Seeing therefore he useth to set upon us on all advantages, we are always to be so provided as that we give him no advantage; being awake, we are always to stand upon our guard, ready armed with the graces of God's spirit; being to sleep, we are to desire the Lord to watch over us, and to command his angels to pitch their tents about us, that so we may be defended from Satan's fury; seeing he is ready to assault us when he seeth us disarmed, we are always to keep the coat-armor of a Christian buckled unto us: lastly, seeing in the time of prosperity he is ready to puff us up with pride, and in the time of adversity to plunge us into despair, let us humble ourselves when God exalts us, by thinking of our unworthiness to receive the least of God's mercies; and comfort ourselves in the time of our affliction, by remembering that it is the portion of all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, and that whosoever suffer with Christ, shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. 3:12, and 2:12.

The second thing to be observed in his manner of fight, is, that he setteth upon us when we are most secure, and then soundeth the alarm to battle, when we most flatter ourselves with hope of peace, and that not drowsily and faintly, but with all celerity and speed, whereby he overcometh oftentimes, or at least foileth us, before we can arm or prepare ourselves to make any resistance. And thus he assaulted our first parents in paradise, when they securely promised unto themselves the continuance and increase of their happiness; and David also after all his troubles when he was reckless and idle, sleeping in the day, and after walking on his house top, letting his eyes wander after pleasures.

If therefore we would withstand Satan, let us shake off all drowsy and carnal security, and continually watch, standing on our guard to resist his

encounters whensoever he setteth upon us: and as in calm weather the careful Mariner provideth all things against a tempest, and the valiant soldier doth arm and furnish himself with all necessaries before the assault; so when Satan seemeth to offer us a time of truce, let us therein prepare ourselves more strongly against the day of battle; for when this raging lion seemeth to sleep as though he did not regard us, then if through recklessness we give him the least advantage, he will suddenly run upon us and devour us, if he get us within his cruel paws.

The third thing to be observed, is his indefatigable pains in tempting and assaulting us, for he never taketh rest, but still goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; and this is evident by his own confession, Job. 1:7, where he professeth that he had been compassing the earth to and fro, and walked from place to place. So that he omitteth no pain nor labor in seeking our destruction. And though he overcome us not at the first, but retire foiled, yet he will gather his forces again and again, and incessantly set upon us. And therefore if we would obtain victory, we must not think much of our labor, but use all pains, diligence and watchfulness in repelling his assaults. And seeing Satan is so vigilant and painful in seeking our destruction, let us think no pains too great in seeking our preservation; and considering that Satan after one, or two, or twenty foils is as ready to set upon us again as at the first, let us never faint, but like valiant soldiers always stand ready in the field to endure his encounters. But alas, the practice of most is far otherwise, for they watch and drudge night and day to attain unto riches and preferment, and in the meantime little regard this dangerous foe, but to the end they may attain unto their worldly desires, they entangle themselves in the snares which he hath laid to entrap them to their utter destruction.

The fourth thing to be observed in Satan's fight, is his often changing of his temptations, and taking as it were into his hand another weapon, when he perceiveth the first woundeth not. For example, he will tempt us to the contempt of God's word; if he cannot so prevail, he will entice us at least to neglect it; and if thus he cannot hurt us, he will, if he can, choke the seed of God's word with the thorny cares of the world, and so make it unfruitful. He will move us to think that Christ was no Savior; if he cannot persuade us to this, then he will tell us he is not our Savior. Yea so shameless is this tempter, that he will now tempt us to believe one lie of his coining, and presently after when he seeth we give no credit to that, he will tell us the clean contrary. For example, he will sometimes tell us that we are such grievous sinners that there is no way but damnation: and if we withstand this assault, he will soon after persuade us to an overweening conceit of our own excellency, and to a pharisaical opinion that we are not as other men are. Sometimes he will move us to doubt of our election, and if he cannot thus prevail, he will presently persuade us to think our election so sure, that though we follow our own lusts, and give ourselves over to all outrageous wickedness, yet in the end we shall be saved. In a word, this wicked Protheus will transform himself into a thousand diverse shapes, and in a short space will vary many ways his temptations, that if he cannot prevail by one means, he may overcome us by another. And therefore it behooveth us, if we will withstand him, to arm ourselves, not on one side alone, nor to be prepared against two or three assaults of our spiritual enemy, but we must be ready to answer all objections, and not so wholly incline to one side and to the defending one part, as that in the mean time we leave the other naked to be wounded with Satan's blows. And to the end we may the rather be encouraged to stand constantly in our defense, we are to know that when

Satan doth so often shift his temptations, and in a short distance of time doth seek to bring us into quite contrary vices, it is a manifest sign that he doth not yet prevail: for as no enemy is so foolish as will after that he hath made one sufficient breach for entry, or forced one gate of the city, go from that to another, but rather enter where the way is made; so Satan laying siege to our souls, would not seek to make a new battery with his temptations, if the former had made way for him to enter and surprise us; he would not tempt us to pride and presumption, if he had overcome our faith and plunged us into despair; he would never transform himself into an angel of light, if he could have overcome us in his own likeness; he would never tell us of God's mercy, if he had already overwhelmed us with the sight of our sins, and consideration of God's justice; nor yet of God's justice, if he could keep us in carnal security, by setting before us his mercy: but that way whereby he perceives he any whit prevails, he will follow and continue earnest in the same pursuit, till he perceive he cannot catch us. As therefore when the fit of the ague shifteth from time to time, it is a good sign that our nature waxing strong doth prevail against the disease; so when Satan's temptations in a short time often change, and that from one contrary to another, it is a sign that God's spirit being strong in us, doth resist Satan and putteth him to these shifts, whereas he would hold on a constant course if he prevailed against us.

The fifth thing to be observed in the manner of Satan's fight, is, that sometimes he setteth upon us immediately in his own person, and sometimes mediately using for his instruments the world and the flesh. Of the first we have an example, 1 Chron. 21:1, where it is said that Satan provoked David to number Israel. So, John. 13:2, the Evangelist showeth that the devil did put in the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Christ. And the

Apostle Peter, Act. 5:3, telleth Ananias that Satan had filled his heart with his suggestions that he should lie unto the holy Ghost. And thus also he tempted our Savior Christ immediately forty days together in the wilderness, Matth. 4. When he thus fighteth against us in his own person, he giveth the assault either in his own likeness, or else transformeth himself into an angel of light. When he encountereth us in his own likeness and like a devil indeed, then he doth as it were proclaim open wars, tempting us not only to those sins which, having some appearance of good in them, our corrupt conscience doth approve of, or at least can without any great terror wink at, but also to all outrageous wickedness and hellish impiety, which even a civil worldling would abhor to think of; namely, to Atheism, Idolatry, contempt of all religion, blasphemies against God, perjury, sacrilege, persecuting the known truth, heresy, murder, adultery, and such like: all which at the first sight may easily be discerned to be the suggestions of Satan, because this hellish brood do resemble their wicked father in their very countenance and outward appearance. And therefore Satan who subdueth more with the serpents wiles than with the lions force, doth seldom use this fight against any which have but the civil restraining grace of God, unless he entice them thereunto by degrees (as before I have shown) or except he find them exceeding ignorant, to the end he may make them believe that his suggestions are their own thoughts; but he practiceth these temptations, for the most part, against those who have even sold themselves to work wickedness, having their hearts hardened and consciences seared with their customable sinning.

And therefore most commonly he transformeth himself into an angel of light tempting us to sin, by using friendly persuasions, and making liberal offers of pleasure, profit or preferment, or else mincing those sins to which

he tempteth us as though they were nothing, or masking them under the vizard of virtue. Neither doth he often move us to commit those sins which nature (restrained by God's common grace, or sanctified by his spirit) doth abhor and tremble to think of; unless it be either to vex God's children with such suggestions, rather than for any hope of overcoming them; or else that whilst their minds are wholly intent in withstanding his outward violence, he may more cunningly entrap them in his secret ambushments, which they regard not: but otherwise he usually tempts us to commit such sins, as through our corruption we are prone unto, as not thinking them to be sins, or but small, or rather never entering into any consideration of them at all; as namely, carnal security, hardness of heart, infidelity, impenitence, neglect of God's word, profaning of his Sabbath's, covetousness, ambition, pride, neglect of the general duties of Christianity and special duties of our callings; all which are not much less heinous in the sight of the Lord than the other gross outward sins, and much more dangerous unto us, as being Satan's secret snares which he layeth to entrap us at unawares; in which when we are caught we are content to lie bound, because they do not so much pinch and torment the conscience as the other outward sins, they being not seen, or not regarded. As therefore those diseases which by disturbing the brain do take away all sense of pain, are of all others most desperate, namely, the dead palsy, the falling sickness, and sleepy lethargy, and in other diseases the patient is most dangerously sick when he hath no feeling thereof; so there is no sickness of the soul so desperate and dangerous, as those that afflict not our consciences with any sense of pain, to wit, carnal security, hardness of heart, and the rest above named.

And thus have I shown Satan's disguised and subtle manner of fight, wherein like a Pirate he hangeth out flags of truce, to signify peace and

friendship, till he have gotten us within his reach and command: and then he grappleth with us, and ransacketh us of all God's graces, and casteth us over board into the sea of destruction. And therefore it behooveth us with no less care to withstand Satan when he fawneth, than when he frowneth; when he fighteth by ambushment, than when he assaulteth us by open violence; when he offereth to stab us to the heart, than when he doth but (as it were) prick a vain, letting us bleed to death without sense of pain; when he tempteth us to outrageous sins, than when he enticeth us to secret and hidden sins; when he allureth us like a friend to commit sin, by offering pleasure, riches, or honors, than when like an enemy a roaring lion, or cruel dragon he rangeth about and rageth against us; *Nam cum delectabile proponit, molestum supponit, & dum vngit pungit*; He propoundeth things delightful to bring us to grief and misery, he fawneth on us that he may bemire us, and killeth while he embraceth us. Neither doth man know his time, but as the fishes which are taken in an evil net, and as the birds which are caught in the snare, so are the children of men snared in the evil time, when it falleth upon them suddenly, as it is, Eccl. 9:12. Nay, seeing this fight is far more dangerous, because he covereth his hook with an alluring bait; and those snares of sin more pernicious which lie hidden, than those which lie in open view; seeing we are more easily tempted to those sins which are secret and disguised in the habit of virtue, than unto those gross sins which have their names as it were branded in their foreheads; seeing also we can more hardly repent of them, both because they do not appear so horrible and grievous unto us, as the other open and outward sins, and also because they work in us no shame after we entertain and live in them, neither can any of our Christian brethren admonish or rebuke us for them, they being secret and unknown: therefore is Satan made more audacious to

tempt us, and we more bold to admit of his temptation, and after we are fallen we lack means to raise us up again by unfeigned repentance, for ourselves do approve our sins, and our brethren know them not: which Bernard well discerning, uttereth this speech fit for this purpose: *Extimesco magis occulta peccata quae clam committo quam manifesta quae perpetro palam, clam enim si pecco nemo me redarguit. Vbi autem reprehensio non metuenda est, ibi tentatori patet aditus liberrimus, & peccatum cum voluptate admittitur.* I am more afraid (saith he) of my secret, then of my open sins; for if I sin secretly there is no man to reprove me; and where reprehension is not feared, there the tempter hath most free access and the sin is entertained with pleasing delight. In a word, seeing we are more easily drawn into these sins; and after we are enthralled with them, make no hast to get out of our captivity: therefore let us be much more wary and heedful in discovering and avoiding these hidden snares and secret sins, into which we do most commonly fall unwittingly, and being fallen, do most willingly continue in them.

Secondly, Satan assaulteth us sometimes by his deputies and instruments; especially he employeth in these services, the world and the flesh. In the world he doth not only make choice of our enemies and profane irreligious men, which he stirreth up to afflict and persecute us, to the end we may be discouraged from the profession and practice of true godliness; but also of our dear friends and acquaintance and our near kindred: sometime our brother or sister, our parents and children, yea sometimes a man's wife which lieth in his bosom, playeth the part of the tempter. As we may see in the example of Job, who was not so much vexed by all his outward afflictions, as by the temptation of his wife, and three friends. The same is evident in the example of Eve, whom Satan used as his instrument to entice

Adam to the breach of God's commandment: and Jezebel who was the devils deputy, in provoking her husband to oppression and horrible murder. Neither doth he only use to these ends our carnal friends, but also our spiritual kindred in Christ, who are of the same religion, and make the same profession with us; and thus by the old Prophet, he enticed the young Prophet to transgress God's commandment. 1 King. 13. And thus he tempted our Savior Christ to neglect the work of our redemption, using the Apostle Peter as his instrument; and therefore because he supplied the devils place, our Savior calleth him by his name saying, Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offense to me, Matth. 16:23. And thus nowadays he useth professors, yea preachers of the Gospel, as means to tempt men to sin, both by their words and evil examples: which temptation is far more dangerous and of greater force, then if all worldlings should combine themselves together, and labor both by persuasion and example to seduce them; for when they can say I am a professor as well as thou, I am a servant of God who make conscience of my ways as well as thou, I am a Prophet as well as thou, and therefore thou needest not to make any doubt or scruple in following my council or example; it is a most strong temptation to entice us to sin: for like sheep we are most apt to follow after when any of our own company lead us the way. And therefore if we would resist this temptation, we must labor after true knowledge, that we may not depend upon others for our direction, but upon the word of God alone, and not live by example, but by precept; for the straightest rule that ever was of the most holy man's life (our Savior Christ excepted) is often and in many places crooked (for who is it that hath not erred and gone astray?) and therefore if we always follow their examples in all particulars, we shall err with them besides all our own errors.

So also he useth the help of our own flesh to betray the spirit, and lead us captive into sin; and that so cunningly, that we can hardly discern between Satan's suggestions and our own corrupt motions and desires: for being a spirit, he doth not appear in a corporal shape and persuade us to sin with real words, which are conveyed to the heart by the ear, but he cometh to us after a spiritual manner, and suggesteth secretly his temptations into the heart and mind directly and immediately, so as we can seldom distinguish his motions from our own thoughts. For as the spirit of God doth so move us to all virtuous and holy actions, as that in the mean time we would think his motions to be our own godly cogitations, but that we are sufficiently instructed out of God's word, that we cannot of ourselves so much as think a good thought unless it proceed from God; so much less can we discern between the suggestions of Satan and our own fleshly thoughts, because they are both corrupt and alike wicked. By reason whereof it cometh to pass that Satan wanteth no opportunity of circumventing us, because we can put no difference between his temptations and our own carnal desires: and therefore he having gotten (as it were) our own watchword, we are ready to open the gates of our souls when he offereth to enter, and to yield to his temptations as soon as he assaulteth us; whereas no man almost is so outrageously desperate that would wittingly and willingly entertain Satan's suggestions, whom he knoweth to be a common enemy to mankind, continually seeking their destruction, though he should entice him hereunto by offering much riches and great preferments. Yea hence it is that after Satan hath many times deceived and circumvented us, yet cannot we beware of him, nor avoid his deceits. For whereas if a man do give us evil counsel, or any way counsel us, yet after once or twice he come unto us, we can take heed of him, and though he make fair shows of honesty and

friendship, we will notwithstanding be very jealous and suspicious least again he overreach us; when Satan cometh to us this day and tempteth us to such gross wickedness, that we cannot choose but discern them to be his suggestions, yet this is no impediment to him but that he may come again tomorrow, and deceive us with some more subtle policy, because we cannot discern between his suggestions and our own thoughts, and therefore do acknowledge no other author of his temptations but ourselves.

Hence also it is that he will not stick to tempt the most godly unto the grossest impiety, and the most learned and sound in judgment, to entertain the absurdest heresy or error. For if he prevail (which sometime he doth as we may see in the example of David whom he tempted to adultery and murder, though he were a man according to God's own heart; and of Peter whom, he tempted to deny and forswear Christ, though he were a most worthy Apostle) then he getteth a great victory, and giveth them a singular foil; but if he be repulsed, yet this is no hindrance unto him, why he may not entrap them in some more secret ambushment. Hence it is that though he begin his fight with cunning policy, taking upon him the person of a friend, and transforming himself into an Angel of light, yet this is no impediment but that he may afterwards again appear and violently assault us in his own likeness; as he assaulted our Savior, first with subtle and secret temptations, like a friend and well-willer; and when he could not so prevail, he doth not stick to appear like himself, tempting him to outrageous gross idolatry, saying, all this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me. And contrariwise though he begin his assault like a devil and professed enemy, this is no hindrance but that he may end it like an Angel of light, and a flattering treacherous friend. So when he hath enticed us to one extreme and prevaieth not, this is no impediment but that soon after he

may allure us to the clean contrary; because though we think the first motion to be his suggestion, yet we may imagine the other to be our own thought, or (as I said) the motion of God's spirit, because it is quite contrary to the former.

Seeing therefore the matter standeth thus; how may we resist Satan, considering that we cannot discern his suggestions from our own cogitations? I answer; we must be skillful in God's word, and thereby able to judge what is good and what is evil, to discern what is virtue and what is vice, what God hath commanded and what he hath forbidden, which be the motions of God's spirit, and which the suggestions of Satan, and the thoughts of our corrupt flesh; and then are we carefully to embrace that which our conscience approveth as good, being informed by God's word, and to avoid and reject those motions which we know to be evil, whether they do proceed from Satan or from our selves; for it is not greatly material to know who is the author of them, so we are assured that they are evil and wicked; neither is it any dangerous error to ascribe Satan's suggestions to our corrupt flesh; or to attribute the wicked thought of our own flesh unto Satan: for though he be not the next and immediate cause, yet he is the first and principal cause of all sin and wickedness. And hence it is that in the Scriptures the same wicked motion and action is sometimes ascribed to man, and sometimes to Satan indifferently as appeareth, Act. 5:3,5 where first Peter affirmeth Satan to be the author of Ananias sin, by filling his heart with his suggestions, whereby he was tempted to lie unto the holy Ghost, and after he saith that Ananias had conceived this lie in his own heart.

But though most commonly it be very hard to discern between the suggestions of Satan, and of our corrupt flesh, yet sometimes they may be

distinguished by apparent differences; as first when the temptations are so cunning and exceeding subtle, that it is not possible they should be the thoughts of a seely ignorant man, but the apparent suggestions of the old wily serpent.

Secondly, when as the suggestion is urged with great force and violence, and leaveth behind it a deep impression, which seemeth to bring a necessity of doing that which is even contrary to natural reason, whereas the suggestions of the flesh do rather lead and entice us then draw and enforce us unto sin.

Thirdly, the temptations of Satan move us oftentimes to such outrageous wickedness, and hellish impiety, that even nature corrupted doth condemn as abominable, and even trembleth with fear and horror, when they are first suggested.

Fourthly, the flesh taketh occasion of things present and subject to the senses to entice us unto sin; but Satan's suggestions sometimes are far-fetched and so strange unto us, that before the instant they are suggested we never thought or so much as dreamed of them.

Lastly, the things whereunto we are tempted by the flesh, are always delightful and pleasing unto us; but Satan tempteth us also to those things which are irksome and grievous: as namely to superstitious abstinence whereby the body is almost starved; to punishing of our own bodies, as he tempted the Baalitish priests, to cut and launce themselves before their idol; and the superstitious papists to whip themselves before their images, and to take upon them tedious and dangerous pilgrimages to idols and relics of Saints; and the idolatrous heathen to burn in sacrifice their dear children. So also he tempteth some to despair of God's mercy and so torment themselves with horror and fear; yea sometimes to lay violent hands upon themselves,

murdering and taking away their own life, which by nature is so dear and precious unto them. All which being contrary to our natural inclinations and the desires of the flesh, manifestly appear to be the suggestions of Satan.

And these are the chief differences between the temptations of Satan and the flesh; otherwise they are commonly so like one to the other that they can hardly be discerned: and therefore let us not be so careful, curiously to distinguish them, as to avoid or resist them; knowing that Satan is the captain general, and the flesh and the lusts thereof Satan's chief aides and assistants, which continually fight against the spirit and labor to plunge both body and soul into everlasting destruction.

CHAP. XXII. OF THE GENERAL MEANS WHEREBY WE MAY BE ENABLED TO WITHSTAND OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES.

And so much concerning the manner of Satan's fight: now we are to speak of the conflict itself; wherein (as I have shown) the parties assaulting and oppugning are the devil and his assistants the world and the flesh; the party defending and resisting is the Christian soldier. The cause of the fight is not for lands and dominions, nor for riches and mines of gold; for these would Satan be content to give if he had them in his possession, if we would renounce God's service, and fall down and worship him; but for the everlasting salvation of our souls which Satan laboreth by all means possible to hinder, and to plunge us into endless destruction. The weapons which the assailants use in this fight are not the sword and spear, or any other carnal furniture, but spiritual temptations, whereby they seek to entice, draw, and provoke man to sin, that consequently he may receive the wages thereof everlasting death. The weapons which the Christian soldier useth to defend himself and repel his enemies, is the spiritual armor before spoken of, namely, the girdle of verity the breast-plate of righteousness, the

knowledge and profession of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, and fervent and effectual prayer.

Now in this conflict of temptations, there are first two common affections or general properties to be considered of; the Christian soldiers manful resistance, or else his fainting and receiving the foil; for either he courageously standeth upon his defense, armed with the graces of God's spirit, and putteth Satan to flight by withstanding his temptations; or else being surprised at unawares, whilst he is disarmed of these spiritual weapons and Christian armor, he is soiled by his spiritual enemies, yielding unto their temptations and falling into sin.

That we may withstand our spiritual enemy valiantly in all his temptations, and obtain a final victory, there are certain general means to be used; which may serve as strong forts and bulwarks, unto which we may retire ourselves as often as we faint, and be ready to receive any disadvantage in the fight. First, we are continually to have in memory the commandment of our chief captain Christ Jesus, whereby he inciteth us to a continual fight without fainting or yielding. So, Eph. 6:10,11. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against all the assaults of the devil. And, 1 Pet. 5:8. Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist steadfast in the faith.

Secondly, let us be encouraged to withstand our spiritual enemies with assured hope of victory; for we fight the Lord's battles under the standard of Jesus Christ, whose power is omnipotent, and therefore able to defend us, and to overthrow our enemies with a word of his mouth; who also is our head and we his members, and therefore we may assure ourselves that he hath no less will than power to succor us. As also let us always have in

mind the crown of victory promised to all that overcome, even a crown of glory and everlasting happiness in God's kingdom, Rev. 2:7, and 3:5,12,21. And this will make us resolve never to faint in the battle, nor cowardly yield unto Satan's temptations, though he should entice us to sin by offering us the whole world, because we would not thereby hazard the loss of this eternal weight of glory.

Thirdly, we are always to stand in readiness armed with the Christian armor, the graces of God's spirit, and to use all good means that we may be more and more strengthened and confirmed in them: but yet when we are at the strongest, we are not to presume upon our own strength, but to rely ourselves wholly upon the Lord's assistance, and when we are tempted and assaulted, we must continually implore his help, that being armed with the power of his might, we may withstand the temptation and obtain victory.

Fourthly, when we are assaulted by our spiritual enemies and tempted unto any sin, we must not only abstain from committing thereof, but also take occasion thereby of doing the contrary virtue. For example, when we are tempted to unlawful pleasures, we must not only abstain from them, but also we are somewhat to abridge ourselves of those that be lawful, and the more seriously and painfully to follow the works of our lawful callings; when we are tempted to covetousness, we must the more earnestly exercise the works of mercy and Christian liberality; when we are tempted to ambition, we must not only refrain from vain-glory, but we must labor after true humility and mortification, refusing not only unlawful honors, but those also which are lawful, so oft as we have just cause to fear that Satan will (taking occasion of our corruption) hereby cause us to forget God; when we are tempted to neglect the hearing of God's word on the Lord's Sabbath, we are the more diligently to hear it, not only then, being bound

hereunto by God's commandment, as being one of the chief means of sanctifying this day consecrated to God's service; but also on the week days, if the Lord give us fit opportunity, when as we might lawfully be exercised in the duties of our callings. In a word, when we are tempted to any vice, we are to take occasion thereby of doing the contrary virtue; in the meantime carefully avoiding the policy of Satan, before spoken of, whereby he laboreth to draw us from one vice to his contrary extreme. And so like valiant soldiers we shall not only avoid the danger and violence of Satan's strokes, but also we shall give Satan the foil with his own weapon, yea and make him afraid to assault us again with his temptations, least when he provoketh us unto sin, we take occasion thereby to serve God, and more constantly to embrace virtue.

Fifthly, we are most carefully to withstand Satan's temptations when they are first suggested; and to give him the repulse as soon as we perceive that he is but beginning to make an entrance. For this gliding serpent if he can but thrust in his head, will easily make room for his whole body: and therefore we must nip and bruise him in the head, and use his temptations like the serpents brood, which if men desire to kill, they do not tread upon their tails, for so they would turn again and sting them, but upon their heads, and then they have no power to hurt them. So we are not fondly to think that we can without hurt vanquish Satan's temptations in the end when we have long entertained them: for unless they be nipped in the head, and withstood in the beginning, they will mortally poison us with the sting of sin. For as thieves coming to break into a house, if they can but find room for the point of their wrench to enter, will easily by turning and winding about the vice make the doors, though very strong, fly open and give them entrance; so if this cunning thief Satan can find any entrance for his first

temptations, so as we can be content to think upon them, and revolve them in our minds with any liking, he will easily burst open the gates of our souls, and entering further will rob us of all God's graces. Let us therefore if we would resist Satan, follow the advice of the heathen Poet in a far different matter: *Principijs obsta: sero medicina paratur, Cum mala per longas conualuêre moras.* Or rather the counsel of the Apostle given us in this selfsame respect, Eph. 4:27. Give no place to the devil. And as wise citizens being besieged, do not let their enemies scale their walls and enter the town, with a purpose then to repel and beat them back again; but they withstand them as soon as they give the first assault, and keep them, if they can, from approaching near their walls with sconces and bulwarks: so we are not to suffer Satan our enemy and the troupes of his temptations to enter into our hearts, but to give them the repulse at their first approaching, least it be too late afterwards when they have surprised and wounded us with sin. Blessed are they therefore who take this Babylonish brood of Satan's temptations and dash them even whilst they are young against the stones, least waxing old and strong they furiously fight against us, and leading us captive in the chains of sin, grievously afflict and vex us.

Sixthly, if we would not be surprised and foiled by Satan, we must after we have resisted him in one temptation, be ready prepared to withstand another, and after we have once or twice given Satan the repulse, we are not securely to give ourselves to rest, as though the war were at an end: but we must continually expect his return with fresh supplies, and prepare ourselves for a new assault, using the time of Satan's intermission, as a breathing time to recover strength against the next encounter. And as soldiers besieged after they have sustained one assault, and given their enemies the repulse, do not securely give themselves to idleness and sleep,

but prepare all things ready for the next conflict, mending the breaches, and repairing those places which in the time of fight they found to be most weak; so when we have withstood some of Satan's temptations, and given him the repulse, we are not to give ourselves to rest, sleeping in reckless security, as though our enemies were quite overcome, but rather in the intermission of the spiritual combat, we are to prepare ourselves for the next assault, using all means to confirm our selves, where we discerned in the time of fight that we were most weak, and more strongly to arm ourselves with the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit, against those temptations which we found most forcible to prevail against us. For our enemy like a roaring lion continually rangeth about seeking whom he may devour; his malice will never let him rest, but even then when he seemeth to entertain a truce, he is most busy in plotting means whereby he may work our final destruction: and therefore we are never more carefully to stand upon our guard, than when this enemy seemeth to proclaim a peace, or when he fleeth away as though he were vanquished; for when he talketh of peace, he maketh himself ready for the battle, and this wicked Parthian doth more hurt in flying than in fighting. Here therefore the Christian soldier must avoid two dangerous evils: the one, that he do not faint or yield in the time of the fight; the other, that he do not after one victory wax insolent and secure: but when he hath once overcome, he is so to behave himself as though he were presently again to be assaulted. For, Satan's temptations like the waves of the sea do follow one in the neck of the other, and when one is past, another is ready to overwhelm us, if like skillful Pilots we be not ready as well to break the violence of that which followeth, as of that which went before. Neither must we look for any sound truce or firm peace, till we have the everlasting peace in God's kingdom; for as long as we continue in this

life our spiritual enemies will continually assault us: and therefore let us never be secure, until by death we have obtained a final victory.

And to the end that we may the rather be persuaded to continual care and Christian perseverance in this spiritual fight unto the end of our lives; let us consider that God's promises and the crown of victory are not promised to those that enter into this spiritual fight, but unto those that continue fighting, till they have obtained a full victory over their enemies. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, Rev. 2:7. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Ver. 10. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. Ver. 11. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Manna that is hid, &c. Ver. 17. He that overcometh shall be clothed in white array, and I will not put out his name out of the book of life. Chap. 3:5. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sit with my father in his throne. As it is, ver. 21. So that it is not sufficient that we enter the lists and sustain the first and second encounter, if afterwards we shamefully forsake the standard of Christ and cowardly run away, or else traitorously yield unto sin and Satan: but if we would be made partakers of God's promises, we must overcome, that is, obtain a full victory over the flesh, the world, and the devil. There is none triumpheth for making his enemies once or twice to retire, or for getting the better in some skirmish; because they may gather their dispersed forces, and join with them new supplies, and so giving a fresh assault, obtain victory: but those only triumph who obtain a full victory; neither shall any triumph in the kingdom of glory, who resist Satan in one temptation only or bridle one lust of the flesh, but they who subdue them finally and wholly not once alone, but unto the end of their lives; for as it falleth out in worldly wars, often time the enemy doth retire back, and

counterfeiteth a flight, to the end the other may pursue him securely and disorderly with full assurance of victory; and then he makes a stand and reuniting all his forces doth overcome his reckless enemy: so oftentimes Satan feigneth himself to be put to flight, to the end we may conceive an opinion of his great weakness, and our own invincible strength, and so be brought to negligence and security; and then he knits together all his force, and overthroweth us when we are recklessly secure fearing no danger. Yea sometimes he is in truth foiled, but yet not so as that he will surcease his fight; for if he cannot prevail one way, he will try another, so long as our continuance in this earthly weak tabernacle giveth him any hope of overcoming or foiling us: and therefore we are always to stand upon our guard, and to keep our standing continually, watching and preparing ourselves against the fresh assaults of our spiritual enemies. If Job had been secure after he had resisted Satan's first temptation, in taking away his oxen, asses and sheep, surely those which followed would have made him blaspheme God as Satan imagined, but like a good soldier after that he had received one blow, he did not cast away his shield of faith and patience, as though he had no further need of it, but still held it up expecting more, till the combat was ended; whose example we must imitate, if we would obtain victory, and enjoy the crown of victory everlasting happiness in God's kingdom. Otherwise if we sleep in security after we have given Satan one overthrow, we shall be sure to be assaulted and surprised before we be aware; for as one saith, *Diabolus victus quoque vincit*, even whilst the devil is vanquished, he obtaineth victory; and therefore *non victor magis quàm victus est extimescendus. Nam saepe se prostratum afflictumque simulat, ut acriùs insurgat; fugit ut in insidias pertrahat & incautos adoriatur; palam cedit ut clam vincat*: he is no more to be feared when he overcometh, than

when he is overcome; for oftentimes he feigneth himself to be foiled that he may the more fiercely renew the assault, he flieth that he may draw us into his ambushments, and assail us at unawares; he retireth openly that he may secretly overcome.

Seventhly, if we would not be circumvented by Satan, we must not give any credit unto him whether he lieth or speaketh true, whether he accuseth or flattereth, whether he endeavoreth to puff us up with pride and self-conceit, or whether he laboreth by aggravating our sins to plunge us into the gulf of hellish despair; for he abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof, as it is, John. 8:44. And if at any time he speak the truth, it is to the end he may be the better credited when he lieth, *Nam verum dicit ut fallat, blanditur vt noceat, bona promittit ut malum tribuat, vitam pollicetur ut perimat*, he speaketh the truth that he may deceive, he flattereth that he may hurt us, he promiseth good things that he may give us evil, he promiseth life that he may kill us. And therefore we are not to believe the truth itself, because he speaks it, but because it is grounded on God's word; nor to receive it from his mouth as his assertion, but from the mouth of God, and his holy Prophets and Apostles, guided and inspired with his spirit; for either he speaketh the truth to gain credit unto his lies, or propoundeth true promises that he may sophisticatedly gather out of them false conclusions. And hence it is that our Savior Christ did reject his testimony though true, and enjoined him silence when he confessed him to be the holy one of God, Mark. 1:24,25. And the Apostle Paul would not suffer the divining maid to give them her approbation though she spake truth, in confessing them the servants of the most high God, which did show unto us the way of salvation. Act. 16:17,18, because Satan did it, either to

this end, that by his testimony and approbation he might cause them the rather to be suspected and reputed imposters and deceivers, who did their miracles by telling this truth, be the rather credited when he did bely and slander them.

Eighthly, if we would withstand all Satan's temptations, we must avoid two extremes, the one to despise them, the other too deeply to apprehend and too greatly to fear them. For if we securely condemn Satan's temptations, we will never arm and prepare ourselves to make resistance, and so he will overcome us before we be aware; if we take them too much to heart continually meditating upon their strength and violence, and upon our own infirmity and weakness, they will fill us with fear, and plunge us into despair; if we despise the temptation, Satan will easily subdue us: for there is no enemy so weak and feeble which will not prevail against those who securely condemn them, though exceeding mighty; because they neglect all means of their preservation, and never stand upon their guard for their defense; and therefore much more will Satan prevail against us, if we regard not his temptations, he being strong and mighty, and we feeble and weak. On the other side if we so fear his temptations as that we despair of victory, Satan shall not need to fight against us, for we will overcome ourselves, fainting before the fight, and casting away our weapons as soon as Satan doth but muster his forces and march against us. And therefore let us so much fear the temptations, as that we do not securely condemn them; and not so much fear them as that we should despair of victory: let us fear them so much as that thereby we be stirred up with more care and diligence to resist and overcome them; but not so much as that we should cowardly faint, distrusting God's help: let us fear them in respect of our weakness and their violence, but let us boldly strive against them, trusting in God's

almighty power and merciful promises of his aide and assistance, being hereby assured of certain victory.

Ninthly, we must be most careful that we do not entertain temptations, either into our judgments to allow them, or into our hearts and affections to be vexed and turmoiled with them, upon the bare testimony of Satan or our own flesh before we have thoroughly examined them by the touchstone of God's Truth. For if we are enjoined not to receive doctrines hand over head from those that stand in the place of God's Ministers, and profess their zeal in seeking our salvation; but first to try the spirits whether they be of God or no; and if the Bereans are justly commended because they did not instantly believe those things which they heard from the Apostles themselves, but first searched the Scriptures to see whether they were so or no; what folly and madness it is to believe the suggestions of the Devil, and of our own flesh without due examination, who are not only notorious liars, that seldom speak the truth, unless it be with a purpose to deceive, but also our professed enemies, who seek by all means our ruin and destruction. And thus we are to examine all temptations; whether they be aspersions or persuasions, promises, or threatening's. For example, when Satan avoucheth that we are Hypocrites, we are not to believe it, because he saith it, and so to vex ourselves with this persuasion, as though it were an undoubted truth; but first we must examine ourselves, by God's Word whether we be so or no, and out of it observing the marks and signs both of hypocrisy and sincerity, we are to apply them unto ourselves, that so we may discern which of both do belong unto us. And if we find in us the notes of uprightness; as that we desire to perform obedience to the whole Law, and not only some few commandments, and that not only outwardly to be seen of men, but also inwardly in our hearts, making conscience of secret

sins as well as of open; that we do yield this obedience out of our love towards God; and not for worldly and by respects: that we hate sin because God hateth it and love righteousness, because he loveth it; and desire as well to be freed from sin as from punishment, and to yield obedience, as to have the reward of it, and such like, then may we with ease and upon a sure ground reject this temptation, as false and frivolous. So when he affirmeth that we have no faith and therefore are in the state of condemnation, let us not rashly believe this suggestion and so be turmoiled and vexed with it, but let us according to the counsel of the Apostle, try our selves whether we be in the faith or no, observing out of God's Word the marks and signs of it; as the purifying of our hearts from that love and delight in sin which hath been in them in former times; our love to righteousness which we have formerly loathed; our care to please God, and to use the means of grace and salvation; our good works and fruits of new obedience, and such like; which signs if we find in us, we may easily get the victory in this temptation. Thus when he telleth us that we are not the children of God nor elected to salvation but the children of wrath and reprobation, ordained to destruction, if we rashly give any credit to this suggestion how will it torment and vex us? How will it discourage us in all Christian duties when as we think them bootless and unprofitable: whereas if we examine the temptation by the Word of God, and try our state by the marks and signs of our Election and Adoption therein contained, of which I shall speak afterwards, how easily may we foil Satan, and with much peace and comfort proceed in the ways of godliness? So when Satan persuadeth us to neglect holy duties, as hearing the Word, Prayer, and such like, because we perform them imperfectly and corruptly, and so sin against God and increase our condemnation; or defer the doing them for time to come, when as we shall

be more fit to do them: if we give credit to these temptations they will much turmoil us, and more and more disable us unto this holy service; but if we call them into question, and examine them by God's Word, we shall find their falsehood, and avoid their danger. Because that will teach us, the more we neglect the means of grace and salvation, the further we shall be from them, that God requireth of us the obedience of sons, that is, that we desire and endeavour to perform service unto God in as much perfection as we are able; and that if we so do, he will accept of our will for the deed, pardon our imperfections, and spare us as a loving Father spareth his son that serveth him. Thus also when he persuadeth us to sin; to despair of God's mercy, and seeing it is too late to repent, to go on in our evil ways, and to take as much pleasure as we can in carnal delights; if we would but examine this temptation we should find it contrary to God's Truth, which revealeth unto us the infiniteness of God's mercy inviting us to repentance, because without all exception of person, sin or time, it is extended unto all that leave their sins and turn unto God by amendment of life. The same might be said (but that it were too long to insist upon them) both of his false promises whereby he allureth the weak Christian unto sin, and also ungrounded threatening's, whereby he frighteth him from holy duties; all which would be of no force to hurt us, if we would bring them to the light of God's Word, and examine them by this touchstone; whereas receiving them at Satan's hands (as it were) in the dark, they do much affright us with causeless fears and ungrounded terrors, and for the time that they are entertained utterly discourage and disable us in using the means whereby we might attain to grace and salvation. And upon this I have the longer insisted because (upon much experience) I dare boldly say, that there is not any one thing that giveth Satan greater advantage in the spiritual conflict, or more afflicteth

and weakeneth poor Christians unto all good duties, than that they rashly give credit to his temptations; and never examine them by the Word of God, either by reason of their ignorance whereby they cannot, or their negligence and sloth caused oftentimes through the abundance of melancholy, whereby they list not to bring them to this trial.

The tenth general means to confirm and strengthen us in the spiritual conflict is to spend our whole forces against Satan's temptations, and not trouble our minds with causeless fears and affrighting terrors by forecasting what will be the issue of them. For things present do belong unto us, but future events are only and always at God's disposing, and are therefore doubtful unto us, whether they shall happen or no; or if they do, when or in what manner. In which respect many weak Christians do often offend and much weaken themselves in being so much taken up with that which doth not appertain unto them, namely future events which God only knoweth and ordereth, that they quite neglect and forget present duties that belong unto them. And thus some finding the violence of Satan's temptations, and their own weakness to withstand them conclude a likelihood of their long continuance, and so an unlikelihood of their withstanding them. For if they cannot in their fresh strength resist the Devil, and stand in a present brunt of temptations, much less shall they (as they imagine) be able to hold out when as being tired their strength decreaseth, and the malice and fury of their enemies is more enraged by their weak resistance. In the meantime not considering that the issue of their temptations is in God's hand, and that he can easily pull back the enemy, so as he shall not assault them, or renew and increase their wearied forces, so as they shall be able to endure his encounters; Others fear that their weak shield of faith shall be pulled out of their hands; and that they shall be utterly spoiled of all saving grace,

because they find them already so weakened in them; not remembering that they stand in the power of God's strength, which is able to finish the battle, as to give the first onset, and that their faith and other graces stand not in their own strength, but by virtue of Christ's intercession who hath prayed that it may never fail; and upon the immutability and truth of God, whose gifts and graces are without repentance. Others feeling in their hearts and consciences affrighting terrors and the troubles and turmoil's of their afflicted minds, do fear lest they shall burst out into impatency, and so dishonor God, discredit their profession, and expose themselves unto shame and disgrace, not well waying with themselves that they have not all this while stood in their own strength, but in the power of the Lord which being all sufficient is also without change; if by faith we rest upon it. Finally, others do fearfully forecast that their troubles continuing and breaking them of their rest and sleep, they shall be distracted of their wits, and so end their days in rage and raving; not considering that the God of peace can when it seemeth good unto him, put an end to their troubles, and make them quietly to take their rest, when as they are assured that being under his protection they are in safety. All which and such like fears thorough fore-casting of future evils, are not only unprofitable, as enabling us only to foresee mischief, but not giving us any strength or wisdom, whereby we may be able to prevent or escape them, but also exceeding hurtful and pernicious, making us much more apt to fall unto the evils feared. As fear of being foiled and vanquished in time to come, doth for the present disarm us of Christian courage and resolution; and to become so cowardly that we are ready to flee at the next encounter. Fear of losing faith and other saving graces; implyeth a likelihood that they may be lost, and so maketh way for diffidence and doubting; fear of bursting out into impatency in time to

come, weakeneth our patience in present troubles, and pulleth away from it a chief prop whereby it is supported, namely, hope of a good issue and desired victory, whereby the weak Christian is ready presently to dishonor God, discredit his profession, and disgrace himself by showing his impatency; through fear of falling into it in time to come. And finally fear of future distraction endangereth him above all things to speedy madness; because it so filleth his heart with terror and amazedness; that it maketh his sleep to go from him, and his mind restless day and night. Into all which evils through the just judgment of God they plunge themselves in giving way to these distrustful fears, seeing hereby they do not only disarm themselves of Christian courage and resolution, and cast away the shield of faith which should defend them in the spiritual conflict, but also rob God of his glory, manifested in the wise and powerful disposing of future events, and distrust his gracious promise, whereby he hath assured us that he will not (if by a lively faith we rely upon him) suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will give a good issue to the temptation, that we may be able to bear it. Yea, hereby they take upon them the execution of God's office of fore-seeing and disposing of that which is to come, which doth not at all belong unto them, and so falling into a spiritual premunire, they are deservedly cast out of God's protection, and make a forfeiture of their liberty with all the riches of his saving graces, whereby they become an easy prey to their spiritual enemies. All which mischiefs if we would escape; our best course is to busy ourselves in performing of our own duty, which is to resist the Devil, and to withstand his temptations, when they are suggested; not intermeddling with things to come, but only thus far forth that we may expect temptations before we are assaulted, and therefore prepare ourselves by having continually all the spiritual armor fast buckled

unto us. But let us for the issue and event securely cast ourselves upon God's powerful providence and gracious promises, and in all humility of spirit submit ourselves to be wholly disposed of by him according to his good will and pleasure, resting contented with whatsoever he sendeth honor, or dishonor, strength or weakness, right wits or madness, life or death, as knowing that is not only all-sufficient in respect of his wisdom and power to our eternal good, but is also most good and gracious unto us being our loving Father in Jesus Christ, who hath promised that he will cause all things to work together for the best unto them that love him, and give a good issue to all our trials.

The eleventh means to withstand all temptations is to labor after humility, and utterly to deny ourselves and all that is in us that God may be all in all, and have the glory and praise of our salvation: unto which till we have attained, we shall never enjoy secure peace and sound comfort, but shall ever be vexed and turmoiled with Satan's temptations. For so long as pride and an opinion of our own worth, beareth any sway in us, we are ready to rob God in whole or in part of the glory and praise of our salvation, whilst we desire to be something in ourselves, and to offer him somewhat in lieu of his mercy for which we look to be accepted of him rather than others, whom we think in these respects inferior unto us. And this maketh way for spiritual desertions, and moveth the Lord who is most zealous of his glory to leave us to ourselves, to Satan's temptations, and to the strength of our corruptions to be foiled and overcome of them, that so by the sight of our weakness, and the lamentable experience of our shameful falls we may be thoroughly humbled and becoming vile, yea nothing in our own eyes be content to yield unto God, the whole and sole praise of his own work. An example whereof we have in Job, who was grievously afflicted with

torments of body and terrors of mind, not only for the exercise and manifestation of his patience that it might be a pattern to all posterity, but also to humble him and to beat him off from that too great opinion which he had of his own righteousness. Neither did the Lord free him from these calamities till he laid his hand upon his mouth, and had learned to abhor himself, and to repent in dust and ashes. And Paul being too apt to be puffed up with the multitude of revelations was pricked with the thorn in his flesh, and buffeted with the messenger of Satan, that he might learn to glory in nothing but in his own infirmities, and in the power of God manifested in his own weakness. And as this pride doth much disadvantage us, because it moveth the Lord to withdraw his assistance; so doth it chiefly advantage Satan in this conflict, when as grounding our resolution, faith and hope upon so weak a ground as our own worth, he can easily overturn all with the least blast and breath of his temptations by discovering the manifold corruptions, and manifest imperfections of the most excellent Graces in us, and the best works and actions done by us.

In both which respects (upon much experience and diligent observation) I dare boldly affirm, that pride is the prime and most common cause of the conflicts and troubles of mind, wherewith many are so long and grievously vexed till they be almost swallowed in the gulf of desperation: The which will seem a strange paradox unto many, because at the first view, none seem more mortified to this vice, none more complain of their sinful unworthiness, or in the sight and sense of their wants and imperfections are more humbled and dejected. But if we look to the ground of all, and can distinguish the effect from the cause, and God's work from our own, we shall plainly perceive that pride chiefly is the cause of all, that God casteth them down, because they would be too much exalted; that they complain of

their sin and unworthiness, because they have rested too much on their righteousness and worthiness, and now in time of temptation find it nothing; and that they are thus deeply dejected, because climbing up to advance themselves in the opinion of their own worth, this weak staff or rather reed breaking under them, when they were at the highest, they have fallen down into the lowest bottom of deep discontent.

But for the better clearing of this point we are to know that ordinarily melancholy is the chief ground of these afflictions and troubles of mind, a principal actor in these Tragedies; and the choicest instrument that Satan useth to plunge poor Christians into these horrors of mind and terrors of conscience; it is his chair of estate in which he sitteth and tyrannizeth, and his strongest fort, of which being once possessed, he is hardly cast out. Now this melancholy is either natural through the excess of this humor in the temperature of the body, or accidental and adventitious through some outward causes. Of this latter, Pride is the most usual and greatest cause, and (as it were) the leaven of the other which setteth it on working and boiling, ministering unto it such virulent poison and corruption, that it disquieteth the mind, terrifieth the conscience, and even racketh and enrageth the heart and affections. For what is the next & immediate cause that breedeth accidental melancholy, and increaseth and leaveneth that which is natural, but impatience and deep discontent? And what is the mother and nurse of these but pride and conceit of our own worth, when as he who is infected with it is crossed in his hopes and desires; the which will appear if we consider this pride and discontent, as they are exercised about either worldly or spiritual objects. For when a man through pride desireth to excel in the world, and to this end overmuch loveth and desireth worldly things, as credit and esteem, riches, pleasures, and such like, when he is

crossed of his hopes and shorted of his desires, he fretteth with discontent; groweth impatient of his afflictions, as though he deserved much better at the hands of God and men, and so this discontent bringeth dejection of mind; heaviness of heart, dullness of spirit, and a general lumpishness in all the powers of body and mind: whereas contrariwise when we are thoroughly humbled and do see and acknowledge our own vileness and unworthiness, we expect no great matters, and answerably are not much troubled, when we are crossed of our hopes; we are patient in bearing even great afflictions, because we know that our sins have deserved much greater, and though with the Church in the Lamentations we were stripped of all, and led captive of our enemies, so as we might justly complain that no sorrow is like ours; yet would we with meekness and patience bear all and acknowledge that it is the Lord's mercies that we are not utterly consumed. Finally we are contented in all estates, because we have learned wholly to resign ourselves unto God's good pleasure, and to submit our wills to his will who knoweth better how to dispose of us, than we ourselves, and can through his wisdom, power and goodness turn all to our good, making those things which seem crosses and hindrances, helps and furtherance's to our salvation.

Thus also when pride is exercised about spiritual objects it is a chief cause of impatency, discontent and melancholy, when as it is crossed of its hopes and desires. For when the Christian after his conversion expecteth that he shall in his sanctification attain unto angelical perfection and contrary to his hopes through the relics of corruption remaining in him, bewrayeth his wants and imperfections, and receiveth many foils and falls in the conflict of temptations, his mind is much disquieted, his heart vexed, and his conscience grievously troubled and turmoiled, whereupon he falleth into

discontent and melancholy, whereas if he were so humbled that he knew with the Apostle, that in him, that is, his flesh dwelleth no good thing; if he had learned to acknowledge with the Prophet, that even his best righteousness were like a polluted cloth, he would not be so affected and turmoiled with the sight and sense of his corruptions and imperfections. So pride maketh men desire to be something in the work of their salvation, and to have life eternal not only upon free gift but partly by purchase, and with some respect of their own worth. But when looking into themselves they find their corruptions many and great, and the best duties performed by them full of wants and imperfections; then this broken reed of their own worth failing, their hopes fall that rested on it, and so they grow discontented and disquieted, affrighted and troubled, and if God should not uphold them with his spirit, making them wholly to abandon themselves and to rest wholly upon his infinite mercies, and the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, they would be easily swallowed up in deep desperation, whereas if being thoroughly humbled, they had wholly denied themselves in the work of salvation, and had ascribed the sole praise of it unto the Lord, who hath only right unto it, they would not be much exalted in their hopes by the sight of their greatest perfections, nor much dejected in the sense of their imperfections, knowing that as their worthiness cannot save them, so their unworthiness shall not condemn them, so as they rest wholly upon the free mercies of God, and merits of Christ by a lively faith. If being truly humbled they were brought to a holy despair in themselves, they should not be so apt to entertain that hellish despair of God's mercies, and if being wholly stripped and stark naked of all opinion of their own inherent righteousness they would by faith put on the perfect righteousness of Christ, their hearts and consciences would not be so tormented with terrors and

fears, doubting and despair, when God's justice summoneth them to make their appearance, but they would with much comfort and confidence come into his presence having to plead Christ's perfect payment, and full satisfaction for their sins.

Lastly, if we would withstand Satan, we must object our Savior Christ against all his temptations: for if we apply him unto us by a lively faith, he will be our shield and buckler to defend us from all Satan's blows. For example, if Satan tell us that we are miserable sinners, and therefore in the state of damnation: we are to answer that our Savior Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that he was wounded for our transgressions and broken for our iniquities &c. and with his stripes we are healed, and so he which knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. If he say that we are subject to the curse of the law; we are to answer that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law when he was made a curse for us. If he object that we are subject to God's wrath, we are to tell him that Christ did bear his fathers displeasure, that he might make our peace: and whereas we were strangers and enemies, because our minds were set on evil works, he hath now reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death. If he tell us that we are his bondslaves, we are to answer, that we were so indeed in time past, but our Savior Christ hath paid unto his father the price of our redemption, and hath set us free. If he affirm that we are unjust and therefore shall be condemned before God's judgment seat; we are to answer that Christ who was innocent was condemned, that we who are guilty might be acquitted; that though we are wicked in ourselves, yet we are most just being clothed with his righteousness; that he that came to save us shall come to judge us, and therefore we need not doubt of mercy, if we plead his merits forsaking the

plea of our own righteousness and renouncing all self-confidence. If he say that we shall be held captive of death and never rise to take possession of our heavenly inheritance, we are to answer that our Savior Christ hath broken the bonds of death and led captivity captive; that he is risen again, being the first fruits of them that slept, and is ascended into heaven, to prepare us a place there. If he object that Christ and all his benefits do not appertain unto us, for every man shall live by his own righteousness, and the soul that sinneth shall die the death; we are to answer that by the spirit of God and a lively faith, Christ is become our head and we his members, so that he is ours and we his, and our sins he hath taken upon him, and bestowed on us his righteousness, he is become our husband and we his spouse, and therefore as he hath communicated himself unto us, so likewise all his benefits, his merits, righteousness, sanctification, and everlasting happiness.

But if Satan will not thus be answered, we are not to entertain any further disputation with him, but to send him to our Savior Christ who hath taken upon him to be not only our redeemer and our mediator and intercessor unto God his father, but also our advocate to plead our cause and to answer all suites made against us both by God's justice and the handwriting of the law, and also by Satan and all his adherents, as it is, 1 John. 2:1. Seeing therefore our Savior Christ who is the wisdom of his father hath taken upon him the defense of our cause in all our suites, let not us ourselves be over busy in disputing with this wrangling sophister, but send him for an answer to our Savior Christ who hath fully satisfied his fathers justice, in all, which it had against us, and cancelled the handwriting of the law, whereby we were obliged and bound, and therefore much more able is he to answer all accusations which this caviling accuser hath against us. Neither are we to

doubt but that our Savior will be our advocate to plead our cause, especially considering that it doth principally concern himself, and his own glory and sufficiency. For the questions and causes controversial between us and Satan, are not about our own worthiness, merits, righteousness, and satisfactions, all which we renounce and cast away from us as polluted cloths, in respect of being any causes of our justification and salvation: but concerning Christ's righteousness, merit, and the sufficiency and efficacy of his death and obedience, for the salvation of all repentant sinners which do apply them unto themselves by a lively faith: and therefore we may assure ourselves he will defend his own cause against all Satan's objections and imputations.

But if Satan continue his importunity, and will admit of no answer, we are as much as in us lieth to banish his temptations out of our minds, and not to think and meditate on them: and to this end we are continually to exercise ourselves in fervent prayer, desiring the Lord's gracious assistance whereby we may be enabled to withstand all the assaults of our enemy, as also to hear read and meditate in God's word, and diligently to use holy conferences with our Christian brethren, and painfully to employ ourselves in the works of our callings, that so we may have no leisure to entertain Satan's temptations. For as a vessel which is already full can receive no more, and whatsoever is poured thereinto spilleth upon the ground: so when our minds are replenished with holy thoughts, and occupied in godly and honest exercises, there is no room left for Satan's suggestions and therefore as soon as they offer to enter, we presently reject them. Whereas on the other side if we spend our times in idleness, and do not diligently exercise ourselves in the duties of Christianity, and of our several callings; then are our minds fit grounds to receive the seeds of Satan's temptations, and to

nourish them till they bring forth the fruits of sin: and if Satan find us like empty houses clean swept and void of all holy meditations and godly exercises, he will easily enter, and if himself be not strong enough he will take unto him seven other spirits worse than himself, that so he may be more strong to keep possession. If therefore we would not be overcome by Satan's temptations, let us beware of idleness; for when the mind is empty of that which is good, it is most fit to receive that which is evil.

But if Satan's temptations be at any time entertained into our minds, let us most carefully take heed that we do not suffer them (as it were) to take up their lodging, by revolving them in our thoughts, not to meditate too earnestly on them, but rather on the preservatives which may strengthen us against their violence; neither are we so seriously to think on Satan's objections, as that in the mean time we forget how to answer them. For example, when he setteth before our eyes the heinousness of our sins, we are not to bend all our thoughts to meditate and call to mind all our sins both new and old, both which we have fallen into through infirmity, and which we have willingly committed, for so the huge cloud of our sins being near our eyes, will hide from our sight the shining beams of God's mercy and Christ's merit, though they are without comparison greater: but as soon as we cast one eye upon our sins for our humiliation, let us cast the other presently upon Christ Jesus who hath paid the price of our redemption, and suffered all the punishment which we by our sins had deserved. For if when this fiery serpent Satan hath stung us with the sting of sin, we spend our time in looking upon the wound, and never think upon the remedy, even the true brazen serpent Jesus Christ hanging on the cross: the poison of sin will so inflame our consciences, that the wound will prove mortal, which at the first might easily have been cured if we would have applied thereunto the

precious balm of our Saviors blood. So when Satan setteth before our eyes our own wickedness and infirmities, to the end we may despair of victory, as being never able to withstand such strong temptations, we are not to spend our time in thinking hereupon, but presently to call to mind the almighty power of God who hath promised us his assistance in this spiritual fight. So when he objecteth unto us the justice and wrath of God, in punishing of sin, and the curse of the law and torments of hell prepared for the damned; we are not over seriously to revolve these things in our minds; but presently to call to mind God's infinite mercy and Christ's merits, whereby God's justice is fully satisfied, his wrath appeased, the curse of the law cancelled, and we made of fire brands of hell heirs of heaven. And thus if as soon as Satan inflicteth the wound we apply the cure, it will never be mortal unto us; but if we let the poison of his temptations run in our minds and never think of any remedy, though at the first it seemed but a small scratch, it will so inflame our consciences with scorching heat that they will afterwards very hardly admit of any cure. When therefore Satan doth cast into our minds his temptations, let us repel them, and endeavor to quench them whilst they be but small sparks: for our corrupt minds are like unto tinder, and Satan's temptations like the fire, and therefore if instead of putting them out we blow upon them, though they be but as a small spark at the first, within a while they will increase to an unquenchable flame which will torment our consciences with scorching heat: neither is there anything but the blood of Christ, and the water of the spirit which will extinguish this wildfire when once it hath taken deep hold on us.

CHAP. XXIII. HOW THE CHRISTIAN BEING FOILED BY SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS MAY BE RAISED AGAIN.

And these are the means whereby the Christian soldier may be strengthened and encouraged to stand in the combat of temptations. But sometimes it cometh to pass that by reason they neglect these means, or else do not so carefully use them as they should, they are foiled by Satan, overcome by his temptations, and led captive unto sin. How therefore must the Christian thus overtaken behave himself? Surely he is not desperately to cast away all hope of victory and cowardly to yield himself to be the slave of Satan, lying contentedly in the chains of sin, without any desire or endeavor of coming out of his captivity: but being fallen he is to labor and strive that he may rise again, and being taken prisoner by sin and Satan, he is not willingly to remain in their bonds but earnestly to desire his freedom and liberty.

Now the means whereby being fallen he may rise again, is by unfeigned repentance, when as he is heartily sorry for his sin, because thereby he hath displeased his loving and gracious father, and steadfastly purposeth for the time to come to leave and forsake those sins, into which by the malice of

Satan and his own infirmity he is fallen; and by a lively faith, when as he doth apply unto himself all the merciful promises made unto all repentant sinners. For though faith in nature go before repentance, yet the act and fruit of faith, whereby we are assured of God's mercy in the free forgiveness of our sins, always cometh after.

Where by the way we may note a difference between the state of God's children and the wicked: both fall into sin very often, both also commit heinous and grievous sins; yea sometimes the child of God falleth into more fearful and horrible sins, than a mere worldling; but herein the chief difference between them consisteth, that the child of God after his fall is vexed and grieved, and laboreth to rise again by leaving and forsaking the sin which is odious unto him; but the wicked man after his fall never soroweth nor grieveth, but rather resolveth to live still in his sin, and to commit it again and again with greediness and delight when he hath any occasion offered.

But here the weak Christian whose soul is oppressed with the heavy weight of sin will say unto me; alas this is small comfort unto me which you speak, neither can I hereby have any assurance that I am the child of God; for after I am fallen into sin, such is the hardness of my heart that I cannot bewail nor be sorry for it; and whereas every small worldly loss or cross maketh me mourn, weep and wail, when by my sin I have offended God, I cannot shed a tear nor show any true sign of hearty sorrow; and such is mine untowardness and corruption that instead of forsaking my sin, I am ready to fall again upon the next occasion. And therefore I cannot have any faith or full assurance of God's promises made in Christ, seeing they are all limited and restrained to those sinners which repent and amend. That therefore these mourning souls may receive some comfort, let them know

first, that if they have an earnest desire of repentance, faith, and the rest of God's graces; if they have a good purpose to leave and forsake their sins, and to spend their lives in the service and worship of God: if they are displeased with their corruptions, and according to the measure of grace given, pray unto God, desiring the assistance of his holy spirit, whereby they may more and more mortify the old man, and crucify the flesh, and the lusts thereof: if they hate the sin they commit, and love the good which they cannot do: if they can grieve because they are no more grieved for their sins, and be displeased with themselves, because their sins do no more displease them: then may they be assured that they are God's children, who are acceptable unto him in Jesus Christ. For he respecteth not so much our actions as our affections; nor our works, as our desires and endeavors: so that he who desires to be righteous is righteous; he that would repent, doth repent; he that striveth to leave and forsake his sins, he reputeth of him, as if he had left and forsaken them; they that would never fall, nor be foiled by their spiritual enemies, God esteemeth as his invincible soldiers, and valiant worthies, who were never vanquished. For the Lord accepteth the desire for the deed; and if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that a man hath not, as it is, 2 Cor. 8:12. So he is accounted blessed, not who hath attained unto perfect inherent righteousness indeed, but he who hungereth after righteousness, Matth. 5:6, that is, who hath a sense and feeling of his wants and imperfections, and withal an earnest desire to have his wants supplied. In which respect one saith, that a just life is always present when we will, because it is justice itself if we effectually desire it: neither is there anything more required to the perfecting of righteousness, than to have a perfect will to embrace it.

But yet we must not imagine, that every flickering and unconstant desire, proceeding from sudden passion, and some extraordinary occasion, is pleasing unto God; for so every worldling might imagine himself to be in the state of grace: but unto this desire I speak of, there are diverse things required. As first, that this desire be joined with a holy endeavor, and earnest striving and laboring in the use of the means, whereby we may attain unto those graces which we do desire: for it is not sufficient that we wish for faith, repentance, and other graces, unless we endeavor to attain unto them, and to this end carefully use all good means ordained of God for the obtaining our desires. Secondly, this desire must not be sudden like a flash of lightening, vanishing away as soon as it entereth into us, but we must constantly persevere in it, till it be satisfied. And as David longed at all times after Gods judgments, so must we long continually after saving grace and spiritual strength, although we cannot always do it with like earnestness, as we may see by comparing Cant. 2:5, with chap. 5:3. Thirdly, it must not be a slight, and indifferent desire, as though we would have these graces, if we could easily attain unto them, otherwise we do not greatly care whether we have them or no: but it must be very earnest, at least some time, though not always: So as we may say with David: My soul longeth after thee, O Lord, as the thirsty land. Psal. 63:1. And, As the Hart brayeth for the rivers of water, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, as it is, Psal. 42:1. Like the desires of a woman with child, which can by no means be satisfied, unless she have her longing. It makes us like the Spouse in the Canticles even sick of love with God's graces which we long after, and at no ease till we enjoy them. Now our desire will appear to be thus earnest when we are impatient of any delay; Saying (like Rachel) give me grace and strength to bring fruits of holiness, or else I die. And when our souls faint in

our longing like a man that is hungry and near famished; according to that of the Wiseman, hope deferred makes the heart faint, but when the desire commeth it is a tree of life. Finally, our desires will appear to be fervent, when as we are inflamed with a holy anger against all things that cross us in them, and with a devout violence of holy resolution do set ourselves seriously and courageously against whatsoever opposition seems to hinder us from obtaining of them. Like the desire of hunger which will break through a stone wall, and make famished men to tread underfoot, even those that do but a little hinder them from their desired food, as we see in the example of the hunger-starved Samaritans. 2 King. 7:17.

Fourthly, this desire is true, and pleasing unto God, when as it proceedeth from a sense of our own want and penury, in regard whereof we are truly humbled. And hereof it is compared to hungering and thirsting; in which two things concur, first, a sense of want which afflicteth us, and, a desire to have it supplied.

Fifthly, it is not sufficient that we have a continual and earnest desire of our salvation, unless we desire as earnestly the subordinate causes and means tending thereunto; namely, vocation, justification, sanctification, faith, repentance, and the rest of the graces of God's spirit: for even Balaam himself did wish that he might die the death of the righteous, but his desire was not acceptable to God, because he wished not also to live their life: he desired to die like them, that he might be saved; but he desired not to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life, whereby he might have been assured of salvation.

If therefore we would have our desires acceptable to God, they must be joined with an holy endeavor to obtain those spiritual graces which we do desire, they must be constant, earnest, and proceed from a true sense and

feeling of our own want, and be referred as well to the means, as to the end, and then the desire of grace is the grace itself; the desire of faith is faith; the desire of repentance is repentance; not in its own nature, but in God's acceptation, who accepteth the will for the deed. According to that excellent saying of Augustine. He hath much profited in this life who in his profiting knoweth how far he is short of perfect righteousness.

And in truth this is the chief perfection of our righteousness, when as we feel our imperfections, and labor earnestly after more perfection: for, *Christiani sumus potius affectu quàm effectu*: We are Christians rather in our affections and desires, than in our works and abilities: neither doth the Lord bestow upon his children the full measure of his spirit and the graces thereof in this life, but only the first fruits, which are as it were but an handful of corn in respect of the whole field; and the earnest to assure us of the rest, which is but as a penny in respect of many thousands, which are confirmed unto us thereby, as the Apostle speaketh Rom. 8:23, 2 Cor. 1:22, and 5:5. True it is indeed that God bestoweth his spirit and the graces thereof upon some of his children in greater measure, and upon some in less, even as the first fruits may be a greater or lesser handful, and the earnest is sometimes a penny, and sometimes a shilling, sometimes more and sometimes less; but yet the greatest measure which any receive, is but as an handful of the first fruits, and an earnest penny in respect of the main sum and full measure, which the Lord hath hereby assured us that he will bestow upon us in his kingdom: and he that hath received the least earnest, hath as full and perfect assurance of the whole bargain, which God hath covenanted to make good unto us, as he who hath received the greatest, according to the nature of an earnest, to which the measure of grace here received is compared. But wherein doth this measure of grace and chief

perfection of a Christian consist in this life? Surely, not in their works, for they are all imperfect, and so full of corruptions that they are odious in God's sight, being considered in themselves, and examined by the rule of his exact justice; neither in their inherent righteousness, and begun sanctification, for when they are at the holiest they are polluted with the relics of original corruption, which bring forth the fruits of actual transgressions, and make us unable to do the good we would, in that manner and measure which we should, and therefore those which are most righteous are not in this respect acceptable to God: but herein the perfection of a Christian consisteth, when as seeing his imperfections, wants and sins, he is grieved and truly humbled with the sight and sense of his own misery and wretchedness, and disclaiming and rejecting his own righteousness and good works, doth flee unto our Savior Christ, hungering after his righteousness, and by a lively faith applying unto his wounded soul his merit and obedience, doth look for salvation in him alone; and lastly, when as in obedience to his commandment, and in true thankfulness for his infinite mercies he hath an earnest desire to glorify his name, by a godly and Christian life, striving and endeavoring continually to forsake his sins, to mortify his corruption, and to attain unto more and more perfection in righteousness and holiness. For, *Maxima pars Christianismi est toto pectore velle fieri Christianum*; It is the greatest part of Christianity to desire with the whole heart to become a Christian.

If therefore we do keep the covenant of the Lord, nay, if we but think upon his commandments, to the end we may do them, the loving kindness of the Lord shall endure forever upon us, as it is, Psal. 103:17,18; if we can from our hearts say with good Nehemiah, Neh. 1:11. O Lord I beseech thee let thine ear now hearken to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of

thy servants who desire to fear thy name, the Lord will hear us indeed and grant our requests. If with the Prophet David we have but a respect to God's commandments, with a care to fulfill them, we shall not be confounded, as it is, Psal. 119:6. If we but desire to obey God's commandment, the Lord will accomplish our desire, and quicken us in his righteousness, though we be dull, yea dead unto all goodness, as it is, ver. 40. If with the Apostle Paul we do the evil which we would not, and consent to the law that it is good, delighting therein in the inner man; then though we are with him led captive unto sin, yet it is not we that offend, but sin that dwelleth in us, that is, our old man, our corrupt and unregenerate part, which cannot fitly be called by our name, because it is mortified already in some measure, and shall be fully abolished by the spirit of God; neither doth it live the same spiritual life with us, seeing it is not quickened by the same spirit: and therefore as those who have diverse souls, which give unto them life and motion, are themselves diverse and also called by diverse names; so the new and old man living as it were by diverse souls, the one being quickened with God's spirit, the other by Satan (whereof it cometh to pass, that the more the one liveth the other dieth, the more strong the spirit is, the weaker is the flesh; and the actions of both are quite contrary) therefore they may fitly be called by diverse names: neither can the actions of the flesh be ascribed to the spirit properly, seeing they are contrary the one to the other. For as if a science of a crab tree, and another of a pepin tree being grafted into the same stock do both bring forth their several fruits, the one crabs, the other pepins, it may fitly be said this tree bringeth forth either pepins or crabs, because they grow in the same stock; but yet it cannot be truly said that the crab tree science bringeth forth pepins, or the pepin science crabs: so because the flesh and the spirit are joined together in the same body and

soul, we may in this respect say that this man sinneth, or doth that which is good; but yet when we speak of the regenerate or carnal man properly and severally, as we cannot truly say that the flesh doth any good, so neither can we truly affirm that the spirit and regenerate man doth commit that which is evil, but (as the Apostle speaketh) sin which dwelleth with him. And though the flesh be the far greater part, yet doth it not denominate and give the name to the Christian and his actions, because it is partly mortified, partly in mortifying, and partly to be mortified, that is, deputed and destined to death and destruction; and also because it is the worse and more unworthy part without compare, and consequently not to give the name: for as wine mixed with water is called still wine, though the water exceed the wine in quantity, because it is the more excellent substance; so the flesh being mixed with the spirit, though it be in greater quantity, it doth not give the name to us and our actions, but the spirit, as being our most excellent and worthy part; and of it we are called spiritual, regenerate and new men, though the least part be spiritual, regenerate and renewed. If therefore we are regenerate, and have in us the spirit of God, and the graces thereof in the least measure, we may boldly say with Paul, that it is no more we that do offend God, but sin that dwelleth in us, neither shall we receive punishment but the flesh, that is, our unregenerate and corrupt part, which shall be mortified and fully abolished by the spirit of God; as for the spiritual and regenerate part, it shall daily be more and more strengthened and confirmed in the spiritual life, and the more punishments, afflictions and torments the flesh hath inflicted on it, the more shall the spiritual man grow up in grace and goodness, till our corruption being by little and little mortified, and in the end fully abolished by death, we shall be perfect men in Christ, living a spiritual and everlasting life in all glory and happiness in his kingdom.

When therefore the Lord suffereth Satan to afflict us in our goods, bodies, and in our souls and consciences as he did Job, it is not because he hath forsaken us and given over his whole interest he hath in us to this wicked spirit, but, as the Apostle speaketh in another matter, he delivereth us unto Satan (to be afflicted) for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:5.

It may be that the work of mortification and regeneration doth go slowly forward, and the Lord may for a time let our corruptions bear great sway in us, to the end he may hereby truly humble us with the sight of our infirmities, and take away from us all self-confidence, presumption and cause of boasting, and cause us wholly to rely upon his mercy and Christ's merits: but though it go on slowly, yet it shall go surely, because it is not begun and continued by ourselves, for we cannot so much as think a good thought; but all our sufficiency is of God, as it is, 2 Cor. 3:5, neither can we so much as will and desire that which is acceptable in God's sight, for it is he that worketh in us the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure, as it is, Phil. 2:13. And therefore these holy desires, which are the beginnings and first fruits of regeneration, being the work of God's spirit; he will finish and perfect that which he hath begun, till at last we be fully freed from our corruption, and endued with unspotted holiness and sanctification. According to that Phil. 1:6. I am persuaded of this same thing, that he who hath begun this good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. For as with the Lord himself there is neither change nor shadow of change, Jam. 1:17. Mal. 3:6, so also are his gifts and calling without repentance, as it is, Rom. 11:29.

If therefore we have but a desire to forsake our sins, and to attain unto true sanctification, this desire is God's work, which he will finish and

accomplish, according to that, Psal. 145:19. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him. For if the Lord do even press upon us whilst we do not desire his company; if he stand waiting and knocking at the door of our hearts, calling and crying unto us that we will open and give him entrance: when his holy spirit hath inflamed us with true love of him, and opened our hearts with an earnest desire to have him enter, will he now think you go away and refuse to come in when we invite him? Nay assuredly, for he hath promised the contrary, Rev. 3:20. Behold (saith he) I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me; that is, I will make him a rich banquet of my heavenly graces, and give him to drink the water of life, of which whosoever drinketh shall never be more a thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, as our Savior speaketh, John. 4:14. So our Savior Christ calleth such as thirst unto him, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink: And, I will give to him that is a thirst of the well of the water of life freely. If therefore we have a thirsting desire after God's spirit and the graces thereof, we shall in God's good time be satisfied, and filled with the full measure of them. And in the meantime though our infirmities be never so great and manifold, yet in Christ God will be well pleased with us, when as our corruptions do displease ourselves, so that we earnestly desire to be freed from them, and to serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness of life. For the Lord esteemeth more of our will than of our deeds, and of our holy endeavor, than of our best works, because this is the service and sacrifice of our hearts, wherewith above all other things he is most delighted: and therefore, *Da cordi Deo and sufficit*, Give thy heart to God and it sufficeth, Prov. 23:26.

For the Lord is our most gracious father, whose love far exceedeth the love even of tender mothers, Isa. 49:15. Look therefore what affection the tender father or mother beareth and showeth towards their child: and such, nay infinite more will the Lord show towards us, as himself professeth, Mal. 3:17. And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serveth him. Now we know that if a child endeavor to his duty, and strive to do his best, though through want of power or skill he is not able to do as he would, those things which his father enjoined him; there is no loving father but will wink at his imperfections, and accept his will; commending his obedience and dutiful endeavor, though the work in itself deserve no commendations: how much more therefore will our heavenly father, whose love is infinite and without all compare, be well pleased with us in the midst of our infirmities, if we have a desire and care to serve him? The Lord is our shepherd, and we his flock and the sheep of his pasture; as it is, Psal. 23:1, and John. 10. Now if a sheep be entangled in the briars, so as he cannot follow the shepherd, though he hear his voice calling unto him, yet if he struggle and strive to come out to the uttermost of his power, and bleat for the shepherds help, when he cannot help himself, hereby it appeareth that he is one of his flock, which the good shepherd will not suffer to be lost; whereas indeed if he want not power alone, but will also to be freed and to follow after, it is clear that he belongeth to another sheepfold: so if when we are entangled in the briars of our corruptions, and so hindered with our imperfections, that we cannot follow the great shepherd of our souls Jesus Christ in the path of righteousness, which leadeth to the sheepfold of everlasting happiness, though we hear his voice calling unto us; yet if with the silly sheep we struggle and strive to be freed from the snares of sin, and when we cannot free ourselves by our power, do as it were bleat, and after

our sheepish manner implore the help of our careful shepherd; crying out with the Apostle Paul, (that blessed sheep of Christ) Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, as it is, Rom. 7:24, then will our loving shepherd Jesus Christ in his good time come and loose us, and if with struggling in the briars of sin we are so disabled that we cannot go, he will take us like the strayed sheep upon his shoulders, and carry us by the ways of righteousness into his sheepfold of everlasting happiness. Neither can it possibly be that our heavenly shepherd, who of purpose came into the world to seek us whilst we were lost, and spent three and thirty years in following and finding us, who were wandering and strayed sheep, crying and calling unto us even till he became hoarse with loud cries, and passing thorough the thorny ways of troubles and persecution, till he had shed his precious blood, and finally laid down his life for our sakes; should now turn away his eyes and stop his ears when his sheep desire to follow him, and earnestly implore his help, finding their own weakness and inability to come so swiftly to him as they should. The Lord is our Savior and Redeemer, who hath not spared his own precious blood, but hath given it to his father as the price of our redemption, that we might be delivered out of the captivity of the devil, in which we were detained, as it is, 1 Tim. 2:6. If therefore we have a sense of our captivity, and a desire to be set at liberty, being weary of our misery, and unwilling to stay any longer in this cruel bondage; our Savior Christ will redeem us, for to this end he came into the world, as appeareth, Luk. 4:18. And though like unto poor captives who (having long time been clogged with heavy bolts, and galled with strong chains) have their limbs so benumbed and sore, that they cannot go after they are freed out of prison; so we after we have long been detained in Satan's captivity, fettered with chains of sin, and clogged

with the heavy bolts of our corruptions, be so galled and benumbed, that we cannot swiftly follow Christ our Redeemer in the ways of righteousness unto his kingdom of glory, but halt and stumble every step through our infirmity and weakness; yet if we have an earnest desire of coming after him, then surely he that hath given this inestimable price for our redemption, will not now leave us in the hands of his and our enemies; but will feed us with the food of his word and Sacraments, and strengthen and support us with his holy spirit, enabling us with the graces thereof to follow his steps, till having obtained full liberty we arrive at his kingdom of everlasting glory.

Lastly, that I may fit the similitude to the spiritual conflict whereof we speak. If we have an earnest desire of overcoming our spiritual enemies, and withstanding their temptations, whereby they labor to draw us to sin: we may be assured we are Christ's soldiers, how weakly soever we fight when we come to the encounter. For though a soldier through sickness be so enfeebled that he cannot wield his weapon against the enemy: yet if he march forward, and show a courageous heart and earnest desire to overcome, it will hereby plainly appear that he is faithful to his Captain, and therefore he shall receive his pay, though at the first onset his limbs should faint under him. And so if through sin we have our spiritual man so weakened, that he is ready to faint at the first encounter with our spiritual enemies, yet if we march under Christ's standard, and fight the battles of the Lord of hosts, having an earnest desire even above our strength to overcome our enemies, surely Christ our grand Captain will acknowledge us for his soldiers, and will give us our pay, even a crown of victory: and seeing his power is omnipotent and his love incomprehensible, we may make sure account that if in the fight we receive a foil, he will stand over us to defend

us with the shield of his providence and raise us up again; yea if we be taken prisoners and led away captive by sin and Satan, he will rescue and deliver us. There is no discredit accrueth to a soldier by receiving wounds, or by being by irresistible violence taken prisoner; nay rather it argueth his valor, and showeth that the invincible courage of his mind doth far surpass the weak force of his body; but rather hereby is a soldier disgraced, if either he dare not march into the field, or being entered the battle doth shamefully flee away, or cowardly yield unto the enemy: so in this spiritual warfare it is no dishonor to receive foils and wounds of our spiritual enemies, for the most valiant soldiers that ever fought the Lord's battles, have sustained the like: nay if in the fight they be taken prisoners, yet so they resist to the uttermost of their power, and show an earnest desire to be out of the captivity of sin and Satan, this is acceptable to their captain Christ, and he will in pity and compassion restore them to liberty. But if rather than they would endure the danger of the fight, they profess themselves friends to sin and Satan; or if having professed themselves Christ's soldiers, they at the first encounter of their spiritual enemies tempting them to any sin, do forsake Christ's standard shamefully, or cowardly yield to sin and Satan, voluntarily living in their slavery without desire of liberty: then either they show themselves notable cowards, worthy to be cashiered out of God's camp: or traitorous rebels, who though outwardly they made a profession that they were Christ's soldiers, yet in heart they desired to serve Satan.

Here therefore is encouragement for the weak Christian, who is discouraged and ashamed to look his Redeemer Jesus Christ in the face, because of the manifold foils which he receiveth in this spiritual combat; for howsoever before the fight of temptations he resolveth manfully to make resistance and to overcome, yet when the devil strongly assaulteth,

the world flattereth or frowneth, and the flesh treacherously betrayeth him, fighting secretly with whole legions of unlawful lusts against the spirit, then is he foiled and often taken captive of sin: But let such to their comfort know, that if they continue their earnest desire of fighting still the Lord's battles, and overcoming their spiritual enemies, they are accepted of Jesus Christ, and in the end he will give them strength to obtain a final victory. And that their manifold foils and grisly wounds which they receive of sin and Satan may not discourage them; let them consider that never any entered the battle (our chief captain Christ excepted) but they have been subject to the like. Adam who was the strongest champion in his own strength that ever entered the lists, was overthrown at the first encounter, and taken captive of sin: in which bondage he should ever have remained, had not Christ redeemed him. Noah was overcome with drunkenness; and Lot added thereunto incest. David a notable soldier in fighting the Lord's battles, was made a slave to his own lusts. Peter a stout champion, ran away and forsook his master. In a word there was never any that lived, who have not been foiled by Satan, and wounded with sin. One perhaps receiveth more and deeper wounds, or is longer held captive in the chains of sin than another; but none have escaped altogether. And those who have received the most grievous hurts, so they have an earnest desire to have those wounds healed which sin hath made in their consciences, to the end they may be enabled to renew the fight against their spiritual enemies; may assure themselves that Christ the good Samaritan and their most careful captain, will power the oil of his grace and mercy, and the precious balm of his blood into their wounds, which will as easily cure them, though they be many and grisly, as if they were but few, and (as it were) but small scratches.

And so much concerning the first consolation which may serve for the comforting and raising up of those who are fallen. In the second place we are to consider that Satan foileth us and causeth us to fall into sin, not at his pleasure nor by his own absolute power, but because the Lord hath said, thou shalt thus prevail, for the further manifestation of my glory: for therefore the Lord doth leave his children sometimes to themselves, so that being assaulted by Satan they fall into sin, and bewray their infirmities and corruption; to the end he may show hereby and declare the riches of his power, mercy, and goodness, which otherwise would not so manifestly appear. And this the Apostle plainly showeth, 2 Cor. 12:8,9,10, where he saith that he besought the Lord thrice that he might be delivered from the prick in the flesh and the messenger of Satan, which did buffet him: but the Lord returned him this answer, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect through weakness; after which answer received, the Apostle quieteth himself, notwithstanding his infirmities, nay glorieth in them, rather than in his revelations, as he professeth saying, Very gladly therefore will I rejoyce rather in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Though then our infirmities be great and our falls many, yet are we not to be altogether discouraged thereby, seeing it is the will of God that we should thus bewray our infirmities and corruptions, to the end his power mercy and goodness, may be made the more manifest, and that both unto ourselves, and unto others. For such is our spiritual blindness and secret pride, that if we should always alike withstand the temptations of Satan, without receiving any foil, and never fall into any sin, we would be ready to think that we stood by our own strength, and so ascribe the praise of victory to ourselves, thereby robbing God of the honor due unto him: and also for the time to come, we would rely upon ourselves rather than on the Lord's

assistance; than the which nothing could be more dishonorable unto God, nor pernicious unto our own souls. But when as in the spiritual combat of temptations, we sometimes stand and sometimes fall, sometimes resist those assaults which are strong and violent, and another time faint and yield in the lightest trials: this maketh it apparent that it is not our own power, which in itself is not much unlike at all times; but the power of God, which sustaineth us sometimes, that we may not be wholly discouraged; and sometimes withdraweth itself, that we may by receiving foils learn to know our infirmities, and wholly to rely ourselves on the Lord's assistance, returning all the praise of victory to the Lord, who only hath sustained us. As therefore our infirmities in respect of ourselves, should serve to abate our pride, and to work in us true humiliation and utter despair in our own strength: so in respect that they show unto us the Lord's power supporting us, they should the rather encourage us to fight the spiritual combat, with assured hope of victory, seeing it is manifest that we stand not by our own power, which like a broken staff or cracked weapon would fail us when we did most trust and rely upon it, but by the almighty power of God, against which neither Satan nor the gates of hell can any jot prevail. And in this regard we may well rejoice in our infirmities with the Apostle Paul, because by reason of them it more manifestly appeareth that the power of Christ dwelleth in us, which is able to defend us from Satan's malice and violent rage, not only when we stand manfully in the encounter, but also when we are foiled and put to the worst.

Yea in this respect the more weak and full of infirmities the poor Christian is, the more is the praise of God's glorious might manifested and magnified; for when Satan, who is so malicious puissant and politic an enemy, hath long time assaulted a seely weak man or woman, and yet cannot wholly

prevail, but returneth away foiled and overcome; it must needs be confessed that they are assisted and strengthened by some superior power which far excelleth Satan in strength and policy: whereas it seemeth no such wonder when as the strong Christian, who hath obtained a great measure of knowledge, faith, and other graces, giveth Satan the repulse; neither are men so ready to ascribe the praise of victory to the Lord, because his immediate power and helping hand doth not so manifestly appear; although in truth their victory also cometh wholly from him, for without his gifts and graces, they were as feeble and unable to stand as the weakest; but yet the weaker and smaller the means are, the more manifest is the Lord's power and wisdom, who hereby doth accomplish things which are above the power of men and Angels. For example; the power and goodness of God appeareth great, when as he provideth for us food convenient, and giveth strength thereto to nourish and sustain us; and yet it is more manifest, when as he so strengtheneth us by virtue of one meal that we need no more in forty days, as he did Elias; but then it shineth as it were in his full strength, when as he sustaineth us without any food at all, as he did Moses and our Savior Christ. So it is made manifest when as he giveth us victory over our enemies, though there be some equality in the numbers, and other preparations, for it is he that teacheth our hands to war and our fingers to fight: but it is more evident when as our number is small, as when he delivered the Israelites by Gideon and his three hundred men, from an innumerable army; and overcame the whole host of the Philistines, by the weak means of Jonathan and his armor-bearer: but then it is most clear and manifest, when as he overcometh our enemies by his own immediate power, as he did the Egyptians in the red sea, and the host of Sennacherib at the siege of Jerusalem. And so when he giveth the strong Christian who is full

of grace, victory over Satan, his power appeareth; for unless he were strengthened with his graces, he could not stand: but when one who seemeth in his own eyes destitute of grace, and full of sin and corruption (so, that he plainly seeth that he is altogether unable to withstand the least assault) is notwithstanding so supported by God's almighty hand, and immediate power, that he doth not only stand in the battle, but in the end obtaineth victory; hereby the power and goodness of God most clearly appears to themselves and all the world. Seeing then our sins and falls do show unto us our own infirmities and weakness, and these do declare God's irresistible power and might, which notwithstanding our feebleness doth uphold us: therefore let us so despair in ourselves, as that thereby we may be moved to rely wholly upon the Lord, having so much more hope of victory, as the strength of God excelleth the strength of man; let us be so humbled with a true sense, and sorrow for our own infirmities and corruption, as that in the mean time we may receive more sound consolation and true joy, because we stand not by our own strength, which every hour would fail us, but by the power of God's might: and therefore though Satan and all the power of hell conspire and band themselves against us, yet shall they not prevail; and though they foil us, yet shall they never finally overcome; for he that is with us is stronger than all they who are against us; and the greater our weakness is, the fitter occasion shall the Lord have of showing his omnipotent power in giving us victory.

But if having bewrayed thine infirmities, and gotten a foil in the spiritual conflict, thou presently be discouraged and despair of victory, surely it is a manifest sign that thou diddest trust too little in God's assistance, and too much in thine own strength, which because it hath failed, thou hast cast away all hope: and the greater thy horror and despair is which followeth thy

fall, the greater was thyself-confidence, and the less thy affiance in God. For he that altogether relieth upon the Lord's assistance, and wholly distrusteth his own strength, when he falleth in the time of temptation, is not much astonished with any great wonder, knowing that through his own infirmity and weakness, he is most apt to fall when God leaveth him to himself; neither is he utterly discouraged and overwhelmed with despair, as though now there were no means to stand in the spiritual combat, and to obtain victory; but hating and with a peaceable and quiet sorrow mourning for his sin, because thereby he hath dishonored his God, and offended his divine majesty, he doth not abate his hope; but with less confidence in himself and more confidence in God, he renews the fight against his spiritual enemies, with undaunted courage; knowing that the Lord in whom he trusteth and wholly relieth will never fail him. And therefore let us no more rest in ourselves, if ever we would enjoy the peace of conscience, or would have any assurance of the Lord's assistance; for he will be all in all, neither can he abide any sharing in the glory of the victory: and therefore so long as we trust in our own strength, and fight with our own forces, he will withdraw his help, till our often falls and foils have taught us to know our own infirmities and corruptions, that so despairing wholly in our own strength, we may peaceably rest wholly upon his almighty power, and promised assistance.

Lastly, let those who are truly humbled in regarded of those foils which they receive in the spiritual conflict, comfort themselves by the experience of God's love, care, and goodness, both in others and in themselves; for how many have been cast down as well as they, and yet have in the end been raised up? How many have sorrowed and mourned, that now rejoice and have received comfort? How many have taken notable foils and grievous

falls in the spiritual conflict, and yet in the end have obtained victory? In a word, who hath depended upon the Lord, and hath been rejected? Who hath been truly humbled, and hath not been comforted? Who hath fought against their spiritual enemies, and hath not by the Lord's assistance overcome? And is the Lord's arm now shortened, or are his mercies come to an end? Hath he forgotten to be gracious, or hath he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure? Nay rather say it is thine own infirmity, for the Lord is the same he was, without change or shadow of change, and therefore as he hath comforted and strengthened and given victory unto others, so will he comfort and strengthen and give unto thee a famous victory over thy spiritual enemies, if thou wilt depend upon him and wait his leisure. But if this will not comfort thee when thou hearest of God's mercy and assistance in supporting others, yet at least let thine own experience confirm thee in the assurance of God's love and succor: for, hast thou not endured many assaults of thy spiritual enemies, and yet thou standest in the encounter? But I pray thee by whose strength? Surely not thine own, for thou art weak and feeble, and thine enemies strong and mighty, and therefore able to destroy thee every minute, if the Lord did not support thee by his almighty power. Hast thou not also received many foils, and bewrayed notable corruptions, and yet thou art not quite overthrown nor swallowed up by thy sins? And who hath preserved thee? Surely not thyself; for if thou canst not stand against Satan whilst thou art fighting, much less couldest thou rise up again when thou art cast down; but it is the spirit of the Lord who hath raised thee up by unfeigned repentance, and hath renewed thy strength, so that again thou art ready to withstand and resist Satan and his temptations. Why therefore shouldest thou fear least Satan will in the end overcome and destroy thee? Why shouldest thou doubt of the Lord's assistance in the time

to come, of which thou hast had sufficient experience in times past? Seeing himself is unchangeable and his gifts without repentance, and therefore those whom he hath defended he will defend, those that he hath once raised up, he will ever raise up, and to whomsoever he hath given grace to withstand their spiritual enemies, to those he will continue and increase his grace, till in the end they have a final victory, and the crown of victory, everlasting glory.

The end of the first book.

APPENDIX I. – BOOK. I. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

In the original facsimile edition of this book, there were a considerable amount of scripture references in the margins. They have been listed here by Chapter in the order they appeared.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:23; Isa. 57:21; Isa. 28:15; Luk. 11:21; Rev. 12:17.

CHAP. II

Job. 13:26; 2 Cor. 12:7; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 13:3; Rom. 5:3,4; 1 Sam. 17:37; Psalm. 27:9.

CHAP. III.

Eph. 6:10; Jam. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; Gen. 3:4,5; Joh. 8:44; Isa. 37:21; 1 Cor. 2:9; Rom. 6:23; Jos. 10:24,25; Joh. 16:33.

CHAP. IIII.

Gen. 3:15; Zech. 3:1; Matth. 13:39; Joh. 8:44; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:3; Job. 1:10; Exod. 32:25; Num. 25:1,2; Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14; Matth. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:5; Job. 1:7; Rev. 12:10; Job. 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:22; Eph. 6:12.

CHAP. V.

Isa. 27:1; Job. 41; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:4; Luk. 11:21; Joh. 12:31; Eph. 6:12; Matth. 25:41; Matth. 12:24; Matth. 12:45; Mar. 16:9; Luk. 8:30; Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 4:4; Zech. 3:1; 2 Cor. 12:7; Rev. 12:7; Phil. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jam. 4:7; Col. 1:11; Phil. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:57; Rom. 8:37; Eph. 6:10,11; Psalm. 18:2; Rom. 8:31; Exod. 14:14; 2 Chron. 20:15; Psalm. 34:7; 2 Kings. 6:16.

CHAP. VI.

Joh. 12:31; Gen. 13:10; 1 Joh. 5:19; Matth. 6:24; 1 Joh. 2:15; Jam. 4:4; Joh. 15:19; Psalm. 75:8; Rev. 14:10; Mar. 8:36; Num. 11:5; Heb. 12:6,7, 8; Joh. 15:19; Heb. 11:25,26; Matth. 5:4,10; Luk. 6:21,25; 2 Cor. 4:17.

CHAP. VII.

Gal. 5:17; Jam. 1:14,15; Psalm. 41:9; Mar. 8:34; 1 Pet. 2:11; Luk. 11:13; Prov. 24:21.

CHAP. VIII.

Rev. 12:9; 2 Kings. 6:12; Rom. 8:7; Job. 28:28; Psalm. 111:10; Prov. 28:7; Psalm. 1:2; Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:19.

CHAP. IX.

Eph. 6:11; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12; Job. 41:17,20; 1 Sam. 17:39,44; Psalm. 41:1; Eph. 5:16.

CHAP. X.

1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 13:16; Joh. 4:24; Jos. 24:14; Mic. 6:7,8; Joh. 17:17.

CHAP. XI.

Isa. 59:17; Rom. 7:15,22; Rom. 7:17; 1 Joh. 3:9.

CHAP. XII.

Luk. 10:5; Rom. 10:15; Luk. 1:7,9; Rom. 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:15; Matth. 10:32; Mar. 8:35; Matth. 19:29.

CHAP. XIII.

Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 5:9; Matth. 6:13; Matth. 13:38; Joh. 8:44.

CHAP. XIII.

Isa. 59:17; Rom. 8:24; 1 Thess. 5:8; Act. 28:20; 2 Cor. 4:17.

CHAP. XV.

Gal. 3:10; Rom. 8:8; Ezek. 18:23,32; 1 Tim. 1:15; Matth. 9:13; Matth. 6:24; 1 Joh. 2:15; Jam. 4:4; Matth. 5:10; 1 Tim. 3:12; Matth. 19:29; Joh. 10:27; Joh. 8:47; Matth. 13:44,45; Rom. 2:13; Jam. 1:22; Matth. 7:21; 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; 1 Pet. 5:7; 1 Tim. 5:8.

CHAP. XVI.

Eph. 6:18; Psalm. 50:15; Matth. 6:13; Luk. 22:40; Jam. 1:17; Matth. 7:7; Joh. 16:23; Luk. 11:13; Luk. 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17; Psalm. 50:15; Isa. 29:13; 1 Tim. 2:8; Joh. 9:31; Rom. 8:26; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; Psalm. 6:6; Psalm. 88:1; Psalm. 119:62; Eph. 5:14; Eph. 2:1; 1 Thess. 5:6; Rom. 13:12; Rom. 12:12; Psalm. 27:14; 1 Thess. 5:17; Luk. 18:1; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 30:18; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Cor. 12:8,9; Hab. 2:3; Jam. 5:16; Jam. 4:7.

CHAP. XVII.

1 Tim. 6:9,10; Act. 19:25; Deut. 16:19; Psalm. 127:1,2; Jam. 1:14; Jer. 17:9; 1 Tim. 6:9,10; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; Matth. 19:24; Luk. 12:20.

CHAP. XVIII.

2 Thess. 2:26; Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20; Matth. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Joh. 4:20; 1 Joh. 3:10; Rom. 2:13; Matth. 7:21; Jam. 1:22; Luk. 12:47; Matth. 11:21; Lev. 10:3; Psalm. 19:13; 2 Cor. 11:14.

CHAP. XIX.

N/A

CHAP. XX.

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CHAP. XXI.

Job. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:8; Job. 1:7; Eccl. 9:12; Matth. 16:23; 1 Kings. 13:18; 2 Cor. 3:9; Act. 5:3,5.

CHAP. XXII.

Eph. 6:10,11; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 3:5,12,21; Eph. 4:27; Psalm. 137:9; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:7,10,11,17; Rev. 3:5,21; Joh. 8:44; Mar. 1:24,25; Act. 16:17,18; Matth. 9:13; Isa. 53:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Col. 1:21,22; 1 Cor. 1:30; Joh. 14:2; 1 Joh. 2:1; Matth. 12:45.

CHAP. XXIII.

2 Cor. 8:12; Matth. 5:6; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Neh. 1:12; Psalm. 119:6; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13; Phil. 1:6; Jam. 1:17; Mal. 3:6; Rom. 11:29; Joh. 7:38; Rev. 21:6; Prov. 23:26; Isa. 49 15; Isa. 66:13; Mal. 3:17; Psalm. 23:1; Rom. 7:24; 1 Tim. 2:6; Luk. 4:18; 2 Cor. 12:8,9; Psalm. 144:1.

BOOK II.

**IN TREATING OF SATAN'S SPECIAL AND
PARTICULAR TEMPTATIONS, WHICH HE
SUGGESTETH AGAINST THE SEVERAL CAUSES OF
OUR SALVATION; AND OF THE ANSWERS
WHEREBY THEY ARE TO BE REFUTED AND
REPELLED.**

CHAP. I. ANSWERS TO THOSE TEMPTATIONS OF SATAN, WHEREBY HE PERSUADETH CARNAL MEN OF GOD'S LOVE.

And so much concerning the common affections of the Christian conflict, namely his manful withstanding Satan's encounters, and also his fainting and falling into sin. Now we are to speak of the special temptations themselves, and the means whereby we may be strengthened against them. Where first we are to consider that Satan's temptations are not always one and the same, neither impugn one or two points only of our faith and religion; but as the causes and the means of our salvation are manifold, so also doth he gather manifold objections against every one of them, if they truly appertain unto us, that so he may impugn and race our faith; or else doth fill us with vain presumption, persuading us that all the causes and means of salvation concur together in us, when as in truth we are void and destitute of them all.

Let us therefore consider of the several causes of our salvation, and observe what temptations Satan suggesteth in our minds against every one of them. The first and principal cause of our salvation is God's eternal love and immutable goodwill, wherewith he hath loved his creatures from before

the foundations of the world were laid; the which love and goodwill in himself did move him to elect them to salvation, whom he so loved without any deserts in themselves: for how could they deserve anything at God's hath before they were? Or what good could the Lord foresee in them, but that which in his eternal counsel he purposed to bestow and impart unto them?

First therefore we will speak of those temptations which concern the love of God toward us, which are of two sorts; the first leading us to vain presumption and carnal security; the other, to horror and desperation. For if Satan see men living in carnal security, frozen in the dregs of their sins, so as in truth there is no sign that they are beloved of God; he will persuade them that they are highly in his favor and love, and therefore though they run on in their wicked courses, yet they shall be saved. Doest thou not perceive (will he say) that God dearly loveth thee? Why, consider that he hath made thee one of his chiefest creatures, whereas otherwise he would have made thee a toad or serpent; he hath also like a tender father preserved and nourished thee from thy infancy, and which is more, he hath sent his dearly beloved son to die for thee, and he hath made choice of thee amongst many others to be a member of his Church, where thou enjoyest the preaching of the Gospel, and the use of the Sacraments, to the end thou mayest be assured of thy salvation without all question or doubting. Never therefore take care nor trouble thyself concerning thy salvation, use not such strictness and preciseness of life, but take thy pleasure, and follow those delights which the Lord hath bestowed upon thee as pledges of his love; for thou art not now a slave but a son, and therefore mayest more freely follow thine own desire, and use thy liberty: cast away all servile fear, which maketh thee take such pains in using all means whereby thou

mayest be assured of salvation; for thou art assured of the principal, namely of God's love, and therefore thou needest not to doubt of the rest, nor to debar thyself of thy pleasures, spending thy time in fear and care, to the end thou mayest get the assurance of that which thou needest not to call into question.

And thus doth the devil fill men with presumption, and lull them asleep in carnal security to their utter destruction; and therefore it behooveth us to arm ourselves against him, that we be not circumvented. And to this end let us consider that God's love goeth not alone, neither is it idle in those whom he loveth: but as the first link of a chain draweth all the rest of the chain with it, so the love of God, which is the first cause of our salvation, is accompanied with all the other causes which are subordinate thereunto; for whom God loveth, them he electeth; whom he electeth, those in his good time he calleth; whom he effectually calleth, them he justifieth; and whom he justifieth, those he sanctifieth: if therefore we be not sanctified, we are not justified; if we are not justified, we are not called; if we are not called, we can have no assurance that we are elected, nor yet of God's love and favor; and consequently whosoever live in their blind ignorance, in their infidelity, and wallow themselves in the filthy puddle of their sins, without any true sorrow for those which are past, or any good purpose of heart to forsake them in the time to come; they can have no assurance of God's love, but are rather justly to fear least they are in the number of those whom the Lord hath eternally rejected, if they continue in this their miserable and desperate estate.

Neither let Satan bewitch them with that vain opinion of God's love towards them, because of those general benefits, which like the rain and Sun-shine are bestowed both upon the good and bad; for what in this

respect can they promise more to themselves than Esau, and Saul? Were not they created men according to God's own likeness? Were they not preserved and nourished by God, and that more liberally than many God's own children? For Esau had so much the he professed to his brother Jacob that he had enough, and was attended upon by four hundred men. And was not Saul a mighty King, who had all at command? Were not all these in the Church of God, and outwardly enjoyed the word and Sacraments as well as any other; and yet God himself saith that he hated Esau, and had rejected Saul. And therefore let us never brag of our assurance of God's love, because of these outward and common benefits which he indifferently bestoweth both upon the elect and reprobate; but if we would be assured indeed of God's love, let us look into our selves, and consider if he have bestowed upon us his spiritual graces, faith, hope, patience, love of him and our brethren, true repentance for our sins, and holiness of life and the rest; and then by the fruits of sanctification we may be assured that we are sanctified, and consequently justified, called, elected, and eternally loved of God.

And thus doth Satan falsely persuade the carnal man that he is highly in the love and favor of God: but contrariwise when he assaulteth the weak Christian, he changeth his copy, and goeth about to persuade him that he is not beloved of God, but subject to his wrath and heavy displeasure. And this he enforceth by two sorts of arguments: the one drawn from his manifold corruptions, whereby he is unworthy of God's love; the other from those grievous afflictions and crosses which the Lord in this life inflicteth on him; both which he thus urgeth against him. Canst thou vile wretch conceive the least hope that thou art beloved of God? Why, do but take a view of thyself, and thou shalt see that original corruption hath overspread both thy body

and soul like a filthy leprosy; unto which thou hast added actual transgressions more in number than the hairs of thy head, or the stars of heaven; for daily, nay hourly thou omittest some duty which thy God hath commanded thee, and committest some sin which he hath forbidden. Can therefore the Lord, who abhorreth wickedness, love the wicked? Canst thou obtain his favor, and yet doest nothing but displease him? He that loveth God keepeth his commandments; but thou by transgressing them all, doest show that thou lovest him not: and will the Lord love them who hate and rebel against him? Can justice itself love wickedness, and perfect holiness impure corruption? No verily; for in his word he hath threatened his wrath against all such notorious sinners, and he is no less true in his threatening's than in his promises.

But if all this will not persuade thee that the Lord abhorreth thee, yet at least be persuaded by thine own experience. For, hath not thy just God begun already to make thee taste the cup of his wrath, of which hereafter thou shalt drink in full measure; hath he not spoiled thee of thy goods, taken away thy good name, made thee an abject amongst men, afflicted thee in body with grievous and continual sickness, and filled thy soul full of horror and despair? Is not thy conscience stung with sin, and hath not the poison thereof drunk up thy spirit? Doest thou not plainly apprehend his wrath, and is not thy soul as it were set upon the rack, so that there is not one part of thee, either of body and soul which is not full of misery and wretchedness. Do not therefore fondly flatter thyself with a vain opinion of God's love, but believe, if not my words, yet at least thine own senses; and seeing thou hast no hope of God's love, if thou beest wise love thyself, follow thy pleasures, eat and drink and cheer up thine heart, and do not vainly macerate and turmoil thyself in laboring after impossibilities, and in striving for the

assurance of God's love, of which, when thou hast done what thou canst, yet shalt thou never be assured.

And thus you see the manner of Satan's temptations, whereby he laboreth to persuade us that we are out of the love and favor of God; against which we must most carefully arm ourselves, as being most odious and injurious unto God, and most pernicious unto our own souls. It is most injurious unto God, if we doubt of his love towards us, seeing he hath given us innumerable pledges and most certain testimonies thereof, and omitted nothing which might do us good. He hath created us after his own image, he hath continually preserved and sustained us, giving us our meat in due season, and oft time hath succored and defended us before we craved his help; but which is more, he hath given his dearly beloved son to die a bitter death, to redeem us out of the hands of our spiritual enemies: and to the end we should be made partakers of Christ and all his benefits, he hath given us his word, and made his covenant with us, that in Christ he will be our God, and we his people, he our father, and we his children: And least yet there should be any place left to doubting, he hath added to his word, his sacraments, which like seals may assure us of his love and favor. What injury therefore shall we offer unto God, if notwithstanding all this we doubt of his good will, of which he hath assured us by so many pledges, testimonies and seals? We know that a kind friend will take it most unkindly, if after he hath heaped upon a man innumerable benefits, and shown all testimonies of true love, he notwithstanding doubt of his good will, and suspect his friendship: and so surely the Lord will take it ill at our hands; and think himself much abused, if after he hath bestowed such infinite benefits, even his dearly beloved son to die for us, we now suspect

his good will, and grow jealous of his love; if we doubt of his love, who is love itself, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 John 4:8.

But against this which I have said, there are two objections, the first is made by the worldling, the other by Satan. The worldly man will say, that the Lord hath made him also partaker of all these benefits, and therefore there is no cause why he should doubt of his love; nor any reason why he should be censured or condemned for his faith. I answer, that he is not reprehended for his persuasion of God's love, nor for his assurance of God's promises in Christ; but for his boasting of this faith, persuasion, and assurance, whereas there is nothing in him in truth but a dead carcass of faith, carnal security, and vain presumption. For true faith purifieth the heart, Acts 15:9, and worketh by love, Gal. 5:6, it is plentiful in good works, and provoketh us to perform all good duties to God and our neighbors: and it is impossible that we should be truly persuaded of God's love, and not love him again: it cannot be that we love God, if we show no care in glorifying his name, by letting our lights shine before men, nor any desire to perform obedience to his will. For as our Savior saith, He that loveth me keepeth my Commandments, and he that loveth me not, keepeth not my words, as it is, John 14:23,24. If therefore we live in our sins without repentance, if we make no conscience of our ways, and show no zeal in glorifying God's name; if our faith be destitute of the fruits of good works, then is our persuasion but fond presumption; our assurance, carnal security; our faith dead, and like a carcass which breatheth not, as James speaketh, chap. 2:26. We do not then reprehend any for being persuaded of God's love, gathering his assurance out of God's manifold mercies, and innumerable benefits bestowed on his Church: nay, contrariwise we affirm that notwithstanding all our sins and unworthiness, we are to be persuaded

of God's love in Christ, yea, and to believe against belief, and to hope against hope, when as there is no ground or reason of either in our selves: but this we maintain, that whosoever hath this assurance and faith, in the least measure begun in him, doth truly love God again, and earnestly laboreth after mortification and newness of life; and whosoever is destitute of God's love, and liveth in his sins, without any sorrow for those which are past, or purpose to leave them for the time to come, he may well brag of his faith and assurance of God's love, but in very truth there is as yet nothing in him but carnal security and vain presumption.

Secondly, the tempter will object that the Lord hath given all these testimonies and pledges of his love unto his Church, and that it therefore may well be assured thereof; but as for particular men, they notwithstanding may justly doubt of his love, seeing they have no special reasons to persuade them that these testimonies and pledges were given unto them. But I answer that this is a fond objection. For what is the Church, but the whole company of God's saints? What is it but a body consisting of many members, which are particular Christians? How therefore can the whole Church be persuaded of God's love, if all the several members doubt thereof? How can anything belong to the whole, which belongeth not to the particular parts? As though a whole city could be assured of the Princes favor, and yet all the particular men in the city should think themselves in his displeasure. Saint Paul teacheth us another lesson in his own person, saying; Gal. 2:20. Who hath loved me and given his life for me: he saith not, who hath loved and given his life for the Church, but for himself. Neither doth the Apostle here speak this by revelation, whereby he might extraordinarily be assured of God's love: but he useth for his argument a reason common to all Christians; namely, that God loved him, because he

had given himself to death for him: whosoever therefore believeth with Paul that Christ died for him, may be assured also with him of God's love.

Secondly, if we do not believe that God loveth us, we make him a liar, for he hath professed his love, and given us many testimonies thereof in his word, neither doth he require any condition at our hands but that we believe him. For his merciful promises do not exclude any for their unworthiness, but for their unbelief: according to that, John 3:16. So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Seeing then there is no other condition required but faith, for the assurance of God's love and everlasting life; surely most desperately do we sin against our own souls, and most blasphemously against God, if we will not believe his word confirmed by his seal, no not his oath whereby he hath ratified his covenant between him and us, but make him, who is truth itself, a liar, a covenant breaker, yea, a perjured person. For so the Apostle speaketh, 1 John 5:10. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believed not the record, that God witnessed of his Son. Though therefore we sin, yet let us not thus blaspheme; though we be grievous sinners, and unworthy God's love, yet let us not add this to all our other sins and unworthiness, to distrust God's truth in his gracious promises: for if we put all our other sins into the one scale, and this alone into the other, yet will it weigh down all the rest; neither are we damned for our other sins, if we do not add unto them infidelity. For whereas the precious balm of our Saviors blood is a sovereign salve to cure all other sores of sin; yet this it cannot help, because it doth refuse the cure, and as it were pulleth off this precious plaster when it is laid on it.

But as this distrusting and doubting of God's love is injurious unto him, so also it is pernicious unto our own souls. For first, it tormenteth our minds,

and setteth our consciences upon the rack, when as we have no other assurance of God's love, but only so far forth as we find ourselves worthy of it: for so often as we fall, and the sight of our sins cometh before our eyes, having no other ground of God's love but our own deserts, we doubt and stagger like a ship tossed with the billows of the sea, and in the end sink into the gulf of despair, being over balanced and too heavily laden with the unsupportable weight of our sins; whereas if we were thoroughly persuaded of God's free love and goodwill, grounded on his own good pleasure, and not on our worthiness, if we did fall we would be grieved in deed even at the very heart, because we had displeased our gracious God and loving Father; but yet our sins would not make us despair or doubt of his love towards us, because it hath not its ground on our worthiness, but upon God's own free mercy, grace, and good will.

Secondly, if we doubt and distrust of God's love towards us, we shall never love him from our hearts: for who loveth him entirely, of whose love he is not persuaded? Or who can perform the duties of love to such a one as hateth and abhorreth him? *Cos amoris amor*, Love is the whetstone of love. And if this be true amongst men, then much more between God and us: for we love him because he loved us first, as the Apostle saith, 1 John. 4:19. As therefore the cold stone can of itself cast forth no heat, till it be first warmed by the Sun beams, and then it reflecteth again some of the heat which it received: so no more can our cold hearts cast any beams of hearty love towards God, till they be warmed with the apprehension of his love towards us, and then they begin to return some sparks of love towards God, after they are inflamed with the beams of his love clearly shining in them. Unless therefore we be assured of God's love we cannot love him, and consequently cannot perform any duty of love in obedience to his will: for

as love is the fulfilling of the Law, as it is, Rom. 13:8, so the want of love is the transgressing of all the commandments: for all consist in the love of God, which is the fountain of all true obedience; and in the love of our neighbor, which as a spring issueth from it. Nay, when we despair of God's love, then do we despair of our salvation, and therefore having no hope of happiness in the life to come, we are ready to seek all the pleasures and delights which this life will afford unto us, giving ourselves over to the satisfying of all the filthy lusts of the flesh, and spending our times in all Epicureanism and sensuality.

Lastly, our doubting and distrusting of God's love doeth overthrow our patience in the time of affliction, and causeth us to murmur and repine against God, blaspheming him to his face; it hindereth all Christian resolution in suffering anything for the Name of Christ; for how should we suffer anything patiently for his sake of whose love we are not assured? It maketh the day of death horrible, when as we are not persuaded that we shall render up our souls into the hands of a gracious father, but into the hands of a severe judge: whereas on the other side, when we are thoroughly persuaded of God's love, then may we patiently, yea, joyfully suffer all afflictions, because we know that they are but gentle trials, and fatherly chastisements, which our gracious God doth inflict on us for our everlasting good: when we are persecuted for our profession of the Gospel, we will triumph with joy, because we are thought worthy to suffer any misery for the Name of Christ, who hath laid down his life for our sake: when the day of our departing approacheth we rejoyce, because we desire nothing more than to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, who so tenderly loveth us. In a word, come prosperity, come adversity, come affliction, come persecution, come fire, come sword, come life, come death, nothing can come amiss,

nothing can dismay or discourage us, if we be once fully assured of God's love in Christ, both because our love of God, which by his love is wrought in us, will make the heaviest and most tedious burden seem light and momentary, which it shall please our heavenly father to lay upon us: and also because we know that all things (even miseries, afflictions, persecutions, yea death itself) work together for the best unto them that love God. As it is, Rom. 8:28.

CHAP. II. THAT OUR SINS AND UNWORTHINESS SHOULD NOT MAKE US DOUBT OF GOD'S LOVE.

Seeing therefore that our doubting and distrusting of God's love towards us, is both injurious unto God and pernicious unto ourselves; let us in no case admit of Satan's temptations whereby he laboreth to persuade us that the Lord hateth us. But forasmuch as there is no persuasion without knowledge and faith, neither can we know and believe that we are in God's favor, unless we have some ground and warrant out of God's word, whereupon we may cast our wavering minds, and confirm our fainting faith against the boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations: therefore let us examine Satan's reasons, whereby he goeth about to persuade us that we are not beloved of God, by the touchstone of God's word; and weigh his objections in the scales of the sanctuary, to see if they be of any weight or substance, or else but frothy, light, and of no sound consequence.

First therefore whereas Satan objecteth that we are miserable sinners, unworthy altogether of God's love, and most worthy of his wrath and heavy displeasure; that God is infinitely just, and therefore cannot nor will not love us being notoriously wicked: we are to answer, that indeed we are in

ourselves unworthy the least dram of God's love, by reason of our original corruption, and actual transgression; and therefore if our assurance of God's favor, had no other foundation but our own deserts, we had great reason not only to doubt, but also utterly to despair of God's love towards us. But the love of God is not grounded upon our worthiness which is nothing, but upon his own good will and pleasure, which is infinite as himself is infinite; and therefore though in ourselves we are most miserable and wretched, yet this is no reason why we should distrust or in the least degree doubt of God's love, seeing it ariseth not from anything in us, but from himself who is unchangeable.

The truth hereof manifestly appeareth by the scriptures, where it is said that the Lord hath loved us not for our excellency and worthiness, but of his free grace and loving kindness. So, Hos. 14:5. I will heal their rebellion; I will love them freely, &c. And the Apostle John telleth us that herein God's love appeareth, in that when we loved not him, he so dearly loved us, that he sent his son to be a reconciliation for our sins; 1 John. 4:10. And Paul saith, that hereby God setteth out his love towards us, seeing that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, and when we were enemies God reconciled us unto himself by the death of his son. Rom. 5:8.10. If therefore the Lord loved us when we were enemies unto him and dead in our sins; how much more will he love us now being reconciled in Christ, and in some measure purged from our corruption, and quickened by his spirit to newness of life? If when we were most unworthy, he freely shown such exceeding favor towards us: how much more having by his spirit and the graces thereof made us more worthy, will he continue his love unto us? If he hath hitherto loved us not for any deserts of ours, but of his free mercy, because he is love itself, as John calleth him, 1 John. 4:8, and the God of grace, as

Peter maketh him, 1 Pet. 5:10: why should we doubt of God's love in respect of our unworthiness, seeing his love hath not his ground upon our worthiness, but upon his own nature which is immutable, and therefore whom he once loveth, he loveth them unto the end, though in themselves they are miserable and wretched. John. 13:1.

But as the Scriptures show that God hath loved us freely from all eternity; so also do they as plainly declare, that God hath manifested this love in the work of our salvation freely, and without any respect of our worthiness: as may appear in the several causes thereof. As first he hath elected us of his own free love and good will, and not for any of our deserts; and therefore it is called the election not of virtue and works but of grace. Rom. 11:5. Nay it is flatly opposed to works in the verse following. And if (saith the Apostle) it be of grace it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace: but if it be of works it is no more grace, or else were work no more work. So that our election is not grounded upon our worthiness, but on God's grace and goodwill: and therefore it cannot be overthrown by our unworthiness, so we wholly rely upon God's free mercy in Christ.

Secondly the covenant between God and us, wherein he professeth himself our God, and taketh us for his people and heirs of his promises, is not the covenant of works, but the covenant of grace: in which he offereth freely in Christ, his grace and mercy to all who will receive it, by the hand of a lively faith. And this the Lord himself expresseth, Jer. 31:31. Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel (that is, my Church.) 32. Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers (that is, the covenant of works) the which my covenant they break, &c. but this shall be my covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days saith the Lord; I will put my law in

their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. So the Apostle Paul saith, that the promise made to Abraham and his seed, was not given through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:13, and that it was therefore by faith that it might come by grace, and the promise might be sure to all the seed. For if the covenant were of works and not of faith, of deserts and not of grace, we should continually disannul and make it of no effect.

Thirdly, as we are elected before all times, so were we in time redeemed freely, and without respect of our own worthiness, of the mere mercy and love of God; although our Savior Christ paid the full price of our redemption unto God his father for us: and this appeareth, Eph. 1:7. By whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to his rich grace. 8. Whereby he hath been abundant towards us in all wisdom and understanding. So that our redemption was not free unto our Savior Christ, for it cost him the inestimable price of his most precious blood; but it was free unto us, without any respect of our works and worthiness. For we were like desperate debtors, deeply engaged unto God, and not able to pay the least farthing; and therefore were cast into the prison of everlasting death, there to be detained till we had discharged the whole debt: which being impossible unto us, it pleased our Savior Christ of his mere pity and free goodwill to become our surety, and to make full satisfaction to his father, even to the least mite, that so we might be released and set free. We were all of us miserable captives, held in the thralldom of sin, Satan and death, unable to deserve in any measure to be set at liberty; for we were the children of wrath, who were not sick only, but even dead in our sins, as it is, Eph. 2:1,5. But our Savior Christ of his undeserved love did pay the price of our redemption, and set us out of our captivity,

quickenings and raising us up from sin to newness of life; as the Apostle setteth it down Eph. 2:3. And you were by nature the children of wrath as well as others. 4. But God which is rich in mercy, through his great love wherewith he loved us, 5. Even when we were dead by sins, hath quickened us together in Christ, by whose grace ye are saved, 6. And hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. 7. That he might show in ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace, through his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. So that there is no worthiness in ourselves which the Lord respected, for we were all alike the children of wrath, and dead in our sins; but only of his free mercy and great love, he hath redeemed us by Christ.

Fourthly, as the Lord hath freely redeemed us, so also he hath freely called us to the knowledge of the mystery of our redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, and chosen us amongst all nations to be his Church and peculiar people, and that of his mere grace and free goodwill, without any respect of our worthiness, as appeareth, 2 Tim. 1:9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose of grace which was given us through Christ Jesus before the world was. So Moses telleth the children of Israel, that the Lord had called and made choice of them above all other nations to be his Church and people, not for any respect of themselves, or their own worthiness, but of his free love and undeserved mercy, as it is, Deut. 7:7,8, Psal. 44:3.

Fifthly, as the Lord hath freely called us, so being called he hath freely justified us: not for any inherent righteousness in ourselves, but of his own grace and goodwill, through the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ which he imputeth unto us. And this is evident, Rom. 3:24, where it is said, that we are justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. And, Tit. 3:7, where the Apostle saith, that we are

justified by his grace. And least we should join with God's grace our own works and worthiness, he telleth us that Abraham himself, though a most righteous and holy man in respect of his sincerity and integrity of heart, was notwithstanding not justified by his works, but Abraham believed God, and that was imputed unto him for righteousness, Rom. 4:3, and ver. 5, he flatly excludeth works from being any causes of our justification; To him (saith he) that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. So that we are freely justified of God's grace and goodwill, without any respect of our own works and worthiness, as being any causes of our justification, although they are necessary and inseparable fruits thereof. For the same death and bloodshed of Christ, whereby we are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin and everlasting death, doth free us also from the death of sin to newness of life, and doth not only justify but also sanctify us, as the Apostle plainly showeth, Tit. 2:14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, (that is, free us from the guilt and punishment of sin to which we were subject) and purge us to be a peculiar people unto himself, zealous of good works.

Sixthly, our sanctification and inherent righteousness itself, what is it else but the free gift of God, begun, increased, and finished by his gracious spirit? What are the graces in us but God's free and undeserved gifts? What are our best works but the fruits of his spirit working in us? For by nature we are dead in our sins, and the children of wrath as well as the unbelieving heathen or most profane worldling, Eph. 2:1,3. By nature we are not able so much as to think a good thought, or to will that which is good, no more than those who remain in the state of condemnation, as appeareth, 2 Cor. 3:5, Phil. 2:13, but it is our Savior Christ, who so loved his Church, that he gave

himself for it, that he might sanctify it and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word, &c. as it is, Eph. 5:25,26. So that when we have attained to the highest measure of sanctification that we can possibly attain unto, we must in all humility confess with Paul, that by the grace of God we are that we are, as it is, 1 Cor. 15:10. Neither must we attribute anything in the work of our salvation, unto our sanctification and good works, but ascribe all to the free grace and undeserved love of God in Christ, whereby we are sanctified and stirred up to new obedience, who were altogether polluted, yea dead in our sins; so that our sanctification and worthiness is not the cause of God's love and mercy towards us, but his love and free goodwill is the cause of our sanctification, and maketh us, who were unworthy in ourselves, worthy in Christ of his love and favor. And therefore we must not measure God's love by our worthiness and abundance of grace as being a cause thereof; nor despair of his favor and mercy, when we see our unworthiness and weakness in sanctifying graces; for these are no causes of his love but effects, and consequently when we want them altogether, though there be no cause of hope whilst we remain in this state, yet we are not utterly to despair for the time to come, seeing the Lord in his good time may begin his good work in us; and when it is begun, and we have received the least measure of sanctification, even a desire and holy endeavor to live in holiness and righteousness, we may be assured that it is God's work, which he having begun will finish and accomplish, according to that, Phil. 1:6. In the meantime let us possess our souls with patience, and with a quiet and peaceable mind labor after the increase of grace, using all good means ordained of God for this purpose, submitting ourselves, in regard of the measure of grace which we do desire, to his good will and pleasure, who will dispose of all so, as shall be most for his glory and our

good. And in any case let us beware that we do not so impatiently and violently desire increase of more grace, as that in the mean time we forget to be thankful to God for that we have, turning our songs of praise for God's great benefits, into murmuring and repining. Let us not be like unto rich misers, who have their minds so intent upon the getting of that riches they have not, as that they forget to enjoy and take comfort of that they have; let us not resemble those unthankful men, who when they have received many benefits, do still desire more, and when their desires are not presently satisfied, ungratefully murmur against their benefactors, as though they had received nothing: but let us make use of those graces which we have received, to God's glory and our comfort; let us desire more, that we may more glorify him with his own gifts; and though our desires be not presently satisfied, let us not fall into impatency, but submit ourselves unto his goodwill and pleasure, and be truly thankful for that portion of grace, which it hath pleased him of his abundant mercy to bestow upon us.

Lastly, our salvation itself dependeth not upon our own worthiness, but upon God's free mercy and undeserved love; for salvation is the free gift of God, and not the wages of our own worthiness, as death is the wages of sin, as appeareth, Rom. 6:23. And we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of our selves; it is the gift of God, as it is, Eph. 2:8. And the Apostle telleth us, Tit. 2:11, that the grace of God bringeth salvation, and teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world: so that our forsaking sin and embracing holiness and righteousness is not the cause of our salvation, but the grace of God, by which all these effects are also wrought in us. But most plain is that of the Apostle, 2 Tim. 1:9, where he excludeth our own works and worthiness, to the end he might ascribe the whole work of our

salvation to God's grace and goodwill. Who hath saved us (saith he) not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. So, Tit. 3:5. Not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of the new birth, and renewing of the holy Ghost.

Seeing therefore God's love is not grounded upon our own worthiness, seeing he electeth, redeemeth, calleth, justifieth, sanctifieth, and finally saveth us of his mere mercy and free goodwill, without any respect of our own merits or good works, let us not restrain the infinite love of God to our deserts, nor measure his immeasurable goodwill by the short ell of our own merits; but as the Lord hath freely loved us, so let us acknowledge his free and undeserved love, and rely wholly thereupon, notwithstanding our unworthiness, seeing our worthiness is no cause of his love, but it is his love which maketh us, and will surely make us worthy to be beloved, if we rest wholly upon him in Christ by a true and lively faith. For, so much as we despair in respect of our own unworthiness, so much would we ascribe to our own worthiness; and look how much we attribute unto ourselves in the work of our salvation, so much we detract from God's free mercy and Christ's merit: and therefore let us humbly acknowledge our own unworthiness, and become nothing in our own eyes, that we may wholly rely upon God, that he may be all in all. For well worthy are we to thirst if we leave the fountain of living waters, and dig unto ourselves broken cisterns which will hold no water; well worthy are we to fall into the gulf of despair, if we forsake the firm pillar of our salvation God's mercy and Christ's merit, relying and resting upon the broken staff of our own righteousness; well worthy are we to be damned, if we envy the Lord the praise and glory of our salvation, desiring rather to ascribe it unto ourselves.

But here the tempter will object that God is just, and therefore in his justice cannot love, elect, justify and save us who are unworthy his love, polluted with sin, and destitute of righteousness. I answer, that God doth not love, elect, justify and save us in our selves, but in our savior Christ, in whom being unworthy of ourselves we are made worthy; being unjust in ourselves, we are made just, after we are adorned with the rich robe of his righteousness; being in ourselves the children of wrath and firebrands of hell, we are made children of God and heirs of heaven. For he is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he who rejoiceth might rejoice in the Lord, as it is, 1 Cor. 1:30,31. And therefore the Apostle teacheth us, that God hath given his grace, not simply unto us, who were altogether unworthy thereof, but in Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1:1,4, and that in all things we are made rich in him, as it is, ver. 5. So he telleth us, that grace doth reign by righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 5:21. And that he hath shown the exceeding riches of his grace, through his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2:7. And as God is gracious to us in Christ, so hath he declared this his love towards us in Christ only, as may appear in the several causes and means of our salvation. For in him God hath elected us to salvation, as appeareth Eph. 1:5. In him is made the covenant of grace, as being that seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, and to whom all the promises were made, as it is, Gal. 3:16. In him are we called and gathered together into one body, whereof he is the head, as it is, Eph. 1:9,10, 2 Tim. 1:9. In him are we justified, as appeareth Rom. 5:18,19, Isa. 53:5, 1 Cor. 1:30. In him we are reconciled unto God, Col. 1:20,21, Eph. 1:6, and 2:12,13,14. &c. In him we are adopted to be the sons of God, Gal. 4:4-7, Eph. 1:5. In him we are sanctified, 1 Cor. 1:30. In a word, in him we

are saved, as appeareth, 1 John. 5:11. God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his son. Though therefore the Lord could not in his justice bestow upon us these his benefits, because we were unworthy of the least of them, and most worthy of all his judgments and punishments: yet in Christ we have fully satisfied his justice, and performed perfect obedience, and therefore even in his justice he could not but bestow these his mercies and graces upon us, because in him we deserved his love, though in ourselves we have deserved eternal shame and confusion.

And therefore not trusting in our own worthiness, nor yet distrusting in God's mercy and free love in regard of our unworthiness, let us cast off all self-conceit and opinion of our own righteousness, so that we may put on the righteousness of Christ; and acknowledging our own weakness, yea our nothing, let us nevertheless be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, as the Apostle exhorteth, 2 Tim. 2:1. In his name let us go boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find help in time of need: for though in ourselves we are the children of wrath, yet are we reconciled and accepted of God, as his beloved in his best beloved, as it is, Eph. 1:6.

CHAP. III. THAT TEMPORAL AFFLICTIONS ARE RATHER SIGNS OF GOD'S LOVE, THAN OF HIS HATRED.

The second argument whereby Satan seeketh to persuade us that we are out of the favor of God, is taken from the manifold afflictions which are laid upon many of God's children, whilst they remain in this vale of misery. But it is easy to answer this objection, if we be but a little conversant in the book of God; for there we may learn that afflictions and crosses are rather signs of God's love than of his hatred; and marks rather of our election and adoption, than of reprobation and eternal damnation. For the Lord hath foreshowed us that his children should mourn when the world shall rejoice; that they should be hated and persecuted for his name sake; that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution and affliction, 2 Tim. 3:12. That they who will be conformable to him in glory, must also be conformable unto him in his sufferings, Rom. 8:29. That this short and momentary affliction, shall cause unto us a far most excellent and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. That if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. 2:12. That whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth: and scourgeth every son that he receiveth, as it is, Heb. 12:6. That those

whom he doth not thus correct, are bastards and no sons, ver. 8. And to these we may add the examples of God's children from time to time, as of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, the Apostles, but especially our Savior Christ himself, who was hungry, harborless, despised, scoffed, reviled, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorn, and lastly crucified; and yet even whilst he suffered all these afflictions, he was the only begotten and best beloved son of his heavenly father.

So that both by testimonies and examples it is manifest, that afflictions are signs rather of God's love, than of his hatred; and marks of the children of God, rather than of the children of wrath. But here the tempter will demand how this can be, considering that the Lord promiseth to his children all good things; whereas afflictions are evils, and punishments inflicted on the wicked. To this we may answer, that though in their own nature they be evil, yet through the wisdom and gracious providence of our God, they turn to the good of his children; and though to the wicked they are plagues and punishments, yet to the godly they are but trials and fatherly chastisements; for all their sins are punished in Christ, neither will it stand with God's justice to punish them again in the faithful: and therefore there is no other end of them but the manifestation of God's glory, and our spiritual good and everlasting salvation. For as they are trials, they serve to show unto all the world, and especially to ourselves, our faith, hope, patience, obedience, constancy, and the rest of the graces of God's spirit, to the praise of his glory who hath bestowed them, and to the comfort of our own souls who have received them. And as they are chastisements they serve for sharp eye-salves to clear our dim sight, so as we may see our sins, and truly repent of them. They serve for sour sauces, to bring us out of love with our sweet sins, and for fire and files, whereby we are purged and scoured from the

dross and rust of our corruptions. They are sharp pruning knives, to lop and trim us, that we may bring forth plentiful fruits in godliness. They are spurs to prick us forward in the Christian race, and hedges to keep us from wandering out of the way. They are sharp salves to draw out our secret corruptions, and bitter potions to cure our desperate diseases. They are that wormwood, whereby the Lord weaneth us from the love of the world, whose pleasing delights we would ever suck without weariness, if our mouths were not distasted with some afflictions. They are rods, wherewith being scourged, we are made more circumspect in our ways, and more careful to perform obedience unto all the commandments of our heavenly Father. In a word, they are the straight path which leadeth to everlasting happiness, and a bridle to restrain us from running headlong in the broad way, which leadeth to endless woe and misery. And therefore seeing our momentary afflictions do serve for the manifesting of God's glory, for the increasing of spiritual graces, and the furthering of our eternal salvation, let not Satan persuade us that we are out of God's love and favor because of our afflictions, but rather let us repute them as they are indeed signs of his gracious providence and fatherly care which he hath over us.

But here the tempter will object that this I speak is true of the outward afflictions of the body, for thereby the flesh is mortified and subdued, and the spiritual graces of God's spirit exercised and increased in us; but thy afflictions (will he say) are far different, for thy soul is filled with horror and fear, thy conscience is mortally stung with sin, and the weight thereof overwhelmeth thee; thou seest thyself subject to the curse of the law, and art already tormented with the pains of hell; thy God who looketh upon his children with an amiable countenance, frowneth upon thee like a severe Judge, and thou tastest of nothing but of his heavy wrath and displeasure; in

a word, thou hast not one spark of true consolation wrought in thee by God's spirit, with which those that are God's children are fully replenished, and whereby they are encouraged patiently to abide all afflictions, but thy inward vexations are the torments of an evil conscience, and the flashings of hell fire wherewith hereafter thou shalt eternally be burned.

To this temptation we must answer, that it cannot be denied but that the afflictions of the mind are far more grievous than the afflictions of the body; and that the torments of conscience caused by the weight of sin, and the apprehension of God's fearful wrath, are as it were God's three-stringed whip, in respect of the gentle rod of outward afflictions; for a sorrowful mind drieth up the bones, as it is, Prov. 17:12, and the spirit of a man may sustain his other infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear, as the wise man speaketh, Prov. 18:14. Nevertheless, though these corrections are more sharp and grievous, than the outward afflictions of the body, yet it cannot be denied but that these also are the chastisements which our heavenly Father inflicteth upon his children: sometimes for his own glory, and sometime for their trial or chastisement, when more light correction will not reclaim them. For first those places of scripture before quoted, are spoken generally of all afflictions whatsoever, and therefore are not to be restrained to the outward afflictions of the body, seeing they extend themselves also to the afflictions of the mind; neither doth our heavenly Father correct all alike, but some he rebuketh only by his word, and goeth no further when as this reclaimeth them; but if this will not prevail, he goeth a step further, and chastiseth them with gentle correction, as with outward crosses and afflictions; but if this will not reform them, he taketh his whip into his hand, wherewith he grievously scourgeth them, to the end they may more sensibly taste of his displeasure, and amend that which is amiss; and this he doth by

making them feel the weight of sin, and apprehend his wrath and heavy displeasure, which by their sins they have justly incurred; and yet notwithstanding all this he still remaineth their gracious Father, who seeketh not their destruction but their reformation. Neither need this dealing of our heavenly Father seem strange unto us, seeing earthly parents take the same courses with their children whom they tenderly love; for when they offend them, they first seek their amendment by words and fatherly admonitions; and when this will do no good they proceed to blows, and in a gentle manner do correct them; and if this prevail not with them, then they use more sharp and severe chastisement; but if all this be to no purpose, then will they disguise their fatherly affection under the vizard of wrath and heavy displeasure; they banish out of their countenance all signs of love, and assume terrible looks and bitter frowns; yea they will sometimes thrust them out of doors, and reject them a while, leaving them to shift for themselves, and to endure all misery. And whence proceedeth all this? Surely not from hatred, but from love and tender care which they have over them for their good. And this maketh them use the bridle of correction, to restrain them from running into all licentiousness; this causeth them to pretend wrath in the countenance, that they be not by their lewdness forced to entertain it into their hearts; this moveth them to reject them for a time, that they may reclaim and retain them forever. Neither doth our heavenly Father, who is infinite in love, deal otherwise with his disobedient children; he useth but his word if his word will suffice; he goeth no further then gentle chastisement if that be enough; but if he sharply scourge us, yea if he look upon us with a frowning countenance, and show nothing in outward appearance but his wrath and heavy displeasure; if he seem to reject us for a time, and to give us over to be tormented by Satan: yet undoubtedly all this

proceedeth from his love and that fatherly care he hath over us, for our everlasting good and salvation; he seeketh not our destruction, but amendment; he frowneth on us for a time, that he may look graciously on us forever; he seemeth to reject us for a while, that like the prodigal son we may return again, and be received into his everlasting love and favor.

Secondly, the Lord sendeth afflictions to mortify in us the old man, the flesh and unregenerate part: now the flesh is not only in our body, but also in our soul and every part and faculty thereof, and therefore the Lord doth not afflict the body alone with outward calamities, but even the soul also with grief of mind and horror of conscience, with the weight of sin and sense of his wrath, to the end that our corruptions both in body and soul may be mortified, the old man with the lusts thereof crucified, and in the end fully abolished. And therefore doth the Lord break our hard and stony hearts, therefore doth he plow and tear them up like fallow ground, to the end that the seed of his grace being sown in them may take root, fructify and bring forth a plentiful harvest of godliness, to his glory and our comfort. It is not therefore for want of love, that our heavenly father doth thus bruise us and even crush us in pieces; it is not because he will reject us and cast us off: but when we are truly humbled, when our hard hearts are softened, and our spirits broken and made contrite, then will he regard us and show his tender love and merciful kindness unto us as he hath graciously promised. Matth. 12:20. The bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench. So, Psal. 51:17. The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit, a contrite and broken heart O God thou wilt not despise. And the Prophet telleth us that our Savior Christ was sent into the world to preach glad tidings unto the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, &c. to comfort all that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for

mourning, the garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness &c. as it is, Isa. 61:1,2,3, Luk. 4:18.

Lastly, that the afflictions of the mind, the apprehension of God's wrath, the sting of sin, and torments of conscience, are not any true and certain signs of God's hatred, hereby it plainly appeareth: in that the most dear children of God have been subject to them, and that in great measure. For example, Job who by God's own testimony was the justest man that lived on the earth, Job. 1:8, notwithstanding was so grievously afflicted both in body and mind, that he bursteth out into these grievous complaints, Job. 6:4. The arrows of the almighty are in me, the venom whereof doth drink up my spirit, and the terrors of God fight against me. And chap. 9, ver. 17. He destroyeth me with a tempest and woundeth me without cause. 18. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness. So, chap. 13:24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face and takest me for thine enemy? And ver. 26. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth. And chap. 16:9. His wrath hath torn me, and he hateth me and gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy hath sharpened his eyes against me. And. chap. 19:11. He hath kindled his wrath against me and counteth me as one of his enemies.

Look also upon the example of the Prophet David, who though he were a man according to God's own heart, yet was he made to drink a deep draught in this cup of inward afflictions, and was vexed not only outwardly in his estate, goods, and body, but also in his soul, with the sense of God's wrath, with the weight of sin, and the terrors and torments of conscience, which make him to utter these and such like pitiful complaints in the book of the Psalms. Psal. 6:3. My soul is also sore troubled: but Lord how long wilt thou delay? And ver. 6. I fainted in my mourning: I cause my bed every

night to swim, and water my couch with my tears. So, Psal. 38:2. Thine arrows have light upon me, and thine hand lieth upon me. 3. There is nothing sound in my flesh, because of thine anger: neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, and as a weighty burden they are too heavy for me. &c. And, Psal. 88:7. Thine indignation lieth upon me, and thou hast vexed me with all thy waves. And ver. 14. Lord, why dost thou reject my soul, and hidest thy face from me? 15. I am afflicted and at the point of death: from my youth I suffer thy terrors, doubting of my life. 16. Thine indignations go over me, and thy fear hath cut me off. So in the 77th Psalm he taketh up this lamentable complaint. Ver. 7. Will the Lord absent himself forever? And will he show no more favor? 8. Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? 9. Hath God forgotten to be merciful? Hath he shut up his tender mercies in displeasure? 10. And I said, this is my death. Look also upon the Apostle Paul, who though he were a chosen vessel, whom God had separated from his mothers womb to carry his name before the Gentiles, and it is, Act. 9:15. Gal. 1:15; yet was he afflicted grievously, not only outwardly in body, as he professeth, 2 Cor. 6:4-8 &c. but also in mind; for the messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, and he had a long time a prick in the flesh, from which he could not be freed, though he often begged this favor at God's hand, as appeareth, 2 Cor. 12:7,8. And the burden of sin grievously afflicting his conscience, forced him to cry out Rom. 7:24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of his death?

So that by these and many such like examples, that is manifest unto our comforts which the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 10:13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as appertaineth to man; for the same

afflictions (which we suffer) are accomplished in our brethren which are in the world, as it is, 1 Pet. 5:9. Yea the same and far greater were endured by our head Jesus Christ himself, who received deep and grisly wounds, in respect of those small scratches which we suffer, and drunk the full cup of God's heavy displeasure, of which we only sip or taste; for he was not only in his outward state dejected and reputed as an abject amongst men, nor persecuted by his cruel enemies alone, even to the taking away of his precious life, by a cruel and shameful death; but also inwardly in his soul he sustained far more heavy crosses then that which he outwardly carried on his shoulders, though the weight thereof caused him to faint for weariness. For to say nothing of Satan's temptations and the power of hell which was set against him, let us consider of that bitter agony which he sustained in the garden, where the burden of God's anger, for our sins was so heavy upon him, that it pressed out of his blessed body a sweat of water and blood; neither was he presently cased of this unsupportable weight, but he was fain to bear it even unto his cross; neither was he comforted in mind when the pangs of death had taken hold of his body, but even then he was so vexed with the sense of his fathers displeasure, that in bitterness of soul he crieth out my God, My God why hast thou forsaken me: Not that he despaired utterly of God's love and assistance, or thought himself a reprobate and castaway, for he calleth him still his God: but the deity having for a time withdrawn itself, to the end the human nature might suffer that punishment which we had deserved even unto death itself, which otherwise it could not have been subject unto, he uttereth this speech truly according to his present sense and apprehension. Now if we consider who it is that was thus grievously afflicted both in body and mind, we shall find that it was not one hated of God, but his only begotten and best beloved son, in whom he

professeth himself to be well pleased. Matth. 3:17. Seeing therefore our Savior Christ who was the natural son and heir of God, and so tenderly beloved of his heavenly father that in him he loveth all his children, did notwithstanding endure not only grievous afflictions of body, but the intolerable burden of his fathers displeasure in his soul also. Why should we imagine that either our outward or inward afflictions are any signs or arguments that God hateth or hath rejected us? Especially considering that he hath predestinated us to be made like to the image of his son, not only in his glory, but also in his afflictions; so that first we must suffer with him, and after reign with him, as it is, Rom. 8:29, 2 Tim. 2:12.

But it may be objected that our Savior Christ suffered all this not for any sin that was in himself, for he did no sin, neither was their guile found in his mouth. 1 Pet. 2:22, but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was broken for our iniquities, as it is, Isa. 53:5. And therefore considering that the Lord did thus hate sin, even when his dearly beloved son did take it upon him; how much more will he hate it in us? If he so severely punished his dear darling when he had taken the sins of others upon him, how fearful punishments are prepared for the sinners themselves? I answer, that indeed Christ who was just did suffer for us who were unjust, as it is, 1 Pet. 3:18, and that sin is so odious to God's eyes that rather than it should not be punished, he would punish it in his dearly beloved son; the consideration whereof should make us also to hate and fly from it as the greatest evil: but yet this should be so far off from discouraging us, or from making us doubt of God's love, that nothing in the world doth more assure us thereof, no consolation can be imagined more comfortable, for what greater testimony of God's love can be imagined, then that when we were strangers yea enemies to God, he should send his dear beloved son to die for us, to the

end that by this means his justice might be satisfied, his wrath appeased, and we being received into grace and favor, might be made heirs of everlasting life? What greater assurance can we have that our sins are forgiven us then that they are already punished in Christ? It being against the justice of God to punish the same sins twice? What stronger argument can be brought, to prove that we shall never be subject to God's wrath, nor be cast away in his heavy displeasure; than that our Savior hath borne his fathers anger, to the end he might reconcile us unto him? And therefore though our Savior suffered these outward and inward afflictions, not as he was the dearly beloved son of God who was free from sin, but as he was our mediator, who had taken upon him our sins, to the end he might satisfy his fathers justice; yet seeing he endured these things in our stead, to the end we might be freed from them, hence ariseth unto every true Christian sound comfort, and certain assurance of God's love and goodness towards him.

But the tempter will further urge his objection after this manner: let it be granted (will he say) that God doth chastise sometime his children whom he loveth, both with outward and inward afflictions, and that they suffer even the same miseries which thou endurest; yet seeing they are sometimes punishments also which he inflicteth upon the wicked, hence thou canst not gather that they are fatherly chastisements and signs of his love to thee: nay contrariwise thou mayest assure thyself, that they are fearful punishments and signs of God's hatred, which God in justice inflicteth on thee for thy sins, that others may be warned by thine example. For if they were chastisements and fatherly corrections, then would they indeed correct thee, that is, reform and amend thee; for this is the end why God inflicteth them on his children, and his end cannot be frustrate: but in thee there is no reformation wrought, nor any increase of patience; whereas in the faithful,

tribulation bringeth forth patience, as even by the Scriptures it is manifest. Nay contrariwise when the hand of God is upon thee, thou bewrayest great impatience, and utterest inconsiderate speeches, which tend to God's dishonor, give offense to the world and wound thine own conscience. And therefore howsoever to other these are fatherly chastisements, yet to thee they are severe punishments, which move thee rather to despair, than assure thee of God's love.

To this we answer, that it cannot be denied, but that God's corrections do correct and amend his children, and that afflictions serve to the increasing of their patience, faith and other graces; but yet let us know that Satan playeth the false deceiver, when he moveth us to look for the assurance of God's love, and for our amendment and increase of God's grace, in the very time when the hand of God is upon us, whilst the conflict lasteth, and the temptation grievously shaketh and battereth us: as if he should come to a man who hath endured much and tedious sickness and should say unto him, thou diddest imagine thyself awhile ago very beautiful and exceeding strong, but thou wast much deceived, for if thou lookest in a glass thou shalt presently perceive that thou art lean, pale, and deformed, and if thou makest trial of thy strength, thou shalt find that it is scarce sufficient to sustain the weight of thine own body. Now who would not deride such fond reasoning? Who could not easily answer, that judgment is not to be taken of the beauty and strength of the body in the time of sickness, but in the time of health? But this is the very like case, and thus sottishly doth Satan conclude, or rather delude God's children in the time of temptation; for he saith thus unto them, thou diddest persuade thyself that thou art the child of God, and in his love and favor, that thou art endued with faith, patience, and other graces, and daily increasest in them; but now thou art come to the trial it proveth far

otherwise; for thy faith is turned into doubting or infidelity, and thy patience to impatency, and therefore there is no likelihood that thou art beloved of God, for then thou wouldest profit by afflictions, and increase in grace and strength, whereas thou bewrayest nothing but thy manifold corruptions. But we are to know that we are not to judge of our grace and strength, in the time of temptation, and of the spiritual conflict, when as our souls are grievously sick with the sense of sin and apprehension of God's heavy displeasure incurred thereby, when as the fire of God's spirit is covered with the ashes of our corruptions, and the fruits and graces thereof nipped with the cold winter and boisterous blasts of temptations, but we are to look into ourselves when the fit is past and the conflict ended, and then shall we find our patience by experience of God's love confirmed, our faith renewed, all other graces strengthened and increased: and then shall we clearly discern the bright beams of God's love and favor, shining upon us, when the clouds of temptation are passed away which did hide them from us.

But if in the time of trial and temptation we judge according to our present sense and feeling, we must needs be deceived: for it cannot be denied but that even the dear children of God who have received a great measure of grace, when the hand of God is upon them do doubt of his love and favor, and when they are grievously afflicted do bewray their corruption, and show their impatience by uttering inconsiderate speeches; for while we continue in this life, we have the relics of sin hanging on us, and we are partly flesh and partly spirit, yea the flesh is the stronger part, and therefore it is no marvel if the flesh being pinched in the time of temptation doth complain, and being lanced deeply with the razor of sharp afflictions doth cry out for pain, complaining of the Surgeon that he dealeth too rigorously with him. And if men through bodily sickness have their

judgments blinded, their understanding dazzled and misled, their memory overthrown, so that they can put no difference between their friends and their enemies, but even rail upon those whom in the time of their health they dearly loved, and think none so much their enemy as their physician, raving and inconsiderately speaking they know not what; what wonder is it if the like effects follow the sickness of the soul, when it is as it were set upon the rack, pressed with the burden of sin, and tormented with the apprehension of God's anger, considering that these kind of afflictions are fair more grievous and without comparison more intolerable, for a man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? As it is, Prov. 28:14. What marvel then is it if they take God for their enemy, when they feel his sharp medicines, though in truth he be their loving Physician, who by this means cureth them of their diseases of sin and corruption? What wonder is it if they utter raving speeches when the sense of pain presseth them so sore? How is it possible but that they should doubt of God's gracious love and favor, when as they presently taste of nothing but his rigor and justice?

We must not therefore judge of our state while the cross is upon us, for so should we condemn the generation of the just to be most wicked, then should we imagine those who have excelled in patience to be most wayward and impatience. Look upon Job who is renowned for patience, and you shall find that while the hand of God was upon him, he bewrayeth the corruption of the flesh and showeth notable impatience, cursing the day of his nativity, and wishing that he had never been borne, or else that he had presently after his birth been swallowed up in the laws of death, Job. 3. So, chap. 6:8,9, he thus crieth out like a man utterly desperate. O that I might have my desire, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for. 9.

That is, that God would destroy me: that he would let his hand go and cut me off. 10. Then should I yet have some comfort, though I burn with sorrow, let him not spare &c. Where Job seemeth to deal with God as a condemned malefactor with a just and severe judge, who seeing the anger of the judge incensed against him for his crime, hath no hope that he can by entreaty and persuasions move him to revoke his sentence of death, and therefore only desireth a mitigation of the tortures, and that he may quickly be dispatched and rid out of his pain; *nam misericordiae genus est cito occidere*, it is a kind of mercy to be speedy in execution. So Job having no hope to be freed from his miseries, desireth only this favor at God's hands, that he would not (as it were) torment him piece meal, but make a quick dispatch of him by laying on a greater weight of afflictions, till by their unsupportable burden the breath were pressed out of his body. And chap. 10:18. Wherefore hast thou brought me out of the womb? Oh that I had perished, and that none eye had seen me! 19. And that I were as I had not been, but brought from the womb to the grave. Look upon the Prophet David who was a man according to God's own heart, endued with a steadfast faith and constant patience; and you shall perceive that God's love, and the graces of God's spirit in him, were so shadowed with the grievousness of his present afflictions, that he could not discern them. For he complaineth like a man utterly cast off and rejected of God. Psal. 88:14. Lord why dost thou reject my soul, and hidest thy face from me? 16. Thine indignation is gone over me, and thy fear hath cut me off. The like complaint he taketh up. Psal. 77:8,9,10. Neither had the Prophet in these times always the spirit of supplication and prayer, but sometime the grievousness of his pain did shut his mouth so as he could not confess his sin, nor humble himself before his God; though through the weight of

affliction, his bones were consumed, and he roared for grief all the day long, as appeareth Psalm. 32:3,4. So Jeremiah seeing the word of God contemned, and himself who was God's ambassador despised, could not bear it but bursteth out into great impatience, cursing the day of his birth, and even the man that brought news thereof to his father, because he was borne to see labor and sorrow, and that his days should be consumed with shame. Jer. 20:14,15,18. If therefore we judge of Job, David, and Jeremiah, according to their outward behavior, and their own inward feeling in the time of afflictions, and in the combat of temptations; we should think them void of faith, impatience, and destitute of all assurance and hope of God's love and favor: but the Scriptures teach us otherwise, propounding them unto us as patterns of patience and true godliness; and themselves also at other times do show their singular faith, patience, and the rest of the graces of God's spirit. Seeing then this is not our case alone, but the state of God's dearest children, let us not believe the tempter telling us that we are not God's children because we see not God's graces so plainly in the time of temptation and trial, but contrariwise bewray our impatience and other corruptions: but let us be truly humbled in the sight of our infirmities, laboring and striving to reform them; and judge of our state, not as we find it in the time of the conflict, but as it was or is before or after the combat is ended.

Lastly, the tempter objecteth, and hath stirred up his wicked instruments the enemies of God's truth to defend, that though we are not wholly to despair of God's love, yet we must doubt thereof: and to this purpose they allege that saying Eccl. 9:1, which they read thus: I have handled all these things in my heart that I might curiously understand: Just and wise men and their works are in the hand of God; and notwithstanding, a man knoweth

not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come &c. I answer, that if God's love or hatred did depend upon our own unworthiness, we might well doubt; nay I will say more, we might justly despair of his grace and goodwill, and certainly assure ourselves that we were hated and abhorred of God; for this, if anything, we have deserved. But the truth is, that as Satan tempting our Savior, and quoting scripture for his purpose, left out that which made against him; so here by his instruments assaulting his members, he addeth to the scriptures that which maketh for him: for neither in the Hebrew, which is the original, nor in the Greek translation is there any one word of our worthiness or unworthiness; but thus it is in the text as it is truly translated in our Bibles; No man knoweth either love or hatred of all that is before them: and whereas they read the words following thus; But all things are kept uncertain for the time to come, they most grossly deprave the text, which is thus to be read as we have it translated; All things come alike to all, and the same condition is to the just and the wicked; and thus also doth Arias Montanus one of the most learned amongst themselves translate it.

Neither will their corrupt translation stand with the sense and truth of the place: for, as he saith, no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love, so also, that no man knoweth whether he be worthy of hatred: but this is utterly false; for so should we say that we could not know whether the Sodomites for their filthiness, the Canaanites for their idolatry, Julian for his apostasy were worthy to be hated of God; whereas the scriptures witness the clean contrary, and even they themselves do confess, that they who desperately give over themselves into all sin and wickedness, are not to doubt but that they are worthy of God's anger and heavy displeasure; why therefore on the other side may not those who are truly converted unto God,

and endued with a lively faith which worketh by love, be assured of God's love and favor, seeing he hath assured them hereof in his word? Nay in the same chapter, ver. 7, their corrupt exposition is overthrown; for there he biddeth us to eat our bread with joy, and to drink our wine with a cheerful heart, for God now accepteth our works. Now, though God did indeed accept our works, yet we could not be moved to joy and cheerfulness of heart hereby, unless also we might be assured of his acceptation.

But let us examine these words and show the true sense of them. There are two expositions given, which may stand with the analogy of faith and the circumstances of the text. For some understand these words not of God's love or hatred, but of man's love towards those things he desires, and of his hatred towards those things he flieth; and then this is the sense of the place; A man knoweth not whether those things which he loveth, as pleasures, honors and riches, or those things which he hateth, namely crosses and afflictions shall happen unto him, because they are not disposed by his own power, but by the providence of God who giveth these outward things indifferently to all both just and unjust. So that if the words are thus to be understood, there is no show of reason in the Papists exposition.

Secondly, let it be granted that it is to be understood of God's love towards us, yet it will make nothing for their purpose: for then this is the plain sense of the words; no man can know whether he be loved or hated of God by these common outward things which happen alike to all, and in respect whereof there is the same condition to the just and the wicked, and to the pure and polluted, to those that worship God and those that worship him not: there is no judgment that can be given, either of ourselves or others in respect of our outward state, for sometime the just are poor, the unjust rich, the wicked advanced to honor, and the godly afflicted and persecuted. For

example, Esau enjoyed his delights and plenty of all things, Jacob like a poor pilgrim went into a strange country, having no other riches but his clothes on his back and his staff in his hand, and when he was come amongst his friends he endured tedious labors, and many miseries; and so David was persecuted, whilst Saul did sit on the throne; yea our Savior Christ himself was arraigned at the bar and condemned, whilst Pilate and the chief Priests and Pharisees sat in the seat of justice, over-swaying all at their own pleasures: and yet at the same time, Jacob was beloved, Esau hated; David chosen of God, Saul rejected; our Savior Christ the dear son of his heavenly father, and his enemies the instruments and limbs of Satan. So that it is most true that Solomon speaketh, namely, no man can have assurance of God's love and favor by these outward benefits bestowed both upon the godly and wicked; neither by his adversities and afflictions can gather that the Lord hateth him: for these befall all indifferently, as it pleaseth God to punish the reprobate, or to chastise his own children.

But though we can gather no sound argument from these outward things of God's love, yet it followeth not that there is no other means to assure us hereof: for by the same reason we may conclude that man is no better than brute beasts, and that there is no immortality of the soul, because it is said, Eccl. 3:19, that the condition of the children of men and the condition of beasts is the same. But as the Wiseman speaketh there of their outward mortality alone, and not absolutely in all respects; and therefore he saith that they are alike to see to, that is, in outward appearance, ver. 18, and explaineth himself in the words following; for (saith he) as one dieth, so dieth the other: so he doth not mean here simply that there is no assurance of God's love, but only in respect of these outward things, and therefore he

addeth, that in these outward respects all things come alike to all, and the same condition is to the just and the wicked.

Though then there is no assurance of God's love to be gathered out of our worldly estate, yet it cannot hence be concluded that therefore there is no means whereby we may be assured hereof: for the Lord hath given unto us his word and merciful promises, he hath given unto us his holy spirit crying in our hearts, Abba father, and witnessing to our spirits that we are the sons of God, Rom. 8. He hath manifested his love by giving us his only son, and begetting in us by his word and spirit a lively faith, whereby we may apply him and all his benefits unto us. Whosoever therefore believeth truly in Jesus Christ, he may be assured of God's love and everlasting life, according to that, John. 3:16. So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

If therefore we believe in Jesus Christ, we need not to despair, no nor to doubt of God's love and favor towards us; notwithstanding our unworthiness, nor yet in regard of the manifold afflictions which God inflicteth on us, neither in respect of those manifold infirmities which we bewray whilst the hand of God is upon us: but we may soundly and assuredly conclude with the Apostle Paul, Rom. 8:38. I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39. Nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so much concerning the first cause of our salvation, namely God's love and goodwill, and also the temptations of Satan, whereby he laboreth to impugn our assurance thereof: the second cause is God's free election,

which proceedeth from the other; for whom he loveth, those he electeth unto everlasting life and happiness, it being an inseparable fruit of love to seek the good and felicity of the party beloved.

Election therefore is that part of God's eternal and immutable decree, whereby of his free love and undeserved grace he hath preordained some in Christ unto salvation, and to the use of the means tending thereunto, for the praise of the glory of his grace.

CHAP. III. OF GOD'S ELECTION, THE CAUSES, SUBJECT, OBJECT, AND PROPERTIES THEREOF.

In this definition is set down first the efficient cause or author of our election, namely God himself, the Father, the Son and the holy Ghost; and this appeareth, Eph. 1:4. He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy &c. And John. 15:16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye go and bring forth fruit, &c.

Secondly, the motive or impulsive cause of God's election is expressed, namely, God's free love, mere goodwill and undeserved grace. And this also is manifest Luk. 12:32. Fear not little flock, for it is your fathers pleasure to give you a kingdom. And Eph. 1:5, who hath predestinated us to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

Here therefore are excluded all other causes, wherewith diverse have imagined God was moved to elect us; as namely our own will, the foreseeing of our works worthiness or faith, and the merits of our Savior Christ. And that these were not the causes which moved the Lord to elect

us, it may be proved by manifest testimonies of scripture. First, our own will is expressly excluded, Rom. 9:16. It is not in him that willeth or runneth, but in God that showeth mercy. Secondly, not the foresight of our own works, for the Apostle plainly affirmeth Rom. 9:11,12, that before the children were borne, and when they had neither done good or evil, that the purpose of God might remain according to election, not by works, but by him that calleth. 12. It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger, 13. As it is written, I have loved Jacob and hated Esau. And chap. 11:5,6, he saith, that God's election is of grace, and if it be of grace it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace. Thirdly, not the foresight of any worthiness in us more than in others; For there is no difference, for all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God: as it is, Rom. 3:23. And the Apostle affirmeth both of himself and others, that they were all dead in their sins, and by nature the children of wrath as well as others, Eph. 2:1,3. Fourthly, the Lord respected not our faith as an impulsive cause moving him to elect us, but only as an effect of our election; neither was the Lord merciful unto us in making choice of us to be partakers of everlasting happiness, because we were faithful, but, that we might be faithful, as Paul professeth of himself, 1 Cor. 7:25. And the holy Ghost affirmeth, Act. 13:46, that as many of the Gentiles as were ordained unto eternal life believed. Lastly, although the merit of Christ was the only meritorious cause of our salvation, yet it was not the cause of God's election, for God's election was from all eternity, and the cause of Christ's merits, which were in time and the effects of God's election, and therefore that which came after could not be the cause of that which was from all eternity, neither can the effect produce the cause, but the cause the effect. Moreover, we are not said in the scriptures to be chosen for Christ, but in Christ, Eph. 1:4. And

the Apostle John affirmeth, that God's eternal love was the cause which moved the Lord to send his son to redeem us by his death, and not that his death was the cause of his love, John. 3:16. And so much concerning the efficient cause of our election. The material cause thereof was the purpose or counsel of God himself, whereby he determined to elect us.

The formal cause was the severing and setting apart of certain men which were to be saved, selected from the rest who were rejected.

The end of God's election was twofold: the first and chief end was the glory of God, set forth by manifesting his grace and mercy in the salvation of the faithful. And this the Apostle plainly expresseth, Rom. 9:23, namely, that the end of God's election is, that he might declare the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy, which he hath prepared unto glory. And Eph. 1:4,5,6, he saith, that he hath chosen us in Christ, and predestinated us, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

The second end which is inferior and subordinate to the other, is the salvation of the elect, and this also is expressed by the Apostle, Rom. 9:23, where he saith, that the elect are prepared unto glory. And Act. 13:48, the holy Ghost saith, as many as were ordained to eternal life: thereby implying that the salvation of the elect is the end of God's election. And these are the causes of God's election. The effects which inseparably follow-hereupon, are Christ the Mediator, and the whole work of his mediation and our redemption wrought by him, our adoption, effectual calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification; and these are the degrees and means of our election, which are as well contained in God's decree as our salvation itself.

The subject in which we are elected, is Christ Jesus our Mediator and head; not in regard of his deity alone, for so he is the efficient cause; nor in respect of his humanity alone, but as he is God and man. And we are

therefore elected in him, both because in ourselves we were not capable of such glorious dignity, as also because he alone is a fit Mediator in whom we should be elected, seeing with our election there is a union and conjunction of us with God who hath elected us.

The object of God's election are all those who are preordained unto everlasting life, and whom the Lord will eternally save; which being considered in themselves are a great number, but yet in respect of the number of the reprobates but a small and little flock; for though many be called, yet few are chosen, as Christ himself affirmeth, Matth. 22:14.

The last thing, which also is expressed in the definition, are certain properties attributed to God's election; namely, that it is eternal, free and immutable. That this decree is eternal, it appeareth, Eph. 1:4. He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. So, Rom. 9:11.

Secondly, that it is free and of his mere grace, it is manifest, Rom. 9:18. He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth. So, Eph. 1:11. In whom we are chosen when we were predestinate, according to the purpose of him which worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Lastly, that it is immutable and most firm and certain, it plainly appeareth, 2 Tim. 2:19. The foundation of God remaineth sure; and hath this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his. Where we may observe, that this immutability and certainty of God's decree, doth not depend upon us or our perseverance, but upon God's good pleasure and foreknowledge, for it is a foundation in itself firm and stable, and hath not the seal of our worthiness or perseverance in grace, but of God's foreknowledge whereby he knoweth who are his.

CHAP. V. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
CONCERNING GOD'S ELECTION
ANSWERED, AND FIRST THOSE
WHEREWITH HE ASSAULTETH
CARNAL WORLDLINGS.

Now concerning this decree of election and the assurance thereof, there are two sorts of Satan's temptations: the first he suggesteth into the minds of carnal worldlings, to nourish in them fond presumption and carnal security: the other, into the minds of weak Christians, whereby he moveth them to doubt and despair of their election to everlasting life. The worldly man he assaulteth with two principal temptations: first, he persuadeth him that there is no election at all or reprobation, but that all in the end shall be saved. Which gross absurdity that he may make more plausible and probable, he setteth before them the infinite mercy of God, and the general promises and consolations in the Gospel: as, that he will not the death of a sinner, and that he will that all men shall be saved, in both places cunningly dissembling that which followeth; for to the first place is added, but that he repent, and in the latter, that they who shall be saved must also come to the knowledge of the truth.

But this temptation is so palpably absurd, that it becometh not Satan's policy to use it to any, but those only whose hearts are hardened, their eyes blinded, their consciences seared, and who having not believed and loved the truth, are given over of God to believe strong delusions; and therefore I will not spend much time in answering this temptation: only let such men as are seduced with Satan's lies know thus much, that God's mercy is a just mercy, as his justice is a merciful justice; that God is infinite in both, and no less glorified in the manifestation of the one than of the other. Let them know that there are no promises of the Gospel so general, which are not limited with the condition of faith, and the fruit thereof unfeigned repentance. Let them know, that God who is not only merciful but also true, yea truth itself, hath in his word revealed his will, as well concerning the eternal death and destruction of the wicked, as the salvation of the godly: he hath said, that many are called and few chosen; that the gate of heaven is so straight, that there are few who find it; that he will say to the workers of iniquity, Go your ways I know you not; that he will make a separation between the sheep and the goats, and as he saith to the one, Come ye blessed of my father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world, so he will say to the other, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. Let them know that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor wantons, nor buggerers, not thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, nor any that live in the like sins, without repentance, shall inherit the kingdom of God, for truth itself hath spoken it, 1 Cor. 6:9,10, but they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, as it is, Rev. 21:8. And therefore let not Satan bewitch them, by setting before their eyes God's

mercy; for as sure as God is just and true of his word, so surely shall such as continue in their sins, without repentance, be eternally condemned; neither is it any impeachment to God's mercy, if he exercise his justice in inflicting due punishment upon obstinate and rebellious sinners, seeing it is sufficiently manifested in the salvation of those who repent and believe.

The second temptation which Satan suggesteth into the minds of carnal men, to the end they may run on in their desperate courses, and wallow still in the pleasing filth of their corruptions, he thus frameth; Why enjoyest thou not (saith he) thy pleasures? Why art thou afraid to satisfy all thy desires? What needest thou to take any pains in performing God's worship and service, and to what purpose shouldest thou forsake thy pleasing sins, studying and striving after mortification and newness of life, which is so bitter and unpleasant unto thee? For God's decree of predestination is sure and most unchangeable as himself is without change, and therefore if thou art elected of God thou mayest follow thy delights, go on in thy sins, live as thou list, yet surely thou shalt be saved, and he will give thee repentance, though it be deferred to the last gasp. But if on the other side thou art a reprobate, rejected of God in his eternal council, then take what pains thou wilt, make thy throat hoarse with praying, and thy bags empty with giving alms, be never so diligent in God's service, never so careful in mortifying thy sins, yet all is in vain, for those whom he hath reprobated shall be condemned. And therefore much better were it to take thy pleasure and to follow thine own desires whilst thou art in this life: for the punishments of the life to come will be enough, though thou addest no torments of this life unto them.

And thus doth Satan reason in the mind of a carnal man, partly to continue and increase his security in the course of sin, and partly to discredit the holy

doctrine of God's eternal predestination, as though it opened a door to all licentiousness. But if we consider of this temptation aright, and sound it to the bottom, we shall find first that it is most foolish and ridiculous, secondly that it is most false and impious. That it is most foolish it will easily appear, if we use the like manner of reasoning in worldly matters; for it is all one as if a man should thus say: thy time is appointed, and the Lord in his counsel hath set down how long thou shalt live; if therefore it be ordained that thy time shall be short, use what means thou wilt of physic and good diet, yet shalt thou not prolong it one day; but if God hath decreed that thou shalt live to old age, take what courses thou wilt, run into all desperate dangers, use surfeiting and all disorder of diet, nay eat no meat at all, and yet thou shalt live till thou art an old man. Or as if he should say; God hath decreed already whether thou shalt be rich or poor, and if he hath appointed thee to be poor, take never so much pains, follow thy calling as diligently as thou wilt, abstain from all wastefulness and prodigality, yet shalt thou never get any wealth: but if thou art preordained to be rich, sell all thou hast and scatter it abroad in the streets, spend thy time in gaming, drinking and whoring, never troubling thy head with care, nor thy hands with work, yet shalt thou be a wealthy man. Now who would not laugh at such absurd manner of reasoning if any should use it? Because every man knoweth, that as God hath decreed the time of our life, so he hath decreed also that we should use the means, whereby our lives may be preserved so long as he hath ordained that we should live, namely avoiding of dangers, good diet, and physic; and as he hath decreed that a man should be rich, so he hath decreed also that he should use all good means of attaining unto riches, namely providence and pains in getting, and care and frugality in keeping that he hath gotten; and whosoever use not the means, do make it manifest

that they were not ordained unto the end. Although indeed, because the Lord would show his absolute and almighty power, he doth not always tie himself unto means, but sometimes crosseth and maketh them ineffectual to their ends, and sometime he effecteth what he will, without or contrary to all means; and hence it is that some quickly die who use all means to preserve health, and some become poor who use all means of obtaining riches, whereas others being deprived of the means attain unto long life and riches by the immediate blessing of God. But ordinarily the means and end go together, and therefore it is fond presumption to imagine or hope, without the use of the means, to attain unto the end. And thus it is also in spiritual matters appertaining to everlasting life; those whom God hath elected, he hath ordained also that they should attain unto and use all good means tending thereunto, namely faith, repentance, sanctification, and newness of life: and therefore it is as absurd for any to imagine, that they shall be saved continuing in their ignorance, infidelity, unrepentancy, and filthy corruptions, as it is for a man to think that he shall live to be old, and yet runneth into all dangers, forsaketh physic yea and food also whereby his life should be sustained. For the spiritual means of salvation are as well (nay much more) contained in God's decree, as the corporal means of preserving life: for it hath been heard-of, that some have lived in the midst of dangers, and in the absence of meat, for a long time; but it was never heard that any have attained unto everlasting life without faith, repentance, and sanctification: for even the thief upon the cross believed in Christ, and shown the fruits of his faith in acknowledging his own sin reproving his fellow, in confessing our Savior Christ even then when his Apostles denied and forsook him, in calling upon his name and desiring by his means everlasting life.

But as this temptation is foolish, so also it is false; for whereas he saith that though we live in our sins without repentance, yet we may be elected and therefore shall be saved; and though we take never so great pains in God's service, and most carefully endeavor to spend our lives in holiness and righteousness, yet we may be reprobates and therefore shall be condemned; this is utterly untrue: for, whomsoever the Lord hath ordained to everlasting life, those also he hath ordained to use the means whereby they may be saved, and consequently whosoever carefully use these means may be assured of their salvation, whosoever neglect and despise these means they manifestly declare that they are not in the number of the elect, so long as they continue in their neglect and contempt: for the end and the means tending to the end, are inseparably joined in God's decree; so that they who use the one shall obtain the other, they who neglect and contemn the means shall never attain unto the end.

Now the end of God's election is twofold. The chief and principal is his own glory, as appeareth, Eph. 1:5,6. Who hath predestinate us to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace. And this end the Lord will not suffer to be frustrate: for his glory shall shine in all his elect, and therefore we also are most carefully to labor that we may further this end; for the more that the praise of God's mercy doth shine in us, the better assurance we have of our election. And seeing God is most glorified when as our lights shine brightest before men in a godly and Christian life, therefore let us be most careful to spend our time in holiness and righteousness, that thereby we may glorify our heavenly father, and also make our own election sure; for he hath chosen us that we should be holy, and therefore if we be holy it is a most certain sign that he hath chosen us.

The second end of God's election is the salvation of his elect; for the just accomplishing whereof, he hath preordained diverse subordinate causes or means, which are the inseparable effects and fruits of his election; all which are so linked one with another, as that the precedent means is the cause of that which next in order followeth, and God's decree the cause of all. The effects of God's election, which are the subordinate causes or means of our salvation, are principally three; Vocation, Justification, and Sanctification. By vocation we are separated from the world, made members of the Church, and engrafted in to the body of Christ; and this is ordinarily done by the preaching of the word being made effectual by the inward operation of God's spirit, or extraordinarily by some other means, or immediately by the illumination of the holy Ghost. In our justification we have the pardon and remission of all our sins by virtue of Christ's merit, and are adorned with his righteousness imputed unto us: and this is done, principally by God himself, and instrumentally by a lively faith. Our sanctification consisteth in our dying to sin, and rising up to newness of life; which is begun, increased, and finished in us by God's spirit. Whosoever therefore are predestinate to salvation, they also are effectually called, that is separate from the world, and engrafted into the body of Christ; and this they attain unto by diligent and attentive hearing of the word. Whosoever are effectually called, are also justified; and therefore have obtained a true and lively faith. Whosoever are justified are also sanctified, that is, die unto their sins, and rise again to newness of life, and consequently whosoever are still mere worldlings and no true members of Christ's body (as all those are who make no conscience of hearing God's word diligently, reverently, and attentively, nor of treasuring it up in their hearts) they are not truly called; whosoever have not Christ's righteousness and obedience imputed and applied unto them (which

none have that are destitute of a true and fruitful faith) are not justified; whosoever live in their sins, without repentance, without any earnest desire and hearty endeavor of serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness of life are not sanctified; and whosoever are not called, justified and sanctified, shall never be saved; for the end and the means tending thereunto are joined together in God's predestination. So that where the one is, there the other is; where the one never is, there the other shall ever be wanting. And therefore as by our sanctification, justification, and vocation, we may certainly conclude that we are elected and shall be saved; so if we be without these, we may as certainly infer that we are rejected, and shall be condemned if we live and die in this state.

Seeing then this is God's truth, let not Satan lull us in security with that sophistical cavil; if we be elected we shall be saved live how we list; if we be reprobates we shall be condemned, be we never so earnest in laboring after godliness: for these principles may well stand together, it is impossible that the elect should perish, and as impossible also that any who believe not in Christ, and bring not forth the fruits of their faith in a godly and Christian life should be saved; it cannot be that the reprobate should attain unto everlasting happiness, and that any should not attain thereunto, who desireth and endevoreth to serve and fear the Lord: because predestination and salvation are so coupled together with the means that come between them, that they cannot possibly be severed from one another, nor the means from either of them, nor yet amongst themselves; even as the first link of a chain is joined with the last by those which are between them, and these which are in the middle one with another.

CHAP. VI. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS WHEREBY HE MOVETH THE WEAK CHRISTIAN TO DOUBT OF HIS ELECTION, ANSWERED.

And these are the temptations where with Satan assaulteth the worldling: but if he have to deal with a true Christian, who is indeed elected of God, and showeth the fruits of his election, by desiring and endeavoring to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, then he persuadeth him to doubt of his election, and to hang as it were wavering in the air, sometime lifted up with hope, sometime dejected and cast down with fear, till at last he being weary and tired with his doubtful thoughts, and having nowhere to rest himself, is swallowed up of desperation: like unto a silly bird which flieth over the main Ocean, and one while hopeth to attain unto the land, another while feareth seeing no place where to light, till at last being so weary that she can fly no further, she falleth down and is drowned in the sea. So these one while hope, and soon after finding their own infirmities, and not seeing where they may rest their wavering minds, doubt and fear, till at last through weariness they sink down and are swallowed up in the gulf of desperation, where they are drowned and destroyed, if it do not please the Lord to lift them up again, and to show

them the firm Rock Jesus Christ, whereupon they may rest their weary minds and refresh their fainting souls; which he always doth perform to those that belong to his election; for it is impossible that any of them should perish, though Satan and all the power of hell seek their ruin and destruction.

But at this mark Satan aimeth though he never hitteth it, and though he never finally prevail, yet to this doubting, and in the end despairing, he laboreth to persuade the true Christian; neither doth he content himself with the forces of his own temptations, but he joineth with him the world, which is as ready as Satan himself to oppugn the certainty of our election, and our own traitorous flesh which is easily moved to doubting and despair, when as it seeth nothing in itself whereupon it may rest. In the world he maketh his choice not of silly ignorant men, but of the most subtle Sophisters and learned Doctors, the true successors of the Scribes and Pharisees, even the whole rabble of the Popish clergy; who stand on Satan's part stoutly fighting his battles, being persuaded and overcome by that temptation which our Savior Christ withstood, All this will I give thee. For to what end (I pray you) do these great Doctors so stiffly stand in the defense of Satan's cause, persuading men might and main to doubt of their election, and consequently of their salvation? Surely that by emptying men's minds of all true comfort, they may fill their own chests, and get the treasures of the earth into their possessions. For when the weak conscience wavereth and doubteth of his election, and not finding any true consolation whereupon it may rest, cometh unto them for some comfort and better assurance; they behave themselves like unto ungracious Surgeons, who intending to make a pray of their patients, and to get their gains out of their pains and tortures, do one day heal, and the next day hinder the cure, making the wound worse

than it was when they took it in hand, till at last they have so poisoned the sore that it is past their cure, whereas they could easily have healed it, if they had not regarded their profit more than their own credit, or their patients health: or like unto deceitful Lawyers, who sometimes speak in their clients cause, and sometimes betray it, going about in a tedious circuit, whereas the direct way lieth open before them, that so their clients cause being made more doubtful and tedious, and themselves impatient of delays, are fain to double and treble their fees, and yet oftentimes to no purpose, because the more they receive, the fitter they think them to be their perpetual Clients. So do these Popish Surgeons and Romish counselors deal with their Patient and Client; for showing his wounded conscience, and desiring some comfort at their hands, they will not make any sovereign salve of the simples which they might gather out of God's word, whereby he might soon be healed, for then their cure, and consequently their gains were at an end: but they hold him in suspense, and increase his disease of doubting, applying thereunto poisons instead of salves, whereby at last his wound is made desperate. Thou canst not (will they say) attain unto any certain assurance of thine election, for that were fond presumption; but thou art to hope well: and that thou mayest confirm thy hope, thou must make vows and go on pilgrimage, to invoke and offer unto these and these saints, thou must do these works of supererogation, build such a Monastery, repair such a Church, give so much money to such a Cloister, buy these Indulgences, whereby thou mayest receive pardon for thy sins; and for more surety sake, thou shalt at thy death bequeath so much money to the Priests, for Masses, Trentals and Dirges, that if it happen thou go into Purgatory, thou mayest speedily be delivered: but all this while they speak not a word of God's undeserved grace and free election, not a syllable of Christ's death

and satisfaction for our sins; no, this were too sovereign a salve, and would too soon heal the wounded conscience, and so mar the market of these mount-banks, making their Vowes, Pilgrimages, Masses, Dirges, Indulgences, and other trumpery-ware not worth the cheapening.

But let us consider the state of the question between us and Satan, with his Doctors and Proctors, whom he feeth with worldly riches to plead his cause. We hold that a man truly converted, endued with a lively faith and sanctified, may ordinarily be assured that he is the child of God, elected to salvation: but they affirm that it is presumption for such to have any certain assurance hereof, unless it be by extraordinary revelation; he may hope indeed that he is elected and shall be saved, but this hope must be tempered with fear, and mixed with doubting; and this doubting they call humility, which they do not account an infirmity, but rather a virtue which doth commend their faith, esteeming firm assurance to be but heretical confidence and damnable presumption, and pronouncing him accursed in their council of Trent, who affirmeth that we are to believe without doubting the remission of our own sin and everlasting life in particular.

And because they cannot but confess, that doubting and believing, in themselves are opposed one against another; they teach, that their faith is assured of God's mercy and Christ's merits, as in themselves infinite and sufficient; but it doubteth (in respect of our unworthiness and manifold imperfections) to apply them particularly unto ourselves: so that when we look upon God and Christ, there is cause of firm assurance, but when we look upon ourselves, there is nothing but matter of doubting, there is indeed some place left to their staggering hope, but none to assurance of faith: as though our faith were grounded on our own worthiness, and not upon God's free mercy and Christ's merits; and as though resting upon these alone, it

could not have certain assurance of our election and salvation, notwithstanding our unworthiness and corruptions. But let us arm ourselves against this their doctrine, which containeth nothing else but principles whereupon Satan may ground his temptations, whereby he persuadeth us first to doubting, and afterwards to despairing of our election and salvation; for when the troubled conscience hath no other assurance of God's love and his own election, but that which is gathered from his own worthiness and works, he still doubteth whether yet he be worthy, or have fulfilled the measure of works required; and then further examining himself to clear his doubt, and finding his best works exceeding imperfect, and that his sins and corruptions are innumerable, then is his conscience set upon the rack, and his soul plunged into deep despair, having no other stay but the broken staff of his own righteousness, which most deceiveth him when he most trusteth to it.

And that we may be confirmed against Satan's temptations, and the subtle sophistry of these his Doctors, I will handle this point at large, and will plainly prove, first, that the child of God being converted, justified and sanctified, may be certainly assured of his particular election, and that without any special revelation after an ordinary manner. Secondly, I will show the means whereby we may attain unto this assurance; and the infallible signs of our election. Lastly, I will answer such objections as are made against it by Satan and his adherents.

Concerning the first, namely, that we may be certainly assured of our election and salvation, it may be proved by testimonies of Scriptures, and also by infallible reasons grounded upon them. For we must not think that we can have this assurance, by ascending into heaven, and there searching into God's secret decree, but we must gather it out of God's word, wherein

the Lord hath revealed his will unto us: and in regard hereof, though God's will in itself be secret, so that we may ask who hath known the will of the Lord? Yet seeing the Lord hath revealed his hidden will in his word, we may say with Paul, that we have known the mind of Christ. Now this knowledge of God's will concerning our election, is not to be gathered out of the law, as the Papists would have it; for by reason of the condition annexed to the promise of everlasting life (Do this and live) it leaveth our consciences in perpetual doubting, nay, rather in utter desperation, because we know that we are far from the exact obedience thereof: but out of the gracious promises of the Gospel, freely made to everyone who believeth, without any condition of our own works and worthiness. And therefore if we believe the promises of the Gospel made in Christ, we may be assured of our election and salvation, though in ourselves we are miserable sinners, who have transgressed all God's commandments: for the covenant and promises of God made to Abraham and his seed, was not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, as it is, Rom 4:13, and therefore it is by faith, that it might come by grace, and the promise might be sure, not in self only, and in respect of the sufficiency of God's mercy and Christ's merits, as the Papists dream; but to all the seed, that is, to all that believe, and be the children of Abraham, who was the father of the faithful both Jew and Gentile. For otherwise we should have no better assurance of salvation by the Gospel than by the Law; for even the promise of the Law was most sure in itself and on God's part, yet not sure to us who could not perform the condition: and therefore the Lord made a new covenant, not of works but of grace, only on the condition of faith; that so the promise might be sure, not only in itself and on God's behalf, but also unto us who are Abraham's seed, that is, true believers, as appeareth, Rom. 4:16. And this also notably

appeareth, Heb. 6:17,18, where the Apostle saith, that God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the stableness of his counsel, bound himself by an oath, 18. That by two immutable things wherein it is impossible that God should lie, we might have strong consolation, which have our refuge to hold fast the hope that is set before us, 19. Which we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast. In which words the Apostle plainly showeth, that the Lord hath added his oath to his promise, not to the end that in itself it should be confirmed, or needed any confirmation on God's part (for his bare word is yea and Amen, so infallible and sure, that though heaven and earth pass away and perish, yet not one jot or tittle of his word shall fail till all things be fulfilled) but to the end that we to whom the promises are made, might be assured of the stableness of his counsel, and thereby receive strong consolation, and might rest our souls in the tempests of temptations upon firm hope, as it were upon a steadfast and sure anchor. Now what stability, what strong consolation, what steadfastness of hope, if we are still uncertain of our election, sometimes hoping, as when we look upon God's mercy and Christ's merits, and sometimes doubting, as when we look upon our own sins and unworthiness? For what is this but to be shaken from our anchor hold, and to be tossed up and down with the waves of doubting, till at last we dash against the rocks of despair, and so make shipwreck of our souls?

And thus you see that the covenant of grace was therefore made with us, that we might be assured of our election, and that the whole Gospel is nothing else but God's ambassage, whereby he certifieth us of his free and undeserved love in Jesus Christ: but let us further consider of some special testimonies whereby this assurance is confirmed. Rom. 5:1, it is said, that being justified by faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus

Christ. But what peace can we have, if we be not assured of our election, but have our minds distracted and racked between faith and doubting, hope and despair? Rom. 8:38, the Apostle professeth, that he is persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, &c. nor any other creature should be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is true (will the tempter say) that Paul had this assurance of his election and salvation, but it was by some special revelation, and not ordinarily; and therefore it followeth not hereof that every particular Christian can have this assurance. I answer, that the Apostle groundeth not his faith on revelations in that place, but on a foundation common to him with all true Christians, namely on the death of Christ, ver. 32, on God's free justification, ver. 33, and upon Christ's intercession, ver. 34, and from hence he confirmeth his and our resolution, that nothing should separate us from the love of Christ, ver. 35, from the love of God in him. Whosoever therefore with Paul believeth that Christ died for him, that God freely justifieth him through Christ's merits, and that our Savior sitteth at the right hand of his Father to make intercession for him, he may be assured of God's love, and consequently of his election. Secondly, Paul speaketh this not of himself alone, but also of all the faithful, and therefore he useth the plural number, I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us. So Eph. 3:12, the Apostle saith, that we have through Christ boldness and entrance with confidence by faith in him. And Heb. 4:16, he exhorteth us to go boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy &c. And chap. 10:22. Let us draw near with a true heart in assurance of faith, &c. But I would fain know what entrance with confidence, what boldness and assurance of faith, when we draw near unto God, and present ourselves before his throne of majesty, if we remain doubtful of his love

and our election? So, Heb. 6:19, he saith that our hope is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul; but what certainty or steadfastness is there in it, if it waver and stagger through doubtfulness, so often as we look upon our sins and unworthiness? The Apostle Peter also doth tell us, that the trust which we have through Jesus Christ must be perfect, that is, entire and perpetual, till we enjoy the thing which we hope for, 1 Pet. 1:13. And 2 Pet. 1:10, he exhorteth us to use all diligence that we may make our calling and election sure: which if we could not do, he should persuade us to the undertaking of a needless labor. Nay he plainly assureth us, that if we do these things (to wit if we join virtue with our faith, and with virtue knowledge, and with knowledge temperance, and with temperance patience, and with patience godliness, and with godliness brotherly kindness, and with brotherly kindness love) we shall never fall; because these are effects and undoubted signs of our election. And the Apostle John would not have it a matter doubtful, whether we are elected and shall be saved or no; but certainly known and undoubtedly believed: and therefore he aimeth principally at this mark, and propoundeth this as the chief end of his epistle, namely to show how we might know ordinarily, and be fully assured that we are beloved of God, elected, and shall be saved. So, 1 John. 3:14. We know that we are translated from death to life because we love the brethren. And therefore in the latter end of his epistle he saith, that he had written it to this end, that we might know that we have eternal life. Chap. 5:13. Seeing then the Scriptures do commend unto us a steadfast and assured faith, whereby we particularly are assured and persuaded of our election and salvation, notwithstanding our sins and unworthiness: therefore let not the tempter persuade us to cast away this certain persuasion, and to waver in doubting; but let us say with the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim. 1:12, Though I am

unworthy yet I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.

But against that which hath been said the tempter objecteth, that the promises of the Gospel are general and indefinite, and therefore no man can gather out of them any certain assurance of his particular election. I answer that this consequence is false: for out of a general and indefinite proposition, we may truly and by the laws of reason gather and infer a particular conclusion, though not contrariwise. For example, if I thus conclude; all men are reasonable creatures: but I am a man; therefore I am a reasonable creature: it is rightly and truly inferred. Though therefore the promises of the Gospel be contained in general propositions, yet may every faithful man as certainly conclude, that they belong unto him, as if they were particularly applied unto him by name. For when the Lord by his ambassadors maketh this general proposition in the preaching of the word; whosoever truly believe in Christ, they are all elected unto everlasting life; the faithful hearer maketh this assumption in his mind, but I by the grace of God, and by the preaching of his word made effectual by his spirit, have a true faith begotten in me, whereby I believe in Christ my Savior; and therefore God's promise of life and salvation belongeth unto me. And thus also doth the conscience of man out of the general curses of the law conclude that he is accursed; for when the law delivereth this proposition in general, Cursed is everyone who abideth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; every particular man maketh this assumption in his own conscience, but I have not continued in all to do it, nay instead of doing all, I have neglected all, instead of continuing in obedience, I have been continually disobedient, instead of doing the duties commanded, I have committed the sins forbidden, and therefore by the

sentence of the law I am accursed. So that though both the threatening's of the law, and the promises of the Gospel be general and indefinite, yet doth every man's conscience truly informed by God's word, gather out of them most certain particular conclusions.

But here the tempter will object further; it is true indeed that every faithful man, may apply the general promises of the Gospel unto himself, but all the question is whether thou canst know that thou hast faith or no, seeing many who continue in their infidelity, brag most of their faith. I answer that it cannot be denied but that many are deceived, by contenting themselves with their carnal security, instead of a lively faith; but hence it followeth not, that because many are deceived with an opinion of faith, therefore those that believe indeed cannot be assured that they have faith; no more than this followeth, some men dream that they are rich, and are not so indeed when they awake, therefore no man knoweth whether he be rich or no; for what is their secure opinion, but an idle dream of their own brains, which hath no warrant out of God's word? Whereas faith certainly and evidently persuadeth, and like a candle doth not only manifest other things, but also itself appeareth by his own light. So that as a man who seeth and feeleth the fire and the heat thereof, doth certainly know that he seeth and feeleth it, so he that believeth in Christ doth know that he believeth indeed: yea as much more certain is this knowledge, as the knowledge of faith grounded upon God's word which is infallible, is more certain than the knowledge of the senses, which are often deceived. Furthermore if we could not be assured that we have faith, then to what purpose serves the admonition of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13:5. Try yourselves whether you are in the faith, examine yourselves: know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates? In which words the Apostle plainly implieth, that

we may know that we have a true and lively faith, or else this trial and examination were vain: nay he plainly saith that we may know that Christ is in us, except we be reprobates, and consequently that we have faith; for this only is the hand whereby we apply Christ unto us and all his benefits. So 1 Cor. 11:28, the Apostle willeth us to examine ourselves before we come to the Lord's table, that so we be not unworthy guests; in which examination the chief thing which we are to respect, is whether we have a true faith; for this is the mouth of the soul, whereby we feed upon the body and blood of our Savior Christ; and therefore unless we can know whether we have faith when we are truly endued therewith, this admonition of the Apostle were to no purpose; neither can we have any assurance to our own souls, that we are worthy guests of the Lord's table, and consequently we rest doubtful whether we receive the Sacrament to our spiritual good and salvation, or to our judgment and condemnation. Thirdly, we are assured of this by God's word that whatsoever is not done of faith is sin. Rom. 14:23. And without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11:6. If therefore we cannot be assured that we have faith, we can have no assurance that our best actions, our calling upon God's name, our hearing of his word, and all other duties of piety and justice, are any better than sins and odious in God's sight: whereof it must needs follow that these actions, how good so ever in themselves, will be done of us in doubting, because we know not whether they be done in faith; and being done doubtingly they become sins indeed, and therefore displeasing in God's sight. Lastly, if I can know whether I believe a man upon his word, and whether I trust and rely myself upon his promise or no; why may I not much more know whether I believe God's gracious promises made unto all repentant sinners, and amongst the rest unto myself, namely, that for the obedience and merits of Christ, I shall

have remission of my sins and everlasting life? Seeing this faith is not out of ourselves, but a gift of God wrought in us by his holy spirit, which is not idle in us, for it purifieth the heart, and worketh by love; it moveth us to hate and fly from those sins we have loved, and to embrace and love that holiness and righteousness of life which heretofore hath been loathsome unto us. As therefore the fire is known by his heat, the sun by the light, the good tree by his fruits, so when our cold hearts are inflamed with the love of God, and a fervent zeal of his glory, when our blind understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of God, and of the true religion, when we bring forth the fruits of our profession in a godly and Christian life, then may we certainly know that we are endued with a true and lively faith.

But here the tempter will take occasion to persuade the weak Christian and the troubled conscience, that he hath no faith, seeing he doth not certainly know that he hath it, nor discerneth these signs and fruits of faith in himself. To this suggestion we are to answer, that we do not say that the weak Christian may be assured at all times, that he hath faith by his present sense; for first when we are newly converted, and the seeds of faith are sown in our hearts, we do not presently discern it; but as the corn which is cast into the ground, is for a time covered and after springeth up the blade, and then the ear; so faith being sown in our hearts, which first like fallow grounds are plowed up, and as it were harrowed and broken with the threatening's of the law, and apprehension of God's anger due unto our sins, doth in the time of our humiliation and contrition, lie covered so as we cannot discern it, till being more and more watered with the water of the spirit, and the heavenly promises of the Gospel, which in the preaching of the word, like sweet dew and pleasant showers distill upon it, it sendeth forth the blade, namely an holy desire and earnest endeavor to serve God,

and afterwards the fruit, even a plentiful harvest in godliness and righteousness of life.

And secondly, sometime after that faith is begun in us, and we have seen the fruits thereof to our comfort, it is after hid from us again, as when either we wound our conscience by committing some grievous sin against knowledge wittingly and willingly, or when it pleaseth the Lord to exercise us in the spiritual conflict of temptations; for then sometimes it cometh to pass that our faith for a time lieth hid under the ashes of our corruptions; and the cloud of our sins, and the apprehension of God's anger, doth so overshadow the eyes of our understanding that we cannot discern the beams of God's love and favor shining upon us; although when the conflict is ended, our faith again flameth out in the love of God, and zeal of his glory, and the loving countenance of the Lord shineth graciously upon us when these clouds of temptations are overpast. And therefore though we do not certainly know our faith by the fruits thereof, either soon after our conversion, or in the time of temptation, yet this must not discourage us, because these are no fit times to judge thereof: only when we want this knowledge and full assurance, let us use all good means ordained of God that we may attain thereunto if we never had it; or recover and again renew it, if after we have once had it, we lose the sense and feeling thereof, either by falling into heinous sins, or by the violence of Satan's temptations.

CHAP. VII. THAT WE MAY BE ASSURED OF OUR ELECTION, PROVED BY DIVERSE ARGUMENTS.

And thus have I shown by plain testimonies of scriptures, that we may infallibly be assured of our election; now I will also prove the same by strong arguments, drawn from the same fountain. First therefore we may thus reason; Whatsoever is manifestly shown unto us in the Gospel, that we are bound to believe, and of that we may be assured: but it is manifestly declared in the Gospel, that we are elected unto everlasting life: and therefore we are bound to believe it, and may be assured that we are elected. The proposition or first part of this reason containeth two branches: the first is, that we are bound to believe whatsoever the Gospel revealeth; the second, that we may be assured of it; both which are evident truths. For that which Christ commandeth, that we are bound to perform: but he commandeth us to believe the Gospel, Mar. 1:15. Repent and believe the Gospel. So this is his commandment that we believe &c. 1 John. 3:23. The breach of which commandment is punished with everlasting death. For he that will not believe shall be damned, as it is, Mar. 16:16. And as we are bound to believe it, so we may also come to be assured thereof; seeing the

Gospel commandeth us nothing, which it doth not also by the inward and ordinary cooperation of God's spirit enable us to perform. For this difference is between the commandments of the Law and the commandments of the Gospel: the Law showeth us the duties which we should perform, but ministers unto us no power whereby we may be enabled to perform them; but the Gospel being assisted with the operation of God's spirit, doth command and withal giveth us ability to perform the commandment, for the words of the Gospel are spirit and life, as our Savior speaketh, 6:63, and with the preaching thereof the spirit inwardly worketh, quickening and strengthening us to perform that which it enjoineth. The assumption or second part of the reason is also clear, namely, that the Gospel manifesteth unto us our election; for what else is the whole Gospel but a declaration of God's love, and of our election and redemption in and by Jesus Christ? What is it else but the ambassage whereby God reconcileth us unto himself? What else is contained therein, but God's merciful promises of life and salvation, made on no other condition but on the condition of faith, which we need not fear to perform, seeing it is commanded us of God? And therefore though we had no other reason to believe, yet we should believe in obedience to God's commandment, seeing, he commandeth nothing which is not good in itself, tending to his own glory and our salvation; and if we do believe, though our unworthiness be never so great, yea though our faith be never so weak and small, yet may we thereby be assured of our election and salvation; for this is God's will, that whosoever believeth in his son shall have everlasting life, as it is, John. 6:40. So John. 3:36. He that believeth in the son hath everlasting life. But most notable is that place, 1 John. 5:10. He that believeth in the son of God, hath the witness in himself: that is, they need no other reasons to persuade

them, that the testimony which God hath given of his son (namely, that whosoever believe in him shall have everlasting life) is true; for they have full and sufficient assurance hereof by their faith. Whosoever therefore can be assured that they believe in Jesus Christ (as all may who bring forth the fruits of faith in sanctification and holiness of life, or at least desire and endeavor to serve the Lord in the duties of piety and righteousness) they may be assured, nay they are bound by God's express commandment, undoubtedly to believe they are elected and shall be saved, because all the promises of the Gospel are made unto them without any other condition.

Secondly, whosoever are bound to believe that Jesus Christ is their Savior and Redeemer, they are also undoubtedly to believe and may also be assured of their election; but every Christian is bound by God's express commandment to believe that Jesus Christ is their Savior and Redeemer, as appeareth, 1 John. 3:23, and therefore they are undoubtedly to believe and may be assured of their election. The proposition is manifest, seeing all those and those only are saved and redeemed by Christ, who are elected to salvation in God's eternal decree. The assumption is most certain, for whereas God commands us to believe in Jesus Christ, he doth not only enjoin us to believe that he is a Savior of his Church in general, or of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles alone, for this also the devils believe as well as we; but we are to believe that he is our Savior and Redeemer, and to apply all the promises of life and salvation made in him, particularly unto ourselves; for otherwise how should we have that assurance of faith and that bold confidence when we approach unto the throne of grace, which the Apostle requireth of us, Heb. 4:16, and 10:22, if we cannot be assured that he is our Savior and Redeemer, in whom God loveth and hath elected us?

Neither must this faith and assurance of our election and salvation be mixed with doubting, as the Papists would bear us in hand, who make doubting not an infirmity, but a commendable virtue of their faith: for faith and doubting though they are often mixed in God's children, yet in respect of their own natures they are opposed in the scriptures one against the other. So it is said of Abraham, that he doubted not of God's promise through unbelief, but was strengthened in the faith, Rom. 4:20, where the Apostle showeth, that doubting is a fruit of unbelief and not a commendable virtue; nay, he opposeth it to faith, saying, that he doubted not of the promise, but was strengthened in the faith. So the Apostle James, chap. 1:5, saith, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask in faith and waver not; where he opposeth faith to wavering or doubting. And our Savior Christ also maketh this opposition, Matth, 21:21, saying, If ye have faith and doubt not. So that though faith and doubting are not opposed in respect of the subject wherein they are, for even the most dear children of God have their faith often mixed with doubting, they being partly flesh and partly spirit; yet these two in their own natures are opposed one against the other; and even in respect of their subject they thus far disagree, that though they have their subsistence in the same subject, yet not in the same part; that is, though they be in the same man, yet not in the same part, for faith is in the regenerate and spiritual part, doubting in the unregenerate or fleshly part.

Doubting then is no virtue of faith, but opposed thereunto as a fruit of unbelief; it proceedeth not from the spirit but from the flesh, and as a fruit of the flesh it is condemned in God's word, though the Papists highly commend it. So Matth. 14:31, our Savior reprehendeth Peter for his doubting; O thou of little faith, wherefore diddest thou doubt? And Luk. 12:29, he telleth us that we must not stand in doubt, or be not like unto

meteors which are carried about in the air with every wind. And the Apostle James, chap. 1:7, compareth him that wavereth or doubteth, to a wave of the sea tossed of the wind and carried away. And Paul is so far from commending doubting for a virtue, that he doth not only condemn it as a sin in itself, but also as a cause which maketh our actions which are indifferent or good in themselves to become sins. So the eating of this or that meat is a thing indifferent and lawful if it be received with prayer and thanksgiving, but yet the Apostle telleth us, Rom. 14:23, that he who doubteth is condemned if he eat; and he rendereth this reason, because he eateth not of faith, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. So that by this he showeth, that he who doubteth, eateth not of faith; and that whatsoever is not done of faith is sin. Seeing therefore doubting is opposed unto faith, and is in itself not only a sin, but also a cause of sin; let us not entertain it though it bring letters commendatory from the Pope and all his shavelings; but labor to banish it out of our hearts, and strive after faith and full assurance of our election and salvation in Christ Jesus; and though we find our great unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, and cannot see any reason in ourselves why we should believe that we are elected and shall be saved, yet let us hope against hope, and believe against belief, for it is not a thing left to our choice but enjoined us by God, as the chief and main duty required in the Gospel: and therefore laying aside all reasoning and disputing, let us resolve to believe in obedience to God's commandment; and then though we are never so full of corruptions, yet will this faith purify us; though we are most backward in performing any good work, yet will it be fruitful in us, and will work by love; though we be most unworthy, it will make us more worthy, by applying unto us the righteousness of Christ and the merits of his death and bloodshed, which will not only free us from the guilt and

punishment of sin, but will also purge us from the vices and corruptions themselves.

Thirdly, the certainty of our election may be proved, by an argument drawn from the nature of faith: which is not a doubtful opinion, but a certain persuasion; not a general notion, but a particular assurance, whereby we do apply and appropriate unto ourselves those things which we do believe. Whosoever therefore hath true faith, he doth certainly believe and is particularly assured of his election, justification and salvation. That faith is a certain persuasion, it may appear first by those properties and names which are given unto it in the word. Heb. 11:1, faith is said to be a subsistence or present being of things hoped for; so that hope waiteth for them in time to come, but faith enjoyeth them as being present, namely in respect of the certain assurance and particular application of the promises unto ourselves: and therefore the Apostle saith, that hereby we may know (not that we shall have, but) that we have eternal life, 1 John. 5:13, not in possession but in assurance of faith. It is called [that] which is quite contrary to doubting, as signifying a manifest demonstration which doth not only show a thing probably, but also doth convince with strong arguments, and make that truth clear and manifest, which was otherwise obscure and secret, and therefore in the text it is called a demonstration of things not seen. So there is ascribed unto it fullness of persuasion, Heb. 10:22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith: and also boldness with confident trust, Eph. 3:12, by whom we have boldness and entrance with confidence (not by extraordinary revelations, but) by faith in Christ: which full assurance, boldness and confidence we could not have, if we were not assured of God's love and our election, but remained doubtful whether we were beloved of God and elected or no.

To these names and properties of faith, we may add some plain testimonies of Scriptures, which clearly show that faith is not a doubtful hope, but a certain persuasion. 1 John 3:14. The Apostle saith, that we know that we are translated from death to life (not by revelation but) because we love the brethren; he doth not say that we know that we shall be, but that we are translated from death to life, to note the certainty of this knowledge and persuasion. Rom. 3:2, the Apostle saith, that by Christ we have access through faith unto God's grace, wherein we stand and rejoice under hope, or, as the word signifieth, glory and triumph with joy: so that we do not waver and stagger, but stand firmly through faith, we do not fear and timorously hope, but even glory and triumph in our rejoicing: saying with the Apostle, Rom. 8:33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's chosen? It is God that justifieth. 34. Who shall condemn? It is Christ which is dead: yea, or rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and maketh request also for us. 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, &c. So, that though our sins be manifold, our unworthiness great, and our faith weak; yet if it be true, it may also be certain in the assurance of God's love and our election: because it is not grounded on our worthiness, but upon God's free justifying and accepting of us, as righteous in Christ, and upon Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession for us unto God his father; which is a most sure foundation that cannot fail. In deed if our faith and the anchor of our hope, did pitch, rest, and fasten itself, upon the light and hollow sands of our own merits and worthiness; the surging waves and boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations, would disanchor and toss us to and fro, till at length we should make shipwreck of our faith, against the rocks of despair: but seeing we take hold and rest upon the firm and sure anchor-hold Christ Jesus his merits and righteousness; well may

the tempests of Satan's temptations shake us, but they shall never remove us from our firm hold and certain assurance which we have in Christ; because we apprehend him, nay rather, are apprehended or taken hold of by him, as the Apostle speaketh, Phil. 3:12. And no man (no not the whole power of hell) is able to pluck us out of his hands, as our Savior speaketh, John 10:28. For though they be mighty to destroy, yet Christ is almighty to save, as it is, Isa. 63:1, and therefore let us not suffer our souls to be racked between hope and fear; but let us trust perfectly on the grace that is brought unto us by the revelation of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle exhorteth, 1 Pet. 1:13.

Lastly, that we may be most certain of this certainty of faith, we will add to these testimonies, some examples of believers mentioned in God's word. And first let us consider the faith of Abraham: which was not wavering and doubtful, but most certain and assured; for above hope he believed under hope, and he was not weak in faith, neither did he doubt of the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in the faith, and gave glory unto God, being fully assured that he which had promised was able to perform it; and therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness; as the Apostle setteth it down, Rom. 4:18-22. Now, Abraham was not only a bare believer, but the father of the faithful; neither was his faith propounded unto us as a wonder to admire at, but as an example for all his sons to imitate. And therefore it is said, ver. 23. That this is not written for him only that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. 24. But also for us to whom it shall be imputed for righteousness, which believe in him, who hath raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. But it may be objected, that Abraham is not said here to believe thus certainly his own election or salvation, but that he should have a son, and become a father of many nations: I answer,

though this were the next and immediate object of his faith, yet this was not the chief and principal; but the promise of blessedness and happiness, which was made to him and all the nations of the earth, in his seed Christ. For Abraham could not be justified by believing that he should have a son, but by believing in the Messiah which should come out of his loins, by whose righteousness and obedience he should be saved. And therefore the Apostle, Gal. 3:16, doth appropriate that promise made unto Abraham, Gen. 22:18. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, unto the promised seed Jesus Christ.

Look also upon the prophet David, and you shall see, that though his faith was often shaken with doubting, yet in itself it remained certain: like a tree shaken with the winds, which is not overthrown, but taketh more firm and deep root: Psalm. 23:4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. So, Psalm. 27:1. 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? Neither had he only this assurance in himself, but showeth that it is also the state of all the faithful, Psal. 125:1. They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but remaineth forever. So Job in the midst of his afflictions showeth his certain assurance and faith, saying, Job. 13:15. Loe, though he slay me yet will I trust in him: And chap. 19:25. I am sure that my redeemer liveth, and he shall stand the last on the earth. 26. And though after this skin, worms destroy this body, yet shall I see God in my flesh, &c. And Paul speaking not only of his own assurance of God's love, and everlasting life, but of all the faithful, saith, that he is persuaded that nothing in the world should be able to separate us from God's love in Christ, Rom. 8:38.

And thus have I shown, that faith is a certain assurance of God's love and favor in Christ. Now I will also prove that it particularly persuadeth us of our own election and life everlasting. For first; such a faith is begot now in our hearts, by the Preaching of the word, as was begot in the hearts of men, by our Savior Christ himself; for as there is but one God, so there is but one true and justifying faith, Eph. 4:5: but by that faith they were particularly persuaded of the remission of their sins, and consequently of their justification and salvation, as appeareth, Luke. 7:42,50, where our Savior saith thus to the woman: Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. So Matth. 9:2, he saith to the sick of the Palsy, Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. And therefore the faith which is now begot in us by the Preaching of the word, doth also particularly persuade us of the remission of our sins and eternal salvation. For as our Savior Christ by his own absolute authority, did remit the sins of those that did believe; so he hath left this authority to his ministers (not absolutely by their own power to remit sins, which the man of sin doth challenge unto himself, but) to declare and pronounce their sins forgiven who truly believe in the son of God, and repent them of their sins: the which their sentence is ratified in Heaven, according to that, Matth. 16:19. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind in earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth shall be loosed in Heaven; which authority is not given to Peter alone and his successors, as the Papists dream; but as Peter answered, not only for himself, but also in the behalf of all the rest, so he receiveth this power both for himself and for all the Apostles; yea, for all God's true Ministers, the undoubted successors of the Apostles, as our Savior expoundeth himself, John 20:23, where he giveth this authority to all the Apostles; saying, Whose sins so ever ye

remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins so ever ye retain, they are retained. So that, the Ministers of God's word, by the Preaching thereof, may assure men particularly of the remission of their sins: for when he maketh this general proposition, whosoever believeth and repenteth him of his sins shall have them remitted, and be made an heir of everlasting life; and the particular hearer doth truly assume that he believeth and repenteth, the Minister hath authority given him of God to make this conclusion: therefore be thou assured that thy sins are forgiven thee in Christ, and that thou art an undoubted heir of everlasting life.

Secondly, as the Lord doth offer unto us his gracious promises of life and salvation, so do we receive them by faith; but the Lord doth not only generally in the word offer these his gracious promises to all that will receive them, but also particularly in the right use of the Sacraments to every faithful receiver: for in the Sacraments we must consider a relation and correspondency between the outward signs and things signified: as therefore the Minister doth offer and give, and I receive and eat the outward signs of bread and wine; so am I as certainly to believe that God doth offer and give, and that I do receive and feed upon Christ Jesus and all his benefits, with the hand and mouth of faith, unto the nourishing of my particular soul to everlasting life, as my body is nourished with these outward elements of bread and wine.

Lastly, the Apostle saith, that through faith we have entrance unto God with boldness and confidence, and therefore by faith the believer is particularly persuaded of the remission of his sins and of his reconciliation with God: for with what boldness or confidence can the poor sinner come before God, who is terrified with the threatening's of the Law, with the temptations of Satan, and with the consideration of his own unworthiness

and self-guiltiness; if he be not particularly assured that his curse is borne by Christ, that he is forgiven the whole debt of his sins, and reconciled unto God? What assured comfort can he receive, if he believe that God hath elected Peter and Paul and all his Church, if he be not also assured that he is in this number? If a whole City should rebel and commit high treason against a Prince, and the Prince should send out a proclamation, declaring that upon some conditions he would receive them to mercy; with what boldness or confidence can any in this city come before him, if he be not assured that he hath performed these conditions? But this is our case, we have rebelled against God, and he hath proclaimed in his Gospel the pardon of our sins, so we lay hold upon Christ by a true and lively faith, and repent us of our sins: If therefore we could not be assured that we have a lively faith and true repentance, and consequently that God's merciful promises belong particularly unto us; with what boldness or confidence can we come before him? But the Apostle faith, that by faith we have this boldness and confidence, and therefore it followeth that we may be assured that we have faith and repentance, and thereby may certainly be persuaded of God's love and our particular election.

Fourthly, that we may certainly be assured of our election, it may be proved by an argument drawn from the doctrine and use of the Sacraments; for the Lord hath added to the covenant of grace, his Sacraments as seals, not to confirm God's promises in themselves, which are so undoubtedly true that they need no confirmation, but to strengthen our faith in this full assurance that they belong particularly unto us. For whereas in the word the promises of grace and salvation are generally propounded to all believers; in the use of the Sacraments, they are particularly applied to every worthy receiver; to the end that all doubting being removed, they may certainly be

assured that all the promises of the Gospel do belong particularly unto themselves. Now if the Lord would have us doubt of our election and salvation, and if this doubting were a virtue of faith, as the Papists teach, then surely there were no use of the Sacraments; for the word is sufficient to beget that general faith which is mixed with doubting, and the Sacraments which do further assure us and apply unto us God's promises, would be rather hurtful than profitable, because they take away doubting, which is a virtue of their faith. But we are otherwise instructed by God's truth, namely, that the Lord would not have us doubt of his promises: and therefore he hath not only written his covenant, but also hath confirmed it by his seal, and hath thereby particularly applied it to the use and benefit of everyone who receiveth it by the hand of a lively faith, that there may be no place left to doubting. And hence it is that the Sacrament of Circumcision is called the seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:11, because thereby as by a seal Abraham was confirmed in the truth of God's promises, and assured that the righteousness of faith, that is, the righteousness of Christ, who was the promised seed, did belong unto him. And answerable to this Sacrament is Baptism, wherein Christ and all the gracious promises of life and salvation made in him, are particularly applied to the party baptized; and therefore the Apostle saith, that all that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, Gal. 3:27, where the Apostle compareth Christ to a garment, which by the hand of faith is put on by every particular believer. So in the administration of the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine is particularly delivered unto all the communicants, to signify unto them, that everyone who stretcheth forth the hand of faith doth receive Christ and all his benefits, whereby his soul is nourished unto everlasting life. Whosoever therefore hath faith, he may be assured that he receiveth Christ; and whosoever receiveth Christ, he may be

assured of his election and salvation; for to as many as receive him, to them he giveth power to be the sons of God: and who are those? Even those that believe in his name, as it is, John. 1:12. And whosoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood hath eternal life, as our Savior saith, John. 6:54. Now if we would know how we feed upon him, it is by the mouth of faith, as he expoundeth himself, ver. 47.

Fifthly, whatsoever we are bound to pray for; that we may be assured of, nay we ought steadfastly to believe that we shall receive it: and this is evident, 1 John. 5:14. This is the assurance that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us. 15. And if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of him. And the Apostle James would have us to ask in faith without wavering, that is, not doubting to receive that we ask. But we are taught to pray for the remission of our sins: and therefore we are certainly to believe that our sins are remitted, and consequently that we are justified, called, elected, and shall be saved; for whom he did predestinate, them also he called, and whom he called, them also he justified, and whom he justified, them also he glorified, as it is, Rom. 8:30.

Sixthly, whatsoever we profess in the Articles of our faith, that we should believe, and of that we may and ought particularly to be assured: but every man professeth that he believeth the remission of sins and life everlasting, that is, that the Lord doth not only forgive sin, and granteth unto some the fruition of everlasting life, for this the devils believe as well as we, but also that he doth particularly forgive me my sins, and that he will make me an heir of eternal happiness: for this is the nature of faith, to assure us certainly and particularly of that which we believe, as we have shown; and therefore we ought particularly to be assured of the remission of our sins, and that we

shall attain unto everlasting life, and consequently that we are elected, seeing none enjoy it but God's chosen. But it may be objected, that if everyone be bound to believe as an article of his faith that his sins are forgiven, and that he is an heir of everlasting life, then some are bound to believe that which is false, for those who live and die in their sins without repentance, shall never obtain either the one or the other. I answer, that we are not bound to believe, being destitute of a true and a lively faith, for this were rather fondly to presume, than surely to be persuaded of the promises of the Gospel, but we are first bound to have a true lively and justifying faith, and so to believe and apply unto ourselves the promises of the Gospel; but those that live in their sins without repentance, they are altogether destitute of true faith, which wheresoever it is purifieth the heart, and worketh by love, moving the believer to endeavor and strive to mortify his corruptions, and to rise from the death of sin to newness of life: and therefore well may they securely presume, but it is impossible that they should truly believe, because they are utterly destitute of a lively faith, and where the cause is not the effect cannot follow: and consequently for their infidelity they are subject to eternal plagues and punishments, because they do not that which they are bound to perform. Neither must we think that every kind of faith, or rather every fond persuasion of faith is enjoined us, but such a faith as is grounded upon God's word; but the word of God doth teach us, that whosoever live in the flesh cannot please God, and if we live after the flesh we shall die, Rom. 8:8,13. That the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9. That the workers of iniquity shall be rejected of Christ, Matth. 7:23. And that no unclean thing, nor whatsoever worketh abomination and lies shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, Rev. 21:27. And therefore those who live in the flesh, those who are workers of

iniquity, unrighteous and unclean, in which rank are all those who live in their sins without repentance, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and falling continually into sin with pleasure and delight, are not bound simply and absolutely to believe, so long as they resolve to continue in this state, for so should they be bound to believe that which is false and repugnant to God's word; but they are bound to have a true faith, which being wrought in their hearts will move them to forsake their sins by unfeigned repentance, to hunger after righteousness, to endeavor to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life, and so to believe in Christ as their Savior and Redeemer, which fruits if our faith bring not forth, we cannot be assured that we have true faith, or do truly believe. For though in nature faith be before repentance, yet in our sense and feeling it always followeth it: neither doth faith ever soundly and truly persuade us of God's love, till we have sorrowed for our sins, and at least in purpose of heart have forsaken them. So that whosoever liveth still in his sins with pleasure and delight, and yet believeth that he is elected to salvation, and that he is in God's favor, and shall continuing in this state be made an heir of eternal life, he is not endued with true faith, but with fond presumption and carnal security, which maketh him to believe that which is false and repugnant to God's word. Though then all men, even carnal worldlings and reprobates are bound to believe, and because they do not, are subject to condemnation, as committing a great and fearful sin; as appeareth John. 3:18, and 16:8,9, where our Savior saith, that the holy Ghost should reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in him: yet they are not bound to believe continuing in their worldliness, and resolving to go on in their sins, for such a faith were but fond presumption; but they are bound so to believe as that their faith may be grounded upon God's word, which it can never possibly

be if it be severed from true repentance, and for want of this faith they are condemned.

CHAP. VIII. THE LAST ARGUMENT GROUNDED UPON THE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S SPIRIT.

Lastly, whatsoever the spirit of God doth testify in the heart and conscience of a man, and doth fully assure him thereof, that he is to believe, and of that he ought undoubtedly to be assured: but the spirit of God doth testify to the faithful, and doth fully assure them that they are the sons of God by adoption and grace, and consequently that they are elected; for none are the sons of God but those who are predestinate to be adopted through Jesus Christ, as it is, Eph. 1:5: and therefore the faithful are to believe, and ought undoubtedly to be assured that they are the sons of God elected to everlasting life. The proposition is manifest; for, what more certain truth can be imagined, than that which the spirit of God witnesseth unto our spirits, and confirmeth unto us, seeing all the properties required in a true witness, do concur in him in the highest degree, namely knowledge, truth, and faithfulness? For knowledge, he is infinite and knoweth all things, even the eternal council, and decree of God concerning our election, as appeareth, 1 Cor. 2:10. The spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God; and this spirit do we receive that we may know the things

that are given to us of God. As it is, ver. 12. What fitter witness therefore can be imagined in this respect than God's spirit, who wholly and only knoweth all his secret counsels? In respect of truth he is most true, yea truth itself, and in regard hereof he is called the spirit of truth which leadeth us into all truth. John. 16:13. And therefore as in respect of his knowledge he cannot be deceived, so in respect of his truth he cannot deceive. In respect of faithfulness he is most faithful and just in all his ways Psal. 145:17, 1 Cor. 1:9, especially in his word; for his testimony is sure as it is, Psal. 19:7, and therefore he cannot lie, neither will he conceal the truth for any respect of persons; and consequently whatsoever this all-knowing true and faithful witness testifieth, we are undoubtedly to believe as being most sure and certain. If an Angel sent from heaven should assure us from God that we are elected, even the Papists themselves could not deny, but that we might be assured thereof by such a revelation without any manner of doubting: but the testimony of God's spirit witnessing to our spirits that we are the sons of God, is so much more certain and without exception than the testimony of Angels, as the spirit of God better knoweth the counsels of God than Angels, as it excelleth them in truth and faith, as the testimony which is imprinted in the heart is more firm then that which is spoken in the ear, which may easily be forgotten. And therefore if by their doctrine we might be assured of our election by the extraordinary revelation of an Angel; then much more certainly may we be assured hereof by the ordinary testimony of God's spirit which he witnesseth in the hearts and consciences of the faithful.

The proposition being manifest, let us prove the assumption; which containeth two branches, first that the spirit of God testifieth to our spirits, that we are the sons of God; and secondly doth fully assure us of this

testimony that it is most undoubted true; both which are manifest by God's word. First that God's spirit giveth this testimony in the hearts of the faithful, it is evident Rom. 8:15,16. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry abba father: the same spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. So, Gal. 4:6. Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts which crieth abba father. Which places do so evidently prove this point, that there needs no more reasons or allegations; for first he excludeth the spirit of bondage, which like the Papists faith causeth us to fear and doubt of our election and salvation; and then he telleth us that we have received the spirit of adoption which beareth witness unto our spirit that we are the children of God.

Secondly, because we are exceeding weak and the graces in us shadowed with imperfections and our faith mixed with doubting, because we are saved as yet but by hope, as it is, Rom. 8:24. And we walk by faith and not by sight, as it is, 2 Cor. 5:7, and this our faith is continually shaken with manifold temptations, therefore least we should doubt of God's love and our election adoption and salvation, the Lord hath given us his spirit to seal, and further to confirm this assurance in our hearts; and that it might be an earnest and a sure pledge unto us, whereby he might secure us concerning the covenant which he hath made with us. The truth hereof appeareth in many places of the Scripture. 2 Cor. 1:22. Who hath sealed us and hath given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts. So, Eph. 1:13. In whom also ye have trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, even the Gospel of our salvation, wherein also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise. 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession purchased unto the praise of his glory. And

Eph. 4:30. The Apostle exhorteth us not to grieve the holy spirit of God, by whom we are sealed unto the day of our redemption. And 2 Cor. 5:5, he saith that God hath given unto us the earnest of his spirit.

Which words do minister unto every faithful man no small consolation, if they be rightly weighed; for first we use to seal those things which we would have most certain and out of all controversy; as when a man hath made a promise or covenant with another, for his better security he doth commit it to writing, and least yet there should any scruple or doubt rest in his mind, he doth confirm it by adding his seal, to put the matter out of all question; so the Lord hath added to the written covenant of his word, whereby he hath assured us of our election adoption and salvation, the outward seal of the sacraments, and the inward seal of his spirit, whereby he hath ratified it, not in itself, but in our hearts, that so all cause of doubting being taken away, we might certainly be assured of his promises, that they belong unto us not after a general manner as the Papists teach, but particularly even as this assurance is particularly sealed by God's spirit in the heart of every true believer, Rom. 4:11. The end therefore why we are sealed to salvation by God's spirit, is not that we should doubt thereof, but that it might be out of all question fully ratified and confirmed unto us: for this is signified by this metaphor here used of sealing, as may appear not only by the ordinary custom amongst us, but also by the use thereof in former times. So when Ahasuerus would have letters written in the Kings name, which no man might revoke, he commandeth that they should be sealed with the Kings ring. Esth. 8:8. And John. 6:27, it is said that God the father had sealed our Savior Christ, that is, confirmed him in his office of mediation, by giving evident testimonies and manifest signs that the people

might not doubt of his calling and anointing. Matth. 3:17, and 17:5, and John. 1:32.

So, whereas the holy Ghost in the faithful is called the earnest of our inheritance, this ministereth unto every true believer no small consolation, nor doubtful assurance of their salvation; for we know that an earnest is given amongst men to ratify and bind a bargain, so as they cannot go from their agreement after earnest is given and received. The word *arrhabo* which is here translated earnest, hath also other significations which minister unto. God's faithful, the same assurance and the like true comfort. Gen. 38:17,18, this word is used to signify a pledge or pawn, then the which there can be no better assurance of performing promise: and 2 King. 14:14, it signifieth a hostage given in wars which is given for assurance to confirm covenants agreed upon. Whereas therefore God's spirit in the faithful is called *arrhabo*, which signifieth an earnest pawn and hostage: we are hereby assured that the Lord will perform his covenant between us and him; that he will not miss a day in the performing of his promise; that howsoever we were enemies, yet now being reconciled by the death of his son, he hath given us a hostage to assure us of eternal peace, even his holy spirit. And therefore let not Satan nor all his assistants cause us to doubt of God's covenant, wherein he hath assured us of our election, adoption, and salvation; seeing he hath sealed this covenant with his spirit, and hath given unto us this earnest and pawn, to assure us that he will perform his promise and bargain.

But here the tempter objecteth, that we cannot know and discern whether we have the spirit of God, unless it should bring forth in us some extraordinary effects: and though it should be granted that we were endued therewith, yet we cannot discern the testimony thereof from our own

thoughts, unless it be by some special revelation. To the first I answer, that though many lulled asleep with carnal security, do vainly dream that they have God's spirit, and so are deluded with their own phantasies; yet this hindereth not, but that he who hath the spirit of God indeed, may certainly be assured that it dwelleth in him; for it sealeth in us the assurance of God's covenant, and who can receive this seal and not feel the impression? It is an earnest, and who receiving an earnest cannot know whether he hath received it? For otherwise how can it assure us of our bargain, if of itself we have no assurance? It is a pawn of God's love and our salvation, and who having a pawn in his custody cannot know that he possesseth it? It is a heavenly light which doth illuminate our understandings, which were blind and ignorant in the knowledge of God's truth, and who cannot discern between blindness and sight, light and darkness? It is a water which purgeth us from our corruption, and who that is thus washed and cleansed, can doubt that this water hath touched him? It is a fire which inflameth our cold frozen hearts with a zeal of God's glory, and love of our brethren, and how can fire which is carried in our breasts be hidden from us? It is a precious oil which mollifieth our hard stony hearts, and maketh them flexible and pliable able to God's will, which before were so stiff and obdurate that they would rather have broken then bowed to obedience; it supplieth also our stiff joints and maketh them active and nimble in the works of holiness, and righteousness, and who finding those strange alterations in himself, may not be assured that he is anointed with this oil? It is the Lord's champion fighting in us against the flesh, and subduing the lusts thereof, and who feeling this intestine war in his own bowels can doubt that the combatants have their residence in him? In a word it is only this spirit which restrained us from the evil, which naturally we love, and provoketh us to embrace that

good, which through natural corruption we loath and abhor: if therefore sin grow unpleasant unto us, and virtue and true godliness delightful, we may be assured that this is the work of God's spirit dwelling in us. Would we then be assured that we are endued with the spirit of God? Why then let us consider if our eyes blinded with ignorance are enlightened in any good measure, with the knowledge of God's truth; if our souls polluted with the filth of sin, are purged in some sort from our corruptions; if our cold hearts are inflamed with the zeal of God's glory and the love of our brethren; if our hearts more hard than adamant, and more inflexible than steel, are softened and made obsequious to God's will; and if the other members of our body, which were benumbed and as it were taken with a dead palsy, be made nimble and active in the works of holiness and righteousness; if we feel a fight and combat between the flesh and the spirit, the one striving to lead us captive unto sin, the other resisting and drawing us out of this captivity; if the sins which heretofore we have loved, be now loathsome unto us, and the virtues which we have abhorred be delightful and pleasant; and then we may assure ourselves that it is the light of God's spirit which hath shined upon us, it is this heavenly water which hath washed us, it is this divine fire which hath inflamed us, it is this precious oil that hath mollified and softened us, it is this champion of the Lord of hosts which maketh war against our traitorous flesh, and subdueth the lusts thereof; in a word it can be nothing but God's spirit, which makes us hate that sin which naturally we so dearly love, and to love virtue and godliness which by nature is loathsome and bitter unto us.

And thus it is manifest that we may be assured that we have God's spirit, by the ordinary fruits thereof in every faithful man. Now let us consider how we may know the testimony of God's spirit, witnessing in our hearts

that we are elected adopted and shall be saved, from our own phantasies caused through carnal security and vain presumption. And to this end we are to know, that the preaching of the Gospel is the ministry of the spirit, whereby we are sealed and confirmed in the assurance of our salvation, as appeareth, 2 Cor. 3:6. And hence it is that the preachers of the Gospel are called the ministers by whom the people believe, 1 Cor. 3:5. And the words of the Gospel are called by our Savior Christ spirit and life, because it is the ministry of the spirit which quickeneth us, as it is, John. 6:63. And Gal. 3:2, the Apostle saith that we have received the spirit by the hearing of faith, that is, the doctrine of faith preached in the ministry of the Gospel. If therefore the testimony of salvation in the minds of the faithful, be conceived by the preaching of the Gospel applied unto them by faith, then is it most certainly the testimony of God's spirit; for the inward testimony of God's spirit is not different from the outward testimony of the word: but if this persuasion be not grounded upon God's word, as theirs is not who persuade themselves that they are elected, adopted, and shall be saved, notwithstanding that they live in their sins without repentance, making no conscience of their ways, nor endeavoring to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness of life; then is it not the testimony of God's spirit, but a presumptuous fantasy, and a secure and carnal imagination: for the testimony of God's spirit in the conscience, is the same with the testimony of the word, and therefore it doth not bear witness nor give any assurance that they are saved, which God's word pronounceth to be in the state of damnation. When therefore this testimony is given in a faithful man and, agreeable to God's word; it is the testimony of the spirit which sealeth us in the full assurance of that we believe: according to that Eph. 1:13, where the Apostle saith, that after the faithful had received the word of truth, even the Gospel of their salvation,

and believed therein, they were sealed with the holy spirit of promise. But those who make no conscience of hearing the Gospel preached, and when they hear it, do not believe it, nor apply it to themselves by a true and lively faith, nor bring forth any fruits thereof in a holy and Christian life, they have neither faith nor God's spirit: and therefore if they have any persuasion of their election and salvation, it is not the testimony of God's spirit, but their own fantasy, and a vain opinion arising from carnal security and presumption.

Secondly, the testimony of God's spirit may hereby be known: first, in that it thoroughly persuadeth the faithful of their election and salvation; secondly, by the manner of persuading them; thirdly, by the effects of this testimony and persuasion. For the first, the spirit of God doth not only give this bare testimony that we are elected, adopted, and shall be saved: but also doth fully persuade us hereof, as being a thing most certain and without question. So, 1 Cor. 2:12, the Apostle saith that we have received the spirit of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God. And Eph. 1:17,18. God's spirit is called the spirit of wisdom and revelation, which doth enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we might know what the hope is of his calling, and what the riches of his glorious inheritance is in the Saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power, particularly towards us that believe, according to the working of his mighty power. So the Apostle John saith, hereby we know that Christ abideth in us, even by the spirit which he hath given us, 1 John. 3:24. So that we may be assured that we have God's spirit, and thereby be thoroughly persuaded that Christ dwelleth in us, and consequently that we are elected and shall be saved. And, chap. 4:13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. And the Apostle Paul by

the spirit of God was so steadfastly assured of God's love, that he professeth that he was firmly persuaded that nothing could separate him from it, Rom. 8:38,39. So that the spirit of God thoroughly persuadeth the faithful that they are elected and shall be saved; whereas the wicked who are destitute of God's spirit, may well have a fond opinion and a foolish conceit, that they are highly in God's love and elected to salvation, through carnal security and vain presumption; but they are never thoroughly persuaded hereof: for when any affliction of body or mind is inflicted on them, their vain persuasion vanisheth away, and nothing remaineth but doubting, which in the end bringeth them to utter desperation.

But here the tempter will take occasion to discourage the weak Christian, and to persuade him that he hath not God's spirit, seeing he doth not feel in himself this firm persuasion of God's love and his election and salvation. To which we are to answer, that God's spirit doth thoroughly persuade, although not at all times, neither in our present sense and feeling; for immediately after our conversion when we are newly regenerate, and like new borne babes in Christ, the motions of the spirit are but weak in us, and we are not skillful in understanding this heavenly language of the spirit, wherewith we have been altogether unacquainted; but the spirit waxing stronger in us, and we growing to a ripe age in Christ, doth cry in our hearts, Abba father, and testifieth to our spirits that we are the sons of God; which we then being better acquainted with this heavenly speech, do well understand, and are thoroughly persuaded thereby. And secondly, when the poor Christian who hath received a great measure of the spirit is exercised in the spiritual conflict, the hideous noise of Satan's temptations which like Cannon-shot sound in his ears, and the tumultuous outcries of his own passions do so disturb and wholly possess him, that he cannot hear the

voice of the spirit persuading him that he is the child of God; till the skirmish be past and the noise of temptations ceased, and then again as in former times he heareth to his comfort the spirit of God persuading him of God's love, and hereby he is again assured thereof. So that we are not to judge of the having of God's spirit in the time of our Christian infancy and spiritual nonage, nor yet according to our present sense in the time of temptation, but when we are come to perfect age, and when the conflict of temptations is ceased.

Secondly, the testimony of God's spirit persuading us of his love and our election, is known by the manner whereby it persuadeth us: namely, it persuadeth us hereof with arguments grounded upon God's word, and drawn not from any worthiness in ourselves, but from God's free grace and undeserved mercy, and from the righteousness and merits of Christ; whereas Satan and our own flesh never use such reasons, but either move us to a bare and vain opinion which hath no ground at all but self-love, which maketh men easily believe that which they desire; or else with some arguments drawn from some outward common benefits, bestowed indifferently upon the good and bad; or lastly from a pharisaical conceit and false opinion of our own worthiness and deserts.

Lastly, the testimony of God's spirit is known and discerned by the effects thereof; for after that it hath effectually persuaded us, that we are elected and the dear children of God, we are moved thereby to trust wholly in God, and to love him as our gracious father: from which love proceedeth a zeal of his glory, and a true hatred of sin, because thereby our heavenly father is dishonored and displeased with us; and a true love and hearty endeavor of embracing holiness and righteousness, because thereby our gracious father is glorified and well pleased with us. If therefore these effects and fruits

follow this persuasion of God's love and our election, we may be assured that it is the spirit of God which doth persuade us; but if we have no such trust and affiance, no such love of God, no zeal of his glory, no hatred of sin, no love nor desire of embracing righteousness, but remain as carnal, worldly, and profane as ever we were, then let us brag as much as we will of our persuasion of God's love and our election, yet it is most certain that this persuasion is not wrought in us by God's spirit, but that it is a vain conceit and fond opinion which proceedeth from self-love, carnal security, and fond presumption, which in the end vanishing away will leave us in despair.

CHAP. IX. OF THE MEANS WHEREBY WE MAY BE ASSURED OF OUR ELECTION.

And thus have I proved that those who are converted unto God, justified, and in some measure sanctified, may ordinarily attain unto the assurance of their election: Now I will show the means and signs whereby we may be thus assured. The first and principal means which assureth us of our election, is the inward testimony of God's spirit which crieth in our hearts Abba father, and witnesseth unto our spirits that we are the children of God, as it is, Rom. 8:15,16. Which testimony it doth not give by extraordinary revelation, but by a secret application of the promises of the Gospel unto us, and by an inward cooperation whereby it maketh the outward ministry of the word effectual for the begetting of faith in us, whereby as with an hand we do appropriate the general promises of the word unto our own selves. And when the Ministers use reasons to persuade us of God's love in Christ, the holy ghost openeth our deaf cares, and enlighteneth our blind understandings, and powerfully inclineth our wills, so that we may attentively hear, truly understand, and be fully assured of that truth which is delivered, not only in respect of the whole Church, but

also in respect of ourselves particularly, so as we can say, I believe that these promises of God are true, and that they belong to all the faithful, and consequently unto me who do believe and am assured of them, seeing they are promised on no other condition.

But the tempter will object, that many through carnal presumption do persuade themselves, that all the promises of the Gospel do belong unto them, and therefore we may easily be deceived, not being able to discern between the testimony of the spirit and presumptuous security. I answer, that those who are endued with God's spirit, may easily discern the testimony of the spirit from the carnal language of presumption, as is evident by that which before I have delivered, and also may more plainly appear by manifest differences, if the one be compared with the other. For presumption is a fruit of original corruption which accompanieth us from our mothers womb, till it be beaten down with God's sanctifying spirit; but the testimony of the spirit is a thing supernatural, which no man ever feeleth before his conversion unto God, when as by the preaching of the word he is humbled under the burden of sin, sorrowing and grieving for his sins past, and detesting them from his heart, and purposing to leave and forsake them in the time to come. If therefore we have had always this testimony in our minds that we are in God's favor and elected, and never felt our conversion, nor discerned any fruits thereof; then doth this testimony proceed from carnal presumption and not from God's spirit. Secondly, those who have the testimony of the spirit, make conscience of the diligent and careful use of the outward means of salvation, as the hearing and reading of the word, the receiving of the Sacraments, and other holy duties of God's service, because they know that the inward testimony of the spirit is not ordinarily severed from the outward testimony of the word; and the assurance of God's love

and our election is not wrought immediately in us by revelation of the spirit, but by the paring of the word and use of the Sacraments, made effectual by the inward cooperation of the holy Ghost. But presumption as it ariseth not from the use of these means made thus effectual, but from carnal security, so is it not confirmed thereby: for the less that the presumptuous man heareth the word and performeth the duties of piety and God's service, the more confidently doth he boast of his faith and full assurance, and therefore he maketh no conscience of using these means ordained of God; nay contrariwise he will not stick to affirm, that the hearing of the word too often is the cause that troubleth men's minds and afflicteth their consciences, moving them to doubt of God's mercy, which before they never called into question: and why is this, but because hereby men are roused out of their sleep of security, and have their confident presumption beaten down. If then we are careful to use all holy means ordained of God to assure us of our salvation; that assurance and testimony which followeth is the testimony of God's spirit: otherwise it is nothing else but fond presumption. Thirdly, presumption is most confident, and never doubteth nor maketh any question of his election and salvation who thus presumeth; but this testimony of the spirit is much assaulted with doubting, and oftentimes thereby so exceedingly weakened that we cannot hear the voice thereof: as we may see in the example of Job, David, the father of the possessed child, the two Disciples who journeyed to Emmaus, and in all God's children who have not yet attained unto fullness of persuasion, unto which none can come but by degrees. And therefore if we can brag with secure worldlings, and say with the proud Pharisee, I never was troubled I thank God with any doubting of mine election and salvation, as many are; but always have had a strong belief that I am in God's love and shall

undoubtedly be saved: we may assure ourselves that this is the voice of presumption, and not the testimony of God's spirit. Fourthly, presumption is joined with worldliness and profaneness, but the testimony of God's spirit is never severed from sanctification, or at least from an earnest desire and holy endeavor of serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness: for (as I said) the testimony of the spirit in the conscience is never contrary to the testimony of the spirit in the word, neither doth it bear witness that those are in God's love and elected to salvation, which the Scriptures witness to be in God's displeasure and in the state of condemnation, namely, all unrepentant sinners continuing in their unrepentancy: and therefore if the assurance which we have of our election and salvation be not joined with a desire to leave our sins, and with an earnest endeavor of serving God in the duties of holiness and righteousness, then it doth not proceed from the testimony of God's spirit, but from carnal security and fond presumption. Lastly, presumption no longer persuadeth men of God's love and favor, than they enjoy the outward benefits of this life; but when the Lord layeth upon them any grievous affliction, either outwardly in body and state, or inwardly in mind; then this persuasion vanisheth, and nothing remaineth but doubting, which commonly endeth in utter despair: but the testimony of the spirit is constant and permanent; and howsoever we cannot by reason of the grievousness of afflictions, and the violent noise of our own passions hear the voice thereof at sometimes, yet afterwards again it crieth allowed in our hearts Abba father, and witnesseth unto our spirits that we are the sons of God: So that the chief means whereby we are assured of our election is the spirit of God. But seeing we have it not naturally in ourselves, how may we attain unto it? Surely we are to have our recourse unto the Father of lights by earnest prayer, from whom descendeth every good and perfect gift,

having our faith grounded upon God's gracious promise, namely, that if we ask we shall receive, and more especially, that he will give his holy spirit to them that ask it, as it is, Luk. 11:13.

The second means whereby we may attain to the certainty of our election, is the hearing of the word, wherein the Lord manifesteth his grace and goodwill to all believing and repentant sinners, and whereby also he ordinarily begetteth this faith and repentance in all his children. For howsoever Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God alone giveth the increase; yet God's blessing ordinarily accompanieth his own ordinance, making it effectual by the inward operation of his spirit for those ends for which he hath ordained it. And though the word may long sound in our ears before it pierce the heart, or beget any saving grace in us, unless the Lord open our hearts and make the seed of his word fruitful: yet those who make conscience of hearing the word, with diligence reverence and attention, and pray for the assistance of God's spirit, whereby it may become profitable to their salvation, may constantly expect the blessing of God upon his own ordinance, which they carefully use in obedience to his will; whereas those who neglect and contemn God's word have no such assurance, because it is the means and instrument which is ordained of God for this purpose, without which the spirit of God doth not ordinarily beget faith or any saving grace in us. Though therefore we do not after long hearing of the word, feel this assurance of God's love and our election, yet let us not give it over but expect God's blessing upon it, and wait his leisure assuring ourselves that in the end, he will make this his own ordinance effectual for those ends, for which he hath ordained it.

The third means whereby we may attain to the assurance of our election, is the frequent and religious use of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper,

whereby our faith is more and more confirmed the in truth of God's promises. For the Lord to the preaching of his word which is the covenant of grace, hath added these seals that we might be the more thoroughly assured of his love and favor; and therefore if we conscionably frequent this holy Sacrament, the Lord will bless also this his own ordinance. Moreover they who worthily receive these holy mysteries, do receive Christ Jesus, and have the union and communion which is between him and them, more and more strengthened and confirmed, for he that eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him, As it is, John. 6:56. Now there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, Rom 8:1; and therefore they need not doubt of their election and salvation.

The fourth means whereby we may be assured of our election, are the effects of God's predestination, which are the undoubted signs thereof; for the effects argue the cause, as the cause the effects, and that not only in natural things, but also in those which are supernatural and spiritual: and therefore as certainly as we know that there is fire because it casteth forth heat, and the sun by his casting forth of bright rays whereby the world is lightened, and that a tree is good by the good fruits which it bringeth forth, so also may we as certainly be assured that we are elected of God, when we find in ourselves the effects and undoubted signs of our election.

Neither are these effects bare signs only of our election, but also manifest seals which by their plain impression, do evidently assure us thereof: so that though we do not directly and immediately know God's election, predestination, and eternal decree of our salvation in God himself, electing predestinating, and decreeing that we shall be saved, yet we may plainly see apparent seals and impressions hereof in ourselves, lively resembling that which is secret in God's hidden council; and as we not seeing the seal which

maketh the impression, do easily discern the form, fashion, and quantity thereof by the print which it hath made; so we not seeing God's secret decree of predestination, may notwithstanding attain to the evident knowledge thereof, by that impression which it maketh in us.

This also may further be illustrated by a familiar similitude; namely, as the sun shining upon us with his bright beams, doth imprint as it were in our eyes the image of his light, whereby we see the sun and the light thereof (the beams of the sun which are cast upon us, being reflected back again to the sun itself;) so the foreknowledge of God whereby he hath decreed that we shall be saved before all eternity, is secret in itself, so that we cannot see nor understand it directly, but yet whilst God doth acknowledge us for his elect, he doth express the image and form of this his foreknowledge in those whom he hath elected, whereby we do also acknowledge him our gracious God who hath elected us; and so it cometh to pass that by the true knowledge of God, which is communicated unto us, whereby we acknowledge him for our God and father, we also know his foreknowledge, whereby he knoweth and acknowledgeth us for his sons and children. For first God knoweth us, and then by the light of this knowledge communicated unto us, he enlighteneth our hearts with the true knowledge of himself, as the sun first enlighteneth our eyes, and by this light we see the sun itself. And this our Savior Christ intimateth, John. 10:14, where first he saith he knoweth his sheep, and then he addeth that he is also known of them. As though he should say, whilst I know and acknowledge them for my sheep, hereby I bring to pass that they in like manner by the participation of this my light and knowledge, do acknowledge me for their true pastor. If therefore we know and acknowledge God, for our gracious God and loving father in Christ, it is a most certain sign, that he also by his

foreknowledge, doth know and acknowledge us for his people and children. But if we remain in our ignorance, without the knowledge of God, and his son Christ, we can gather no assurance unto ourselves of our election; for if the foreknowledge of God had shined upon us, the beams thereof would have illuminated our hearts, so as we should by their light have known God also.

The like may be said of God's eternal love, wherewith he hath loved us in Christ; for God loving us, hath imprinted the image of his love in our hearts, whereby we love him again: and when this heavenly heat of God's love hath descended on us, and warmeth our cold hearts, frozen in the dregs of sin, then do we reflect some of those beams of God's love towards him again. And this the Apostle John plainly showeth, 1 John. 4:19, where he saith that we love God because he loved us first; that is, by that eternal love wherewith God loved us in Christ, there is imprinted in our hearts the love of God. And hence it is that he saith ver. 7, that love cometh from God: because we can neither love God, nor our neighbors aright, till his love towards us having shined upon us, hath inflamed our hearts. So the Apostle Paul saith, Rom 5:5, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given unto us, whereby love towards God is begotten in us. If therefore the love of God be in our hearts, we may be assured that it is but an impression which is made in us, by the seal of his love towards us, but a little spark kindled by this heavenly flame, and a small model or little counterfeit resembling the infinite love of God, wherewith from all eternity he hath loved us in Christ. Thus also God's eternal election, whereby before all worlds he hath chosen us in Christ, doth make an impression, and sealet in our hearts the form or image thereof, whereby we make choice of the true God Jehovah, amongst all the God's of

the nations to be our only God, whom we will serve and worship. And therefore if we have made this election, and dedicated ourselves wholly to God's worship and service alone, it is a most certain sign of our election, whereby God hath chosen us: fought our choosing of God is an effect of his choosing of us, and an impression or print wherewith by his election he hath sealed us.

And thus it appeareth that the effects of God's election do not only as signs signify, but also as seals confirm unto us the assurance thereof: but let us further consider the special effects of our election, whereby we may be assured that we are chosen of God. The first effect, is our Savior Christ himself, set apart of God to be the mediator to reconcile all God's elect unto him, dwelling in us by his spirit; who may justly be called the first effect of God's election, because all the other, namely our vocation, justification, sanctification, and salvation, are by him and through him alone. Whosoever therefore are assured that Christ dwelleth in them and they in him, they have a most undoubted sign of their election: and whosoever have not Christ dwelling in them by his spirit, can have no assurance that they are chosen, as the Apostle plainly showeth, 2 Cor. 13:5, know you not (saith he) that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates? But how shall we know whether Christ dwelleth thus in us and we in him? The Apostle telleth us, Rom. 8:1, that those who are in Christ Jesus, walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, that is, those who do not willingly submit themselves to be ruled and led by the lusts of the flesh, but labor and strive to resist and subdue them, studying and endeavoring to live a spiritual life, in holiness and righteousness. For in whomsoever Christ dwelleth by his spirit, those he regenerateth and raiseth from the death of sin, to newness of life; and his

blood is effectual, not only to purge them from the guilt of sin, but also to cleanse them in some measure from the corruptions themselves.

The second effect of our election, is our effectual calling; whereby we are separated from the world, and engrafted into Christ, and made lively members of his body: and this is done ordinarily by the diligent and attentive hearing of the word, joined with the inward operation of God's spirit. If therefore we have heard God's word preached, diligently and attentively; if thereby we have attained unto the knowledge of the work of our redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, and are delighted therewith; if by this means we have our hearts somewhat weaned from the world, and fixed upon our Savior and heavenly things; and thinking it sufficient to have spent the rest of our lives past in the lusts of the Gentiles, do live hence forward after the will of God: then are we truly and effectually called, for those are Christ's sheep that hear his voice and follow him, John. 10:4. Those are engrafted into his body, who bring forth the fruits of godliness: for as the branch can bring forth no fruit except it abide in the vine, so neither can we bring forth any fruits of piety and righteousness except we abide in Christ; and therefore if we do bring forth these fruits, it manifestly appeareth that we are in Christ, and consequently truly called and elected, for without him we could do nothing, as it is, John. 15:4,5.

The third effect of God's election, is our justification, consisting in the remission of our sins, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness: and to this is required a true and lively faith, which assureth us of the remission of our sins, and applieth unto us Christ's righteousness. If therefore we believe that our sins are forgiven, if we do by faith apply unto us Christ and his righteousness, we may be assured that we are justified, and consequently elected: now this persuasion and lively faith, is discerned by the fruits

thereof; for it purifieth our hearts, and worketh by love; and it worketh in us a hatred of sin, and love of righteousness, which is our sanctification.

So that our sanctification which is the last effect of God's election wrought in us in this life, is the true touchstone of all the rest: whereby we may certainly know whether we be effectually called, that is, separated from the world, and engrafted as lively members into the body of Christ; and whether we be truly justified, that is, purged from the guilt and punishment of our sins by Christ's blood, and adorned with his righteousness imputed unto us. For if we be separated from the world, then do we not set our minds upon worldly things, but have our conversation in heaven from whence we look for a savior, even the Lord Jesus Christ; if we are engrafted into the body of Christ who is the true vine, then do we bring forth the sweet grapes of holiness and righteousness in our lives and conversations, as it is, John. 15:5; if we have by a true faith the assurance of the remission of our sins, then will we love God who hath forgiven us so great a debt, and labor to express our love by glorifying his name, in causing our light to shine before men; and if the blood of Christ be effectual unto us for the purging away of the guilt and punishment of sin, then will it also in some measure purge away the corruptions themselves. For we are grafted with him into the similitude of his death and resurrection, and our old man is crucified with him and the body of sin destroyed, that from henceforth we should not serve sin, as it is, Rom. 6:5,6. And as our sanctification is the only undoubted sign of our vocation and justification; so also of our election; for the Lord hath chosen us that we should be holy, Eph. 1:4. And therefore if we be holy we have a manifest effect and inseparable fruit of our election, if we be not holy nor make conscience of serving the Lord in the duties of piety and Christianity, we have no

assurance that we are elected: for though the foundation of God remaineth sure on God's part being sealed and confirmed in his eternal counsel, yet it is not sealed in our hearts until we depart from iniquity, as it is, 2 Tim. 2:19.

Though then there be no place unto our sanctification in God's decree, as being any cause thereof; and therefore when the question is asked why we are elected, we must answer not for any deserts or holiness in ourselves, but because of God's good pleasure and undeserved grace; and when it is demanded in whom we are elected, we must reply in Christ Jesus only: yet there is chief place unto our sanctification in the assurance of our election, so that when the question is asked who are elected, answer is to be made, those only who are also sanctified in God's good time by his gracious spirit; for without this holiness no man shall ever see God, as it is, Heb. 12:14.

Now our sanctification doth principally consist in a love of righteousness, and a true hatred of sin; from whence proceedeth an earnest desire, and hearty endeavor of forsaking that which is evil, and of cleaving unto that which is good: and for the better effecting hereof, a careful study of mortifying the flesh and the lusts thereof, and painful diligence in using all good means whereby the spirit may be strengthened, and the gifts and graces thereof increased, that so we may not be so prone to fall into that sin which we hate, nor so backward in embracing and following that righteousness and holiness which we love. And this is the sanctification which is an inseparable fruit and effect of God's election in all his children, which though it be the last in nature and next unto salvation itself, for first God electeth, and those whom he hath elected, in his good time he calleth, and whom he calleth those he justifieth, and lastly, whom he justifieth those he sanctifieth and saveth; yet when we are to gather assurance of our election, we are not to observe this order, but to begin where the Lord

endeth, and so ascend from the lowest degree till we come to the highest. For as it is a foolish thing for a man, to think that he can leap to the top of an high ladder at the first step, and therefore everyone beginneth with the lowest, and so ascendeth step by step till he come to the highest: so it is a foolish thing for a man to imagine, that he can leap into heaven, and there search the unsearchable councils of God, and so know whether he is elected or no; but we must begin at the lowest step, namely our sanctification which being attained unto, we may ascend a step higher in our assurance, namely that we are justified, and so to the next, that we are effectually called, and lastly to the highest that we are elected. Otherwise if we curiously dive into the bottomless secrets of God's councils, we shall be drowned and overwhelmed; if we approach unto this unapproachable light, the eye of our understanding will be dazzled, yea stark blinded; if we presume to understand beyond sobriety, we shall by the just judgment of God be infatuated, and thrust ourselves into an endless labyrinth, out of which we shall never find way, wanting the line of God's word to guide us. And therefore if we would have any true assurance of our election, we must examine ourselves whether we be sanctified; and if we find in ourselves sanctification by the fruits thereof, we may undoubtedly conclude that we are justified, called, elected, and shall be saved. If we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, we may be assured that we are in Christ Jesus, and therefore there is no condemnation belonging unto us, Rom. 8:1. If we bring forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness, we may be assured that we are good trees of God's own planting, Matth. 7:17. If we be fruitful branches we may assuredly know, that we are engrafted into the true vine Jesus Christ, John. 15:4,5.

Seeing then our sanctification assureth us of our election and salvation, and without it there is no assurance; what stronger argument can be imagined to make us flee sin, and labor after mortification and newness of life; what keener knife can be used to cut asunder the cords of vanity, wherein naturally we are fettered and entangled; what sharper spur to prick us forward in the course of godliness; than to know and consider that by our sanctification and holiness of life, we are certainly assured that God hath elected us, to be heirs of the unspeakable joys of his kingdom, and that by our wickedness and profaneness we have no less certain assurance that we shall have our portion forever in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone? For if we live holily like true Christians on earth, we shall live happily like glorious Angels in heaven; but if here we lie frozen in the dregs of our sins, without any sense of sorrow for those which are past, or any desire and purpose of heart to forsake them in the time to come, we shall be thrust from the Lord amongst the workers of iniquity, and the wrath of God shall pursue, overtake and consume us. What sin therefore can be so pleasant to our taste, which this consideration will not make more bitter than wormwood? What duty of holiness and righteousness so displeasing and grievous, which this will not make sweet and delightful?

Now that we may not deceive ourselves with a counterfeit holiness, instead of true sanctification, we are to know that this assurance of salvation, doth not proceed from every kind of holiness, but from that which is true and unfeigned: for there is an holiness of the tongue, severed from the holiness of the heart, in show but not in deed, in profession but not in practice; there is a holiness in performing outward duties of God's service, severed from righteousness towards our brethren; there is a holiness in leaving some or the most sins, without any desire or purpose to forsake

some one or two sins by which we receive greatest pleasure or profit; there is a holiness in tithing mint and cummin, which neglecteth the weighty things of the law, and which maketh clean the outside of the platter and cup, leaving the inside full of rapine and excess; and outwardly maketh a glorious golden show, when as within there is nothing but putrefaction and rottenness: there is a holiness which consisteth in the pharisaical censuring of poor publicans, and in extolling our own virtues. The first kind is of those whom the prophet reproveth, Isa. 29:13, who drew near unto God with their lips when as their hearts were far from him: and of those whom the Apostle brandeth, 2 Tim. 3:5, who make a show of godliness, but in their lives deny the power thereof: in which rank many professors also in these days may fitly march. The second kind is of those who are content to serve God in the outward duties of his worship, because they find them good cheap, yea often gainful; but cannot away with righteousness, because that is sometimes painful and sometimes requireth cost. And these men instead of making godliness their gain, make a gain of godliness. The third kind is Herod's holiness, who heard John gladly and did many things, yet could not abide to leave his incest: and such holiness is in some nowadays, who will be content to leave all gross outward sins, so they may continue in their covetousness or voluptuousness. The fourth is the holiness of those pharisees which are most zealous in ceremonies and their own traditions, but key cold in those duties which most concern God's glory and their neighbors good. The last kind was the holiness of the ancient pharisees, and is the holiness of our new Brownists, who place the most of their religion in censuring and condemning the corruptions of the Church, and misdemeanors of private men, not looking into their own sins of hellish pride, bitterness, envy, and want of charity.

But none of these, no nor yet all these joined together, will ever give unto us any sound assurance of our election; but it is that true sanctification indeed, which beginneth not in the mouth but in the heart, and sanctifieth our will and affections, making us to love and to embrace to our uttermost power virtue and godliness, and to abhor and flee from sin and iniquity: and from the heart it proceedeth to the tongue and hands, making the word of God and all holy conferences honey in the mouth, and inciting us to the practice of that which we profess. It always approveth golden piety to be pure, and without mixture of the dross of hypocrisy, by the touch stone of righteousness; it is as careful in approving the heart and secret actions unto God, as the outward actions unto men; it causeth us to hate as well one sin as another, and that sin most of all into which we are most prone by nature to fall, though it bring never so much pleasure and profit; it embraceth afflicted godliness when it is attended with loss poverty and shame, as well as when it is waited upon with gain, pleasure, and the praise of men; it is very charitable in censuring the faults of others, but most severe and strict in judging and condemning the sins which ourselves have committed. And therefore if our sanctification have these properties, we may most certainly be assured thereby that we are elected and shall be saved; but if these be wanting, it is but a counterfeit holiness which affordeth no such assurance.

Now if this be true, what hope can they have who have not so much as a show of godliness? How desperate is their state, who even in outward appearance show nothing but wickedness and profaneness? If the fig tree which beareth fair green leaves be accursed, what curses, what misery and wretchedness are they to bear and suffer, who have not so much as leaves, that is, an outward profession of godliness? If Herod be a damned wretch in hell, who heard John the Baptist willingly, and did many things according

to his doctrine, because he nourished one sin in his bosom; what fearful condemnation are they to expect, who contemn and neglect God's word, not thinking it worth the hearing, and cannot find in their hearts to submit themselves to the obedience of any part thereof, neither will be brought to forsake any one sin wherewith they are delighted, till it leave them? And yet such is the blind ignorance, carnal security, and vain presumption of such men, that they will not stick to brag that they are sure of God's love, and that they are elected to salvation, though there be no show of reason whereupon they may probably ground their foolish persuasion. But the truth is, that whilst they continue in this damnable estate, consolation itself cannot give unto them any true comfort, for without sanctification there is no hope of election or salvation: and seeing the Lord hath elected us that we should be holy, therefore without holiness there is no assurance that we are elected: seeing he hath sworn that all those whom he hath redeemed and saved, out of the hands of their spiritual enemies hell, death and the devil, shall worship him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life; what hope of redemption and salvation can they conceive, who live in impiety and unrighteousness, seeing by God's oath they are excluded from both, whilst they continue in this state?

CHAP. X. OF THE SIGNS AND INFALLIBLE NOTES OF OUR ELECTION.

And thus have I set down the means whereby we may be assured of our election: now let us consider of some special signs which are infallible notes of those that are elected. The first sign is an earnest desire after the means of our salvation, and a conscionable endeavor in using them after we enjoy them. For the end and the means are never separated in God's decree, and therefore those that carefully use the means may be assured that they shall attain unto the end. For example, the hearing of God's word is the chief means of our conversion, being made effectual by the inward operation of God's spirit; and as thereby we are begotten unto God, so also it is that bread of life, wherewith our souls are nourished and strengthened in all spiritual graces. So that whomsoever God hath elected, those he hath decreed to call ordinarily by these means; and by the same also to furnish with his graces being called. Whosoever therefore labor to purchase this precious pearl, whosoever hunger after this heavenly Manna, and are content to enjoy it not only when it is good cheap, but also when it is very chargeable, whosoever enjoying it do attentively and diligently hear it and

receive it with delight, they use the means of their salvation, and therefore may be assured that they are elected, for the means and the end go together. And that this is a note of God's child, it appeareth, John. 10:3,4, where our Savior saith that his sheep hear his voice. And Matth. 13:45, he compareth the true member of the kingdom of grace to a Merchant, who rather than he would want the precious pearl of God's word, selleth all he hath to buy it. Those therefore who make this precious account of God's word, and carefully diligently and attentively hear it when they enjoy it, may to their comfort assure themselves that they have an undoubted sign of their election. And on the other side, those who had rather be without it than enjoy it, those who will bestow no cost to obtain it, nor forgo any pleasure or commodity that they may hear it, nor when they do hear it are affected with any delight, but are glutted with loathing satiety, hearing no part of the sermon with any pleasure but the conclusion only; they can have no assurance of their election, because they neglect the means of their salvation, which are joined with the end in God's eternal decree. The like also may be said of other means, as the receiving of the Sacraments, meditating in God's word, the works of holiness and righteousness, and the rest.

The second sign of those that are elected, is the spirit of supplication, when as they can pour forth their souls in fervent and effectual prayer unto the Lord, confessing their sins, and imploring his grace and mercy: for this is a notable fruit of God's spirit working in us, which we cannot by any natural means attain unto; for of ourselves we know not what to pray as we ought, but the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed, as it is, Rom. 8:26. Prayer therefore is a most inseparable fruit and undoubted sign of God's spirit, and God's spirit

certainly assureth us of our election and adoption, for it beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, as it is, ver. 16. So, Rom. 10:13, it is said, that whosoever call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But this prayer must proceed from faith; for, as it followeth, How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And must be performed in spirit and truth, and not with deceitful lips; for it is to no purpose to draw near unto God with our mouths, if our hearts be far from him, Isa. 29:13.

The third sign of those who are elected and adopted to be the children of God, is, when as their hearts are somewhat weaned from the world, and seated in heaven minding the things that are above; and when their tongues being set a work by the heart, do gladly entertain godly and religious conferences; for there as the treasure is, there will the heart be also, and with whatsoever the heart is affected, the tongue is delighted. Now that these holy meditations and religious discourses are signs of the child of God, hereby it plainly appeareth; in that they cannot possibly proceed from our corrupt nature, to which they are irksome and tedious, but from the spirit of God dwelling in us, and guiding and directing us in our thoughts and words; and whosoever are thus led with the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, as it is, Rom. 8:14. He that is right heir to a royal kingdom and not yet possessed thereof, is never weary of thinking on it, nor gluttoned with such discourses as tend to the extolling the riches and glory which there attend him, or show the means whereby he may be assured to come into speedy and peaceable possession of his right: and so those who are elected by God, and adopted to be the heirs of his everlasting kingdom of glory, are never satisfied in meditating and speaking of the riches and joys of this heavenly inheritance, or of the means whereby they may be assured

undoubtedly to obtain it; whereas those who have no such interest nor hopes, think and talk of these things with loathsome weariness, as being matters not concerning them; and therefore when such thoughts come into their minds, they vanish as suddenly as a flash of lightning, and when they are present at any spiritual discourses the time seemeth long, and they sit upon thorns until they be ended; and they remain dumb as though they were tongue-tied, unless they take occasion to interrupt such holy conferences, and to divert them to some worldly affairs.

The fourth sign of the child of God who is elected to salvation, is, when he seeth his sins and imperfections, and truly repenteth of them, that is, bewaileth those which are past, and endeavoreth to forsake them in the time to come. For naturally we are blind, and yet do not perceive our blindness, we are most sinful and miserable, and yet do not see our sins and misery, but with the proud Pharisee and justiciary Papist we think ourselves righteous, and with the Church of the Laodiceans we imagine that we are rich and have need of nothing, not knowing that we are wretched, miserable, pour-blind, and naked, until it please the Lord to anoint our eyes with the eye-salve of his spirit, whereby we are enabled to discern the pure gold of Christ's merits, which only maketh rich, from the dross of our own works, and the white raiment of Christ's obedience from the polluted rags of our own righteousness. And though we see our sins, yet naturally we are not sorry for them, nay we delight ourselves with their remembrance; or if we sustain any grief, it is not for the sin, but for the punishment which either we feel presently inflicted, or fear as being hereafter threatened, until it please the Lord to adopt us for his sons, and to give us the spirit of adoption, which moveth us to grieve and sorrow for our sins, not so much for fear of punishment, as for son-like affection, because by our sins we

have dishonored and displeased our gracious and loving father: and because we cannot wholly mortify them so long as we continue in this life, we lamentably cry out with Paul, Wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this body of death? And because we know that we shall be never freed from it altogether so long as we live, we wish earnestly with the Apostle that we may be speedily dissolved, being contented to part with our lives, because we can no otherwise part with our sins. Whosoever therefore hath this sorrow for sin; he may be assured of his election and salvation: for, as it is, 2 Cor. 7:10, this godly sorrow causeth repentance unto salvation not to be repented of, whereas worldly sorrow causeth death; and all the promises of life and eternal happiness, are made only to such repentant sinners, and to them only they appertain. And as God's children are grieved for their sins past, so do they hate and detest them, as in all others so especially in themselves, which hatred causeth them to flee from them, and avoid all occasions which might cause them to fall into the like wickedness, striving and endeavoring to mortify their lusts and evil concupiscence's, and to lead their lives in holiness and righteousness, because herewith their heavenly father is well pleased. Whereas the wicked man, if he be not restrained with a servile fear of God's judgments, or of temporary punishments, goeth on in his sins with pleasure and delight, adding drunkenness unto thirst, and drawing iniquity unto him with the cords of vanity. Whosoever therefore have this son-like care, and holy endeavor of forsaking their sins, and betaking themselves to serve the Lord in the duties of holiness and righteousness, they may be assured that they are elected and adopted to be the sons of God; but those who have no such purpose can never have this assurance; for if they were the sons of God, they would be affected like loving children to such a gracious father.

The fifth sign of the child of God elected to salvation, is, when as feeling his own misery and wretchedness, he earnestly desireth and even as it were hungereth and thirsteth after Christ's righteousness, looking for life and salvation in him alone; for such as these our Savior Christ calleth unto him: John. 7:37. If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink; and to such he promiseth everlasting happiness. Rev. 21:6. I will give to him that is a thirst, of the well of the water of life freely, of which whosoever drinketh shall never be more a thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. And to this we may add also, an high and incomparable estimation of Christ and his righteousness, after that we are assured of them, whereby we prize and value them so much above all worldly things, that with Paul we esteem them all but dross and dung in respect of gaining Christ, Phil. 3:8, and are content not only with the Merchant to sell all we have that we may buy these precious pearls, but also to suffer tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, yea death itself, rather than we would be separated from the love of Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 8:35.

The sixth sign of the child of God, is the inward combat which they feel, between the flesh and the spirit, whereby on the one side they are drawn unto sin, and on the other side incited unto holy obedience; now delighted in the law of God, and yet soon after led captive unto sin; one while rowing against the tide of their carnal affections, and another while carried violently down the stream, by reason of their weakness, and the strength of their in-bred corruption. For naturally we go all one way, without any stop, opposition or resistance, even the broad way which leadeth to hell and destruction: naturally we serve sin, and willingly subject ourselves to live in the bondage of our spiritual enemies, until the Lord do with his holy spirit

renew our will, and sanctify our affections, working in us an earnest desire to come out of this miserable captivity, that we may attain unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God: which renewing and sanctification, because it is done but in part, therefore is it opposed by the contrary corruption which we have by nature, so that what the spirit loveth the flesh hateth, what the spirit embraceth the flesh abhorreth, what the spirit would have us do, the flesh hindereth and enforceth us to leave undone, with whatsoever the spirit is delighted, with that the flesh is vexed and displeased; and this spiritual fight is in all God's children as appeareth, Rom. 7:23. Gal. 5:17, which should be so far from discouraging us, that nothing more can assure us of our election; for naturally we are all flesh, wholly submitting ourselves to be ruled by Satan, neither is there any fight or opposition in us, for Satan's kingdom is not divided against itself, and whilst the strong man wholly keepeth the house, all that he possesseth is in peace, until our Savior Christ, by the operation of his spirit, thrusteth him out of his possession, and seeketh to rule in us by the scepter of his word; and then the devil rageth and striveth to keep his hold, and the flesh stormeth, desiring still to serve his old master. When therefore we feel this inward fight within ourselves, we may be assured that Christ is come to dwell in our hearts by his holy spirit, and consequently, that we are the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life, for as many as receive him, to them he gives power to be the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, as it is, John 1:12.

The seventh sign of the child of God is new obedience, when as he applies his heart to the keeping of God's commandments, desiring and endeavoring to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life; for if any man keepeth God's word, in him is the love of God perfect in deed, and hereby we know that we are in him, as it is, 1 John 2:5. And whosoever abideth in him

sinneth not, whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither hath known him, as it is, chap. 3, ver. 6. So, ver. 10. In this are the children of God known and the children of the devil, whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, &c. So that our new obedience is a sign of the child of God, and the neglect thereof a mark of the child of darkness. But we are not to understand this of that exact obedience which is required in the Law; for thereby none living can have any assurance of their election and salvation, but rather of reprobation and damnation; but it is to be understood of an evangelical obedience, which consisteth in an holy desire and earnest endeavor of keeping all God's commandments; with which the children of God are so wholly possessed, that after their true conversion it is impossible that they should fall into any known sin, with full consent of will and with their whole hearts. And this is the obedience which the Gospel requireth, and of which the Apostle speaketh, and thus we never sin but keep all God's commandments, namely, in respect of our desire and earnest endeavor. This is that righteousness which is accepted, as though it were perfect before God, who spareth us as a man spares his son whom he tenderly loveth, as he professeth, Mal. 3:17, and therefore measureth our obedience not according to our actions, but according to our affections, and accepteth of the will for the deed, as before I have shown.

But yet that we may not deceive ourselves with a counterfeit show, we are to know that this evangelical obedience hath these properties; first, it must be total, and that both in respect of the subject and of the object; that is, we must not share ourselves between God and the world, giving one the tongue, the other the heart; one our outward actions, and the other our inward affections; but we must perform our obedience with our whole hearts, yea with the whole man body soul and spirit: for though we be

regenerated and sanctified but in part, yet is there no part of the whole man unregenerate and unsanctified, howsoever the flesh and the corruption of nature be spread likewise and mixed therewith throughout the whole body and soul. And therefore though all our obedience savor of the flesh, and is mingled with manifold imperfections, yet it doth proceed from the whole man body and soul, because regeneration from which it proceedeth is not of any part alone, but of the whole man. So also it must be total in respect of the object; for it is not sufficient that with Herod we observe many things, if we nourish willingly any one sin taking therein pleasure and delight, but we must desire and endeavor to forsake all our sins, and to perform obedience unto all God's commandments; for if we nourish one sin in our hearts, it will open a door to let in more when we are tempted unto them; as we may see in the example of Herod and Judas, the one harboring incest, the other covetousness; if we neglect willingly, obedience to one precept of God's law, it will so harden our hearts and sear our consciences, that soon after we shall neglect all. If therefore we would have our obedience acceptable unto God, we must with the Prophet David, Psal. 119:6, have respect unto all God's commandments; for, he that faileth in one, is guilty of all, as it is, Jam. 2:10.

Secondly, this obedience must be perpetual, continuing in a constant course from the time of our conversion to the end of our lives; for we are not to judge of ourselves or others, by one or two or many actions whether they be good or evil, but by the whole tenor and course of our lives, so that he who in this respect is holy and righteous, he is so accepted before God, notwithstanding his many falls and great infirmities; he that in the course of his life is wicked and profane, is so esteemed of God, although he seem to himself and others religious by fits, and performeth many excellent duties

and good works. It is therefore not sufficient that we begin in the spirit, if we end in the flesh, Gal. 3:3. It is not sufficient to profess and practice godliness in our youth, if we break off in our age; it is not enough that we enter into the Christian race and run well in the beginning, if we stand still in the midst, or before we come to the goal; for he only that endureth to the end shall be saved, as it is, Matth. 24:13. As for him that layeth his hand on the plough and looketh back, he is not fit for God's kingdom, as our Savior affirmeth, Luk. 9:62.

Lastly, our obedience must be grounded upon God's word, and therefore performed because the Lord hath enjoined such duties unto us; it must proceed from faith, which first purifieth the heart, and then worketh by love; it must not be done for any worldly respect; but of a conscionable care of performing our duties, and in a fervent zeal of God's glory, which is magnified when as our lights shine before men; which zeal will make us go forward in our course of godliness, through evil report, and good report, honor and dishonor. And if our obedience spring from these fountains, and be referred to this end that God thereby may be glorified; then will we make no less conscience of secret, than of open sins; then will we be no less ready to serve God in the duties of piety and righteousness when there is no witness of our actions, than if all the world should look upon us; then will we be as fearful to offend God in the breach of any of his commandments in our secret chambers in the dark night, as in the Church or market place at noon day.

The eighth sign of the child of God, is the love of our brethren in obedience to God's commandment; when as a man loves entirely a Christian, because he is a Christian, and engrafted into the same body of Christ whereof he is a member: for as it is, impossible that one member of the body should not

love, cherish, and defend another, because they are quickened by the same soul and governed by the same head; so it is not possible but that one true Christian should love, cherish, and defend another, because they are quickened by the same spirit, and ruled by the same head Jesus Christ. And this is made a mark of God's child by the Apostle John, 1 John. 3:14. We know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren: as the want of this love is a sure note of the child of wrath, for as it followeth in the same verse, he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Now the undoubted signs of love and Christian charity are two; giving to those that want, and forgiving those that offend: for it is a property of true love to be bountiful, 1 Cor. 13:4, as to all, so especially to those that are of the household of faith, as it is, Gal. 6:10; and on the other side, He that hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, he is destitute of the love of God, and consequently of the love of his brethren, which is but a stream issuing from this fountain, 1 John. 3:17. And this Christian liberality as it is, a sign of true love, so also of our election and salvation; for our Savior Christ hath shown us, that according to these fruits of charity, and actions of Christian liberality, he will pronounce the sentence of everlasting joy and happiness at the day of judgment, Matth. 25:34,35,36, and on the other side, that he will pronounce the sentence of condemnation against the neglectors of these duties of Christian charity, ver. 41,42,43.

The second sign of true love is forgiving, when as we are ready for God's sake and in obedience to his commandment to remit and pardon those injuries which are offered us; for, love is not provoked to anger, and therefore much less to revenge; it suffereth all things, it endureth all things,

as it is, 1 Cor. 13:5,7. Nay, it doth not only not render evil for evil, but it overcometh evil with goodness, leaving revenge unto God, and to his deputies and vicegerents the Magistrates, as we may see in the example of our Savior Christ, and the blessed Martyr Stephen, who prayed for their persecutors; whose example we are to imitate, as the Apostle exhorteth, Rom. 12:14. Bless them that persecute you; bless I say and curse not. And so shall we have a certain sign of true love, and an undoubted note of God's spirit dwelling in us, of the remission of our sins, and consequently of our election and salvation. For naturally we are Wolves, Leopards, Lions, yea Cockatrices who kill with their looks, as the Prophet speaketh, Isa. 11:6,8, and like brute and savage beasts willing to offer all injuries, but impatient of suffering any: and therefore when our savage cruelty is turned into charity, and we become as meek and harmless, as the lamb, calf, or little child, it is a manifest sign that our stout courage's are abated and beaten down with the rod of Christ's mouth, that we are borne anew and quickened by his spirit, and that now we are seated in the mountain of his holiness, and shall be heirs of his kingdom of glory. So also hereby we are assured of the remission of our sins, when we find ourselves ready and willing to forgive our neighbors; for our Savior Christ hath promised, that if we do forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly father will also forgive us, Matth. 6:14, and consequently we may assuredly gather, that we are justified, called, elected, and shall be glorified.

The ninth sign of the child of God elected to salvation, is, the love of God's true Ministers and ambassadors, not only because they are Christians, but also because they are sent of God to execute these holy functions, for the gathering together of God's elect. And this our Savior Christ declareth, Matth. 10:41. He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall

have a Prophets reward; that is, everlasting joy and unspeakable happiness in God's kingdom; for, they that turn many unto righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever. And because none should pretend that by reason of their poverty they cannot show their love to God's Ministers, therefore the Lord encourageth even the poorest, to show their goodwill and affection unto them, Matth. 10:43, saying, Whosoever shall give to any of these little ones to drink, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward, namely in God's kingdom. Moreover, those that love God's ambassadors, do prove unto themselves and show unto the world, that they have received good by their ambassage, even reconciliation with God, peace of conscience and assurance of salvation, which maketh them to think no worldly benefit sufficient to requite these spiritual graces, which by their means and ministry they have received: and therefore with the Galatians they could be content, if it were possible to do them good hereby, to pull out their own eyes and to give them unto them, seeing by their means the blind eyes of their understandings, are enlightened with the knowledge of God and Christ their Savior. And because they have received from them to their comfort, the glad tidings of peace and good things; therefore their feet, that is, their approaching and coming unto them, seem beautiful and delightful, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 10:15. If an ambassador were sent from a mighty Prince, who was our enemy in time past, and able at his pleasure to destroy us and our country, to the end he might conclude a peace; and not only so, but to offer us the free use of all the riches and commodities of his kingdom; who would not receive him with joy, and give him royal entertainment, if they were persuaded of the truth of his ambassage? But we by our sins had made the glorious King of heaven and earth our enemy, who

is able every minute to destroy us with the breath of his nostrils; and it hath pleased the Lord to send his ambassadors, not only to offer peace, but also to beseech us that we would be reconciled unto him, as the Apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. 5:20; and upon this reconciliation, he assureth us of the riches of his kingdom: who therefore receiving and believing this ambassage, will not love the Ambassadors that bring these blessed tidings unto them? Who can be assured of such inestimable benefits, and yet show no token of thankfulness towards them, who are the means whereby they are derived unto them.

Where by the way we may note, how few the number is in these days, who receive the Lord's ambassage to their spiritual comfort; how few they are to whom it is effectual for the begetting in them the graces of God's spirit; how few hereby come to the true assurance of the remission of their sins and everlasting happiness: seeing the number is so exceeding small who love and respect the Lord's ambassadors in regard of their ambassage. Nay rather the most, even for their ministry sake do contemn those, whom otherwise in respect of their learning, wisdom, and other excellent gifts of body and mind, they would respect and highly esteem if they were not of the ministry. So that their honorable calling, which above all things should commend them, doth above all things make them base and contemptible: and no marvel, seeing the most are flesh and not spirit, the children of Mammon and not the children of God: and therefore, savoring only the things of the flesh and not perceiving the things of the spirit of God, they seem foolishness unto them, and the preachers of them fools, and men of shallow conceits. But let such know, that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound mighty things; and vile things of the world, and things that are despised hath God

chosen, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should rejoice in his presence, as it is, 1 Cor. 1:27,28. Let them know that this their contempt, or at least small regard of God's ambassadors, is a most manifest sign that they never received good by their ambassage: for had they received from them spiritual things, they would never grudge to bestow upon them their worldly things, which in the true Christians estimation are not to be compared with them; and much less would they against their own conscience defraud them of their own right, which by the laws of God and man is due unto them, whereby it cometh to pass that whereas all men being industrious and frugal, may live plentifully even of their meanest trades, only the Lord ambassadors, though never so painful in their callings, live in want and misery.

The last sign of God's child elected to salvation, which I will speak of, is their earnest desire that our Savior Christ should come to judgment: whence proceedeth that pathetical prayer, Come Lord Jesus come quickly, Rev. 22:20; and that prayer which our Savior hath taught all the faithful to pray daily, let thy kingdom come, Matth. 6:10. Now that this is a note of those that are elected to salvation, it appeareth plainly, 2 Tim 4:8. Where the Apostle saith that a crown of righteousness is laid up for all those that love his appearing. And Rom. 8:23, he telleth us, that those who have the first fruits of the spirit, do even sigh in themselves, waiting for the adoption even the redemption of their body, when as their corruption shall put on incorruption, and the mortal body immortality, as he speaketh, 1 Cor. 15:53. So our Savior Christ hath told us, that his faithful children should at his coming, look up and lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth near, Luk. 21:28; and on the other side that the kingdom of the earth shall mourn, and that the profane worldlings and reprobates shall say to the

mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb; Rev. 6:16. So that by these places it is manifest, that if we love the appearing of the Lord Jesus, and desire his coming to judgment; we are the children of God endued with his spirit, which assureth us of our salvation. For naturally we abhor to think of this fearful day, and tremble with fear when mention is made of the appearing of our judge, because by our sins we have deserved everlasting damnation: but when the spirit of God by the ministry of the word, hath begot faith in us, whereby we apply unto ourselves Christ Jesus, and all his merits, by whom we are reconciled unto God and made friends who before were enemies, and sons of God and heirs of everlasting happiness who before were the children of wrath and firebrands of hell, then do we earnestly desire the company of our heavenly father; when we are assured that our judge shall be our Savior, then can we go boldly to his judgment seat without fear of condemnation; when we are assured that we are the beloved spouse of Christ, then we long for nothing more than for the coming of our bridegroom; when we are certainly persuaded that by God's spirit we are engrafted into the body of Christ, and are become lively members of his body; then do we heartily wish with the Apostle to be dissolved, that we may be with Christ our head in his kingdom of glory, where together with him we shall receive, and be fully satisfied with such incomparable joys, as neither eye hath seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man conceived.

CHAP. XI. THE OBJECTIONS ALLEGED AGAINST THE ASSURANCE OF OUR ELECTION, ANSWERED.

And thus much concerning the signs whereby we may be assured of our election: now I will answer such objections as are brought against this doctrine by the enemies of God's truth. And these are of two sorts, first testimonies of God's word, and secondly reasons. The testimonies of scriptures are diverse: first they object such places as these; 1 Cor. 10:12. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Prov. 28:14. Blessed is the man that feareth always, Rom. 11:20. Be not high minded but fear. Phil. 2:12. Make an end of your salvation with fear and trembling. 1 Pet. 1:17. Passe the time of your dwelling here in fear: to all which and many other such like places, we may answer generally, that the holy Ghost would not hereby take away our certainty of faith, but carnal security; he would not deprive us of the assurance of the remission of our sins and our election, but rather by these admonitions as with a bridle he curbeth in our unruly affections, and restraineth us from running into all licentiousness under this pretense that we are assured of our election; he would not have us doubt of God's grace, but he would not have us too much

trust and rely on those graces which we have received; and therefore he putteth us in mind of our own weakness and infirmity, not to the end we should doubt of our election, and despair or fear our perseverance, but to the end that distrusting our own strength we may wholly rely upon the power love and promises of God, and thereby gather so much more certain assurance of our election and perseverance, as the power of God is above the power of man; lastly he giveth us not these admonitions to bring us into doubting, but would hereby stir up our faith unto the exercise of holiness and righteousness, that it may not through idleness faint and wax stiff and benumbed, and unable to perform these holy actions, whereby this assurance and certainty of our election, would be enfeebled and not so sensibly discerned: and therefore these and such like speeches tend not to this end that we should doubt of our election, but rather that we should be preserved from doubting; to which, carnal security, self-confidence, negligence in the duties of holiness and righteousness, and continuance in sin would in the end bring us; all which the spirit of God by these admonitions and exhortations preventeth.

Secondly, I answer that these and such like admonitions, are not directed only to the faithful, who may and ought to be assured of their election, but in general to the whole Church, wherein there are many hypocrites who content themselves with a bare show of godliness, and many worldly men who please themselves with carnal security, and a carcass of faith, which never so much as breatheth, and much less performeth any actions of holiness and righteousness: and therefore as it was necessary that the faithful should be more and more confirmed with the promises of the Gospel, so was it requisite that hypocrites and secure worldlings should be

roused out of their security, with these and such like admonitions and commination's.

Neither were they necessary for hypocrites and worldlings alone, but even for the dear children of God: who because they are partly flesh and partly spirit, therefore as they have need that the spiritual man should be comforted and their faith confirmed against diffidence and doubting, with the sweet promises of the Gospel; so had they need to have their unruly flesh curbed in, and restrained from falling into reckless security, by these admonitions and commination's. And because by reason of this division which is in ourselves, we are ready as it were to mutiny, one part of our forces being ready to march cheerfully to the land of promise, the other to forsake the way, sometimes on the one side being ready to turn back again, as utterly despairing of attaining to the end of our journey, when we consider the sons of Anakim our spiritual enemies, in respect of whose stature and strength we are but as grasshoppers, and the mighty oppositions which are made against our weak force; and sometimes to go on in a way which God hath not appointed, presuming upon our own strength and abilities. Therefore that we may keep the straight way without declining on either hand, God doth as it were hedge us in on both sides, to restrain us from wandering; on the one side with sweet promises, that we may not despair, but rely ourselves on his strength and assistance; on the other side with sweet admonitions and fearful commination's, that we may not trust too much unto our own power, nor presume upon our own abilities: and by the means of the one, he doth as it were prick us forward in our journey, keeping us from once thinking of standing still, or returning again into Egypt; and by the other as with an hand he doth uphold us, when we are weary and ready to faint, having an eye to the crown of glory, and the

garland of happiness, which is prepared for us at the end of our course, and race of Christianity. And as a skillful pilot, when his ship is in a tempestuous and strait sea, in danger to run on the rocks or to sink in the sands, doth cast our anchor on both sides, or most carefully look unto the stern to keep it in an even course; so we sailing in the tempestuous sea of this miserable world, are in danger on the one side to dash upon the rocks of presumptuous security, and on the other side to sink in the sands and to plunge into the gulf of desperation: and therefore the Lord doth stay us from both, as it were with two strong cables; the first is legal commination's and strict admonitions, to keep us from carnal security and hypocritical presumption, the other is sweet promises whereby he keepeth us from falling into doubting and desperation; neither doth one of these hinder another, but both stay us from falling into these extremes.

So that these admonitions are not given to make us doubtful of our election, but partly to take away the presumption and security of hypocrites and carnal worldlings, and partly to bridle and restrain the flesh from running headlong into sin, and from growing insolent over the spirit even in God's children, whereby in deed their assurance of salvation would be abated and languish. The truth whereof appeareth if we examine the several places. For first, whereas the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10:12, saith, Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall; he doth not move those that are faithful, to doubt of their perseverance, but those that want true faith, not to deceive themselves with vain presumption, and with an opinion of faith instead of true faith in deed: and therefore he saith not simply, let him that standeth, but let him that thinketh he standeth, that is, he that doth not stand in deed but in his own found opinion. Neither can it necessarily be proved, that this falling is to be understood of final falling away from God; but

rather as the coherence of the text showeth, of falling into those sins which the Israelites fell into: and though it were, yet is it but an admonition to take away carnal security, not given to make us doubt of our standing, but to preserve us from falling.

Secondly, whereas the wise man saith, Prov. 28:14, Blessed is the man that feareth always: he doth not understand thereby a doubtful fear of our election, but a fear to sin, and a conscionable care of avoiding those things which are displeasing in God's sight; which fear is opposed to carnal security and hardness of heart, as appeareth in the same place where this is added, 'But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil: as though he should say, that man is blessed which feareth the Lord, for this will work in him a conscionable care of avoiding sin, which is odious in the eyes of God, and of embracing holiness and righteousness, which being acceptable unto God, he will reward with eternal blessedness; but he that hardeneth his heart and continueth in carnal security, runneth headlong into the evil of sin, and consequently the evil of punishment, even everlasting condemnation.

Thirdly, whereas the Apostle, Rom. 11:20, exhorteth, us not to be high minded but fear; he doth not mean that we should doubt of our election and salvation, but doth hereby beat down our spiritual pride, and opinion of our own righteousness and holiness, whereby we are ready to insult over the Jews, as though we were chosen and preferred before them, for some excellency or worthiness in ourselves, and so derogate from the free grace and goodness of God, whereby he hath chosen us without any respect of our deserts. And that this is the meaning of these words, appeareth in the eighteenth verse, where he willeth the Gentiles not to boast themselves against the Jews who were the natural branches. Neither doth the Apostle write this to the faithful only, but to the whole Church of the Gentiles, in

which were many hypocrites and carnal men, who contenting themselves with a bare name of Christians, would insult over the Jews, whom God had cast off from being his Church and people; whom he warneth, not to be puffed up in pride, as though in this respect their state were most secure and out of all danger; for as (saith he) they were cast off for their infidelity, even when they were natural branches, so shall you much more be rejected, who being wild branches were grafted in their places (that is, called to be the members of the visible Church) if you continue in the like infidelity, contenting yourselves with vain confidence and fond presumption, instead of a lively faith.

Fourthly, whereas the Apostle, Phil. 2:12, doth exhort us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; he doth not hereby take away from us assurance of our election and salvation, but carnal security and self-confidence; that so despairing of our own strength, as being unable of ourselves to think a good thought, or to will that which is good, we may in all humility rest and rely ourselves, wholly upon the Lord. And that this is his meaning, appeareth by the reason which he adjoineth in the verse following: for saith he, it is God which worketh in you both the will and the deed. As though he should say, there is no reason why you should be secure, as though you were able to stand by your own strength; there is no cause why you should be lifted up with fond presumption, or be carried away with self-confidence, for of yourselves, you are not able so much as to will that which is good, or to perform it though you should will it, unless it please the Lord of his own good pleasure and free will to work both in you, and therefore respecting your own infirmities and imperfections, you should be so far from carnal security or self-confidence, that contrariwise you should continually fear, least through your corruption you should be overtaken of

sin, and so displease the Lord which is your sovereign King and gracious Father. So that the Apostle doth not here exhort us to doubt of our election and salvation, but to a godly fear that we do not fall into sin: he would not have us to doubt of God's grace and free promises, but of our own strength, by which we are altogether unable to stand if he leave us to ourselves: he would not have us fear least we should be rejected and damned, after we are truly converted unto God, but least we fall into sin, and neglect that duty which we owe to our heavenly father.

These two therefore may well stand together: for the more we distrust our own weakness, the more firmly we rest upon the power and assistance of God, and the more we rely upon him, the more sure we are of standing unto the end: the surer we are of God's love and favor, the more we love him again; and the more we love him, the more fearful we are to displease him: the more we see our proneness to sin, the more we fear least we should fall into it; and the more we suspect ourselves, the more earnestly we implore the assistance of God's spirit, whereby we are enabled to withstand temptations. And therefore David joineth these together, Psal. 2:11. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice in trembling; noting thereby that God's children fear, yea, even tremble in regard of their own infirmities and corruptions, and yet at the same time they rejoice and are filled with consolation, in respect of that full assurance which they have of God's love and favor, and their election and salvation. And as he joineth them in precept, so also in his own practice, Psalm. 5:7. I will (saith he) come into thine house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple: so that at the same time, when as he was encouraged by the consideration of God's great mercy, to go boldly and with a lively faith unto the throne of grace; he was also touched with a godly fear in regard of his

unworthiness and imperfections; not that he doubted least he should not be accepted of God, but least in worshipping of God he should bewray his corruption, and not do it in that manner and measure which God requireth.

But against this it may be objected that John saith, 1 John. 4:18. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, &c. I answer, that there is a twofold fear mentioned in the scriptures; the first is a servile fear proceeding from incredulity, whereby men fear God as a severe judge, who is ready to inflict on them those just punishments which by their sins they have deserved, which fear is expelled when as we are assured of God's love and love him again. The other is a son-like fear, which is a fruit of faith, whereby we do not fear God as an enemy or an angry judge, but as a gracious Father, whose displeasure we would by no means incur; not that we fear his wrath and vengeance, as though it were ready to fall upon us, but because we would not thus abuse his mercy and goodness towards us, nor do anything which might cause him to look upon us with a frowning countenance: or if we do fear God's judgments, it is as they are inflicted on another subject, and not as being ready to fall upon us: for this difference is between the fear of the wicked and God's children, they like malefactors which are led out to punishment, are filled with horror and fear when they think of the torments which they are to endure, but yet did never fear to commit such crimes as deserved the punishments, and though they should escape, yet this would be no warning for the time to come; but God's children seeing the judgments which are exercised upon the wicked, do fear, not least they should be inflicted upon them presently, but least they should so offend and deserve the like punishments, first avoiding sin, that they may not receive the wages thereof. And this son-like fear is commended unto us in the scriptures, as being a part of the honor and service which we owe

unto God, as appeareth, Mal. 1:6. A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master, if I be a father where is mine honor, if I be a master where is my fear saith the Lord? So, Psalm. 34:9. Fear the Lord ye his saints, for nothing wanteth to them that fear him. And Psalm 112:1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord and delighteth greatly in his commandments. In which places we are not to understand a servile and slavish fear, but an ingenuous and son-like fear, which draws us back from falling into sin, and incites us to perform all good duties of holiness and righteousness to God and our brethren, because we would not incur the displeasure of our heavenly father, but do those things which are acceptable in his sight.

Lastly, whereas the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 1:17, exhorteth us to pass the time of our dwelling here in fear, he doth not understand such a fear as maketh us to doubt of our election and salvation, but such an one as provoketh us to obey God's commandments, and restraineth us from wallowing and defiling ourselves in sin: for with this fear in the verse following he joineth certain knowledge of our redemption, and consequently of our election and salvation, knowing (saith he) that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation, &c. but with the precious blood of Christ. So that this fear doth not take away the certain knowledge of our election and redemption, but this knowledge causeth us to fear least we fall into sin after we are assured of this great benefit of our redemption, and thereby displease our gracious God, and defile our souls after they are purged with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Besides these places, there are others also objected, as that Job. 9:21. Though I were perfect, yet I know not my soul; therefore I abhor my life. To which I answer, that Job's scope and drift in this place is to show, that

even the most just and holy man cannot stand before God's judgment seat in his own righteousness and holiness, which is polluted and imperfect, and that therefore it behooveth everyone to despair in himself and his legal righteousness, as not being able to justify him in God's sight, in respect of whose purity even the very heavens are unclean, that so he may wholly rely upon God's mercy and Christ's merits; and this appeareth, ver. 2,3. I know verily (saith he) that it is so (that is, that God is just and all men are sinners, who are righteously punished for their demerits, as Bildad had reasoned in the former chapter) and therefore how should man compared unto God be justified? 3. If he would dispute with him, he could not answer him one thing of a thousand. And ver. 20. If I would justify myself, mine own mouth should condemn me; if I would be perfect, he shall judge me wicked. 21. And though I were innocent or perfect, (that is, though I seemed just in mine own eyes, and knew nothing by myself) yet I know not mine own soul, nor what secret corruptions may lurk in it, and therefore I will not hereby look to be justified, nay in this respect I abhor my life, and cast mine own righteousness from me as a polluted [cloth.] By which manner of reasoning he confuteth Bildads objection, who affirmed that Job and his sons were punished of God for their sins and that justly, and therefore they were not so just and innocent as they had seemed: to this Job answereth, that it is true indeed he could not justify himself in respect of his own righteousness, if he compared himself with God's exact justice, but must needs condemn himself for a wretched sinner; yet hence it followed not that therefore God thus afflicted him, seeing this was the state not of him only but of all men whatsoever: and therefore this could not be the only cause of his extraordinary afflictions. So that this place makes nothing against the assurance of our salvation, which is grounded upon God's free mercy and

Christ's merits; but against that presumption which relieth itself in whole or in part, upon our own legal righteousness.

The like place to this is that saying of Paul which they object, 1 Cor. 4:3,4. I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. For answering whereof, we are to know, that there were diverse in the Church of Corinth, who censured Paul's ministry and disgraced his gifts; against which detractions he bendeth his speech and maketh an apology for himself, saying, that he would not take upon him to judge himself, concerning the excellency and worth of his ministry and gifts, but would leave the judgment and approbation thereof unto God, whose ambassador he was; and though he knew nothing which might be objected against him in regard of his ministry, yet hereby he would not look to be justified in God's presence: So that if this be the sense of the words, as appeareth by the coherence and the drift of the place, it maketh nothing for popish doubting. But let it be granted that Paul speaks not of his ministry, but of his righteousness and obedience to the law, yet this maketh nothing against the certainty of our election; for the Apostle speaking of his own righteousness and innocence, doth disclaim it from being any cause of his justification: neither doth he say that in regard thereof he doubteth, as the Papists would expound him, but he affirmeth directly that he is not thereby justified, and rendereth this as a reason, that it is God who judgeth him: and therefore though he were unblameable before men, yea though he knew nothing by himself; yet he could not hereby be justified before the just judgment seat of God, who requires such perfection and exact obedience as can be found in no man living; for he that but once breaketh but one commandment, is guilty of all, as it is, Jam. 2:10. And therefore it behooved the Apostle and

all others, not to seek for justification in themselves and their own righteousness, but in the righteousness and obedience of Christ, which we may boldly present before God's exact judgment seat, and there be accepted as righteous. And of this justification the Apostle speaketh, not doubtfully or timorously, but boldly and certainly, Rom. 5:1. Being justified by faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. By whom also we have access through faith unto his grace wherein we stand, and rejoice under the hope of the glory of God. So, Rom. 8:33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's chosen? It is God that justifieth. 34. Who shall condemn? It is Christ who is dead, yea rather which is risen again, &c.

Moreover, they object these places to move us to doubt of our election and salvation. Joel 2:14. Who knoweth if he will return and repent; and Amos 5:15. It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be merciful unto the remnant of Joseph. And Jon. 3:9. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce wrath that we perish not? To which I answer, that the Prophets in these places do not speak of the election or eternal salvation of those that truly repent, but of their delivery from outward afflictions, and temporary calamities threatened against them for their sins: which sometimes the Lord doth inflict on his children after their true repentance, either for their chastisement, that they may thereby hate sin for the time to come, when they feel the smart of it; or else for their trial: and sometimes also the Lord after he hath threatened them against the wicked, doth notwithstanding hold back his hand, and as it were put up his sword of justice again into the scabbard, which he had drawn out to punish their sins, upon on their outward humiliation and feigned repentance, that he may show hereby how highly he esteemeth the true repentance of his children, as appeareth in the example of the Ninevites and of Ahab, 1 King. 21:29. And

therefore seeing the Lord keepeth no certain course in these temporary chastisements, but sometimes inflicteth them upon the repentant whom he dearly loveth, and sometime spareth the wicked when they but outwardly humble themselves before him; therefore the Prophets speak doubtfully and exhort to repentance, referring the event to God's wise and gracious providence. And thus doubtfully doth David speak in this respect, 2 Sam. 12:22. Who can tell (said he) whether God will have mercy on me that the child may live? And chap. 16:12. It may be the Lord will look upon mine affliction; and yet though he were doubtful whether he should be freed from these temporal crosses, he was notwithstanding certainly persuaded of his election and salvation; as he professeth, Psal. 16:11. So that these places speaking of temporary chastisements, make nothing against the certainty of our election.

And like unto these, is that which they allege to the same purpose, Act. 8:22, where Peter exhorteth Simon Magus to repent of his wickedness, and to pray unto God, that if peradventure the wicked thought of his heart might be forgiven him. To which I answer, first, that the original word is translated, if peradventure, and in our Bibles, if it be possible, sometimes also signifieth, that truly, and in this sense it maketh nothing for doubting. Secondly, though we understand it as a speech of doubting, yet it maketh not for their purpose; for it is not to be referred unto God, as though it were doubtful whether he would forgive the sins of the Magician, if he did truly repent and call upon him; for he hath certainly assured us by his gracious promise, that whosoever truly repenteth him of his wicked ways, he will receive him to mercy, Ezek. 33:11. But it is to be referred to Simon Magus, of whose repentance and lively faith Peter might well doubt, least either they would be none at all, or else feigned and hypocritical, seeing his heart

was not right in the sight of God, but in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Lastly, though it should be a doubtful speech and be referred also to God, yet it maketh nothing against the certainty of faith; for the Apostle seeing him in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, thought it not fit to raise him up suddenly, by applying unto him the sweet promises of the Gospel, nor to cast those precious pearls before such a filthy swine, unless first he preserved them as it were in the casket of a doubtful and perplexed speech, from being trampled under his bemired feet, till he had washed them in the tears of unfeigned repentance. Moreover, he thus doubtfully speaketh to give him a more clear insight of the heinousness of his sin, as though it might be well doubted of, whether the Lord would forgive it or no, that so his mind hereby being least perplexed, might by the consideration of his horrible sin be beaten down and truly humbled; and because those things which are hardly obtained are more earnestly sought, therefore Peter intimateth unto him by this doubtful speech, that it was no easy matter to obtain forgiveness for such outrageous wickedness, that he might hereby work in the Magician more earnest and hearty repentance, and incite him to call upon the Lord for mercy with more vehemency and fervency of spirit. It is not therefore the Apostles meaning to overthrow the certainty of faith, or to call into question God's mercy, whether he will extend it or no to heinous offenders who truly repent of their sins and believe, for this were contrary to the whole course of the Gospel; but he useth this doubtful speech to this desperate sinner, that he might not make the sovereign salve of God's gracious promises base and contemptible, by applying it to the festered sores of a filthy dog, which were never cleansed with the sharp corrosives of the law; and also for the good of this malicious sinner, for he doth not absolutely assure him of mercy and forgiveness, that he might be

stirred up with more earnestness and care to seek it; for the easiness of obtaining maketh the suitor careless and negligent in seeking and suing; neither doth he absolutely exclude him from all hope of grace, least he should never labor after it, but desperately run on in his wickedness; for when hope is cut off, the desire also fainteth, and therefore he useth a perplexed and wise tempered speech, which on the one side might preserve him from secure presumption, and on the other side from falling into hellish desperation.

Lastly, they object that saying Eccl. 5:5, which they thus read: *De propitiato peccato noli esse sine metu, neque adicias peccatum super peccatum*. That is, be not without fear concerning sins forgiven, neither add sin unto sin. To which, first I answer, that this book is not canonical scripture, and therefore not to be alleged for the determining of questions in controversy, nor for the confirming of doctrines of faith. Secondly, I answer that they have corruptly translated the original text, for he willeth us not to fear concerning our sins forgiven, but concerning the forgiveness of them before they are remitted, least we should securely add sin unto sin, because forgiveness is promised whensoever we repent, and so abuse the mercy and long suffering of God to our just condemnation. So that he forbiddeth not to believe certainly, that our sins are remitted when God hath pardoned them, but he forbiddeth us to run on in sin securely, presuming upon forgiveness, as plainly appeareth by the original text and the whole drift and scope of the place. For in the verse going before he useth this speech: Say not I have sinned, and what evil hath happened unto me, for the Lord is long suffering, but yet he will not dismiss or acquit thee; and in this verse he biddeth us not to be without fear concerning the forgiveness of sin, adding sin unto sin, that is, we must not go on in sin presuming upon forgiveness: and ver. 6. Do

not say that his mercy is great, he will forgive my manifold sins: 7. For mercy and wrath are swift with him; but upon sinners his indignation shall rest. 8. Do not defer to turn unto the Lord, neither put it off from day today; for suddenly the wrath of the Lord shall break forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and thou shalt perish in the time of vengeance. In all which words he doth not take away the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins after we have truly repented of them, but carnal security and vain presumption, whereby men defer their repentance upon hope of mercy and forgiveness whensoever they repent. Lastly, though this place were to be understood concerning sins forgiven, yet the scope thereof is not to hinder our assurance of forgiveness when we have truly repented, but only that we do not after we have obtained remission of our sins, take occasion thereby of falling into sin again, and so abuse the mercy and goodness of God, using it as an argument to move us to go on in sin, because the Lord upon our repentance is always ready to receive us to mercy.

CHAP. XII. THE REASONS ALLEGED AGAINST THE ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION, ANSWERED.

And so much concerning the testimonies of scripture, which are alleged against the certainty of faith: now let us consider their reasons. First, they object that it is proud arrogancy and heretical presumption for a miserable sinner, without all doubting to assure himself that he is elected and shall be saved. To which I answer, that if with the pharisaical papists and proud justiciaries, we did build our assurance upon our own merits and worthiness, it were indeed intolerable arrogancy and proud presumption, not only certainly to believe, but even to doubt whether we are elected and shall be saved (for whereas doubting is there is some hope also) whereas the scriptures peremptorily conclude, that they who look for righteousness and salvation by the law, are under the curse, Gal. 3:10; and that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, Rom. 3:20; and that we are justified not by our deserts, in whole or in part, but freely by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, as it is, ver. 24. But seeing we wholly disclaim our own righteousness, and humbly acknowledging our own misery and wretchedness, do wholly rely

ourselves upon the gracious promises of God, and the merits of Christ Jesus, seeing we become nothing in ourselves in the work of our salvation that God may be all in all, seeing we cast away all glory from ourselves, that we may wholly glory in the Lord according to that Jer. 9:24. Let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me: This is not proud arrogancy nor heretical presumption, but Christian humility which giveth all glory unto God, leaving nothing to ourselves but the comfort which is wrought in our hearts, by the assurance we have of God's promises. Nay the more undoubtedly we trust in God's promises, the greater is our humility; for the more wretched we are in our own eyes, the more we see our imperfections, yea our nothing in God's sight; and hereby we are moved to go out of ourselves, to seek for salvation only in God's free grace and Christ's merits, and to rest in them with full assurance, as being in themselves all sufficient without our works and worthiness. On the other side the more we doubt of our salvation, in respect of our unworthiness, the more is our pride and arrogancy; for we would not doubt in regard of our unworthiness, unless we looked for salvation by our worthiness, and therefore we come so far short in faith and hope, as we find ourselves short in merits; and whence can this proceed but from arrogancy and pride, which maketh men to look for salvation in themselves, and to doubt of God's mercy and Christ's merits, unless they find that they have deserved them by their own works and worthiness? Let us therefore abhor this proud humility of the papists which maketh them doubt of God's merciful promises, and consequently of his truth; for as it is, 1 John. 5:10. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; and also of the sufficiency and value of that inestimable price which Christ Jesus hath given for our redemption, as though it were imperfect in itself, unless it be [stitched] and patched up with

our own merits and worthiness: and though we are most abject, wretched, and in a desperate case in respect of ourselves, yet let us have assured trust and confident boldness, yea a triumphant boasting and glorying in respect of our Savior Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, Eph. 3:12, Rom. 5:2. Notable is the saying of Augustine to this purpose, *Ideo praesume non de operatione tua sed de christi gratia*, presume therefore (saith he) not of thine own working but of Christ's grace, for ye are saved by grace saith the Apostle; therefore here is no arrogancy but faith, to show what thou hast received; it is not pride but devotion. So in another place, *Hoc dixit deus, hoc promisit, si parum est hoc, juravit*. The Lord hath said this, he hath promised it, and if this be not enough he hath sworn it. Because therefore the promise is sure and confirmed, not according to our merits but according to his mercy, let no man profess that with fear, of which he cannot doubt.

But they further urge, that humble doubting is better than presumptuous assurance; I answer, first that their doubting is full of pride, which maketh them look for salvation in their own worthiness, rather than in God's free mercy and Christ's merits: secondly that our faith and certain assurance is full of humility; for we freely confess our own unworthiness, and dare not offer before the seat of God's justice any righteousness that is in us, as desiring in whole or in part to be justified thereby; nay rather we pray with the Prophet, Psal. 143:2. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified; and though we know nothing by ourselves yet do we plainly affirm with the Apostle, that we are not hereby justified. 1 Cor. 4:4. But this humility doth not abate our faith and certain assurance, nay rather it doth confirm and increase it, for it maketh us to go out of ourselves, as finding no hope of salvation whereupon we may rest, and moveth us to seek for salvation in Christ, who is such a sure anchor-

hold that whosoever pitch the anchor of their hope on him, shall find it sure and steadfast, and whosoever build their faith on this foundation and corner stone, the power of hell shall never prevail against them.

Secondly, they object that we are unworthy of God's love, or to be elected, and therefore we cannot be assured thereof. I answer, this were true if God's election depended upon our worthiness and deserts; but seeing the Lord respecteth not anything in us, but elected us freely of his undeserved grace and mere goodwill; our unworthiness in ourselves may well stand with the assurance of our election: for those who are most unworthy need not to doubt of God's love and their election and salvation, so that they wholly rely upon God's mercy and Christ's merits by a true and lively faith; forasmuch as they are not grounded upon their worthiness, and therefore cannot be overthrown by their unworthiness. Notable is the saying of Augustine to this purpose. *Tria (inquit) sunt quae sic roborant & confirmant cor meum, ut nulla me penuriae meritorum &c.* There are three things (saith he) which so strengthen and confirm my heart, that no want of merits, no consideration of mine own vileness, no estimation of the heavenly blessedness, can deject me from the height of my hope: upon them my soul is surely settled. Wilt thou know what they are? I consider three things upon which my hope wholly relieth, to wit, the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, the ability of performance. Let now my foolish cogitation murmur as much as it will, saying, but who art thou, or how great is that glory; or with what merits doest thou hope to obtain it? And I will boldly answer, I know whom I have believed, and I am assured, because God hath adopted me in great love, because he is true in his promise, because he is powerful in performance, for he may do what he will.

Thirdly, they object that our faith is weak and feeble, and by reason thereof the faithful (as appeareth by continual experience) are assaulted with doubting, and grievously shaken with Satan's temptations, so as there can be no such certainty of faith as we speak of. To which I answer, that weakness of faith is not opposed as contrary to certainty, but to strongness and full persuasion, and therefore weakness and certainty may well stand together. Neither do we imagine such a certainty of faith which is never shaken with doubting, nor assaulted with temptations; nay rather we teach that those whom God indueth with most faith, he most exerciseth in the conflict of temptations, like a wise captain who setteth that soldier which is best armed and strongest, to bear the brunt in the forefront of the battle: and the devil is most ready to assault those who most resist him, and most violently to strike where he seeth the shield of faith held up to defend; and therefore our Savior hath taught all his faithful children to pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. But withal we affirm that though this weak faith be assaulted with Satan's temptations, yet is it never overcome; though it be opposed with doubting yet it never falleth from assurance and certain persuasion; though it be sometimes shadowed, and the shining light thereof dimmed, yea though it be for a time hid and covered, yet in its own nature it remaineth firm and steadfast; like the sun which always shineth, though oftentimes by reason of the interposition of the clouds or the earth, we cannot discern the beams thereof; or like unto the fire which being hid under the ashes doth retain his natural heat, although we feel it not: So our faith retaineth in itself his certainty and assurance as it were his light and heat, when as it is shadowed with the clouds of doubting, and covered under the ashes of Satan's temptations.

But it may be demanded how a weak faith assaulted with Satan's temptations can continue certain, seeing the strongest 0 faith can do no more but certainly persuade? I answer, that our certainty respecteth not our faith itself but the object thereof, namely God's mercy and Christ's merits: and therefore seeing a weak faith doth as well apply unto us the mercies of God and merits of Christ as a stronger, therefore also it certainly persuadeth us as well and truly, though not so strongly and fully of our election and salvation, as a stronger doth. So that when we have the least spark of faith, it doth illuminate our minds, so as we can truly discern the loving countenance of the Lord shining upon us though somewhat dimly, and as it were a far off; even as he that is pore-blind doth as certainly see the sun, as he who is most sharp sighted, though not so clearly; and as he who is in a dark dungeon doth discern the light as surely at a little hole, though he be compassed about with black darkness, as he who is in the open fields; so when we are as it were pore-blind, and compassed about with the dark mist of ignorance, yet by the dim sight of faith we certainly discern God's love and favor shining upon us, though the more we increase in knowledge and faith, the more clearly we perceive it, till at last having attained unto fullness of faith, we see him near at hand and as it were face to face.

True it is that our faith which is in itself weak and feeble, and compassed about with the darkness of ignorance, is mixed and turmoiled with much fear and doubting, by reason of our natural inclination unto diffidence and incredulity, the manifold temptations of Satan, and the burden of our sins lying heavy upon our consciences: which maketh God's deer children to groan and complain, yea sometime to murmur and repine against God himself, as though he were their enemy, because he suffereth them thus to be vexed; but still it riseth after it hath received a foil, and gathereth new

strength against all new assaults, until in the end it obtaineth full victory, so as all the faithful may say with the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4:8. We are afflicted on every side, yet are we not in distress; in poverty but not overcome of poverty. 9. We are persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but we perish not. For though their faith be weak, and their temptations vehement and violent, yet this bruised reed is not broken, this smoking flax is not quenched; for as the reed in a boisterous tempest is blown down even to the ground, but when the tempest is past riseth up again to his former estate; so though the boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations beat us down even to earth, yet by faith we rise again when the storm is overblown.

Secondly, it may be demanded how the faith of God's children can be said to be certain, seeing it is continually assaulted and often foiled with doubting, which is opposed to the certainty of faith. To which we may easily answer, if we know and remember that every Christian is divided into two parts, the flesh and the spirit, which continually fight and strive the one against the other; and as they themselves are thus opposed, so are their qualities and fruits, for in the spirit is faith, love, hope, zeal, joy in the holy Ghost, and such other sanctifying graces; in the flesh is doubting, and infidelity, hatred of God, presumption and desperation, coldness, dullness, yea deadness in religion, fear, horror, and such like corruptions, so as we may say with the Apostle, I know that in my flesh, that is, in my unregenerate part dwelleth no good thing, Rom. 7:18. Now as there is a continual war between the flesh and the spirit, so also between their qualities and fruits; for faith is continually assaulted with doubting and infidelity, love of God with the hatred of God, hope with presumption and desperation, zeal with coldness and dullness in religion, the joy in the holy Ghost with horror and fear of God's anger, the curse of the law and

condemnation; and sometimes the one sometimes the other hath the upper hand, both in the meantime retaining their nature and properties, although (as we say) *remissis gradibus*, not exercising them in that measure and degree, as they do when they have victory and give the other the foil. For example, when in some grievous affliction, the hatred of God doth assault the love of God in our hearts, and doth so foil and wound it, that we can scarce discern that it breatheth or retaineth life, yet notwithstanding the love of God even at that instant is not turned into hatred, nor receiveth any properties thereof, but still retaineth his own nature and properties, which again clearly appear and show themselves when the conflict is ended. The like may be said of our hope, zeal, joy in the holy Ghost, and other graces, when they are most foiled by the corruption of the flesh which fight against them, so as they cannot possibly exercise their own actions and functions, yet do they not receive any carnal properties, nor lose any of their own, but retain still their own nature, which again manifesteth itself when the assault is ended. Even as fire covered over with ashes retaineth still his own nature of light and heat, though then by reason of the ashes the light be not seen, nor the heat felt; but when the ashes are removed and new matter added unto it, then it shineth and burneth and heateth as much as it did before: so when the graces of God's spirit are covered (as it were) under the ashes of our corruption, they are not discerned by their properties and effects; but when the corruptions are removed by virtue of God's spirit, and the graces nourished with hearing of the word, prayer, holy conferences, and such like spiritual exercises, as it were with new matter added unto them, then do they again shine in their brightness, and exercise their wonted strength in all good duties to God and our neighbor.

And as it is, with all other graces, so also with faith, which is often assaulted with doubting and infidelity, and sometimes also so foiled that we can hardly discern any breath or life in it; but yet even then it retaineth its own nature and properties, and doth not receive the nature and properties of doubting; but as the tree which is shaken with boisterous blasts of wind and is not overthrown, doth in the midst of the tempest live and suck nourishment out of the earth, and still retains his own nature and properties; so when our faith is shaken with the boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations, and with our own natural doubting and infidelity, yet it still liveth and sucketh nourishment out of God's gracious promises, and still it retaineth his own property of certain persuasion, though then it do not exercise it in action, so manifestly as before and after the conflict of temptations, and as the shaking of the tree is not of the nature thereof, for of itself it standeth firm and steady, but by outward accident, namely the wind blowing upon it: so is not uncertain wavering and unconstant doubting of the nature of faith, for of itself it is firm and certain; but it cometh by outward accident from the boisterous blasts of infidelity, and the temptations of Satan which (as it were) violently blow upon it, which being past, it remaineth like the tree firm and constant. And as the graces of God's spirit, and the flesh and the corruptions thereof do still retain in themselves their own nature and properties, so also do they most commonly show themselves in their diverse fruits and effects, and that oftentimes in the conflict and time of temptation, so that the regenerate man may at the same time feel in himself contrary affections and actions; for the spirit acknowledging God's goodness mercy and truth in his promises, is replenished with joy, being in hope to enjoy them, on the other side the flesh feeling present misery, and the sharpness of afflictions, sorroweth and

grieveth. The spirit apprehending and applying unto it the sweet promises of the Gospel, doth quietly rest upon them; the flesh seeing its own corruption, and the huge weight of sin that presseth it down, feareth and doubteth: the spirit being assured of everlasting happiness, triumpheth with joy, desiring nothing more than to be dissolved and to be with Christ; the flesh finding itself guilty of sin, and in this respect subject to the anger of God and condemnation, feareth and trembleth to think upon death: The spirit conceiveth of God as of a merciful father in Christ, and in all necessities flieth unto him by hearty prayer; the flesh conceiveth of him as of an angry and severe judge, and therefore flieth from him, desiring rather to seek for help anywhere else than of the Lord: so that the Christian by reason hereof, at the same time findeth in himself opposition between action and action, affection and affection. For at the same instant, while the flesh, having in it the conscience of sin and sense of guiltiness, doth murmur repine and complain upon God, as an enemy which is ready to destroy us; the spirit doth fly unto God by a lively faith, and committeth itself to his providence, will and protection, expecting salvation from him only; which it could never do, if it were not assured that we were in his love and favor. And in this the Christian may not unfitly be compared to a child, who having been sharply corrected by his father, doth avoid his presence as though he were his enemy; but if at the same time some sudden danger affright him, before all other he runneth to his father for safeguard and protection: so when our heavenly father hath sharply corrected us, either with some outward or inward afflictions, we flee from his presence as though he were our enemy; but when an imminent danger overtaketh us, and we be in peril to be supplanted with Satan and his assistants, who are our enemies in deed, then the son-like affection which is wrought in our hearts by God's spirit, doth

move us to run unto him before all other, desiring and craving his aid and assistance.

And thus it appeareth, that though the flesh and the spirit be mixed together, yet they retain their own natures, properties and effects; and though faith which is a grace of the spirit, be mingled with doubting, yet this doubting is not of the nature of faith, which in itself is certain and assured, nay, it is not an infirmity of faith, as lameness is an infirmity of the joints, and dimness of the sight, for it is not any way incident to the nature thereof: and therefore much less is it a commendable virtue of faith, as the Papists teach, but it is a fruit of unbelief, which is in the part unregenerate, and is opposed unto faith, as appeareth, Rom. 4:20, and consequently, though faith be assaulted with doubting, yet in its own nature it may and doth remain certain and assured.

Fourthly, they object that it is rash presumption, and proud boldness for any man to search into the mystery of God's secret counsels, or to take upon him peremptorily to determine that he is one whom God hath elected. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? As it is, 1 Cor. 2:16. I answer that it is true indeed, whosoever prieth into God's hidden counsels and secret decree of predestination, is proud and presumptuous, and shall in the end receive the punishment of both, being given over of God to fall into many errors, and in the end utter desperation: and therefore it is very dangerous, yea, pernicious to our souls, if we labor after the assurance of our election by using these means, and judge of God's decree, according to the conceit of our own reason and doubtful speculations. But yet though the will of God be in itself secret and not to be searched into; this must not hinder us from looking into his will revealed, though we can gather no certainty of our election by searching into his secret decree, yet this is no impediment

why we may not gather it out of his word, where he hath revealed his decree and the execution thereof: though we can have no assurance by our own speculations, yet we may attain unto it by the testimony of God's spirit, which witnesseth to our spirits that we are the sons of God, which also searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, and is given unto us that we also might know the things which God hath given us, as the Apostle teacheth us, 1 Cor. 2:10,12, and therefore it is no pride or presumption to be certain and assured of that which the Lord hath revealed in his word, to this end that we might be certainly assured thereof. But it may be demanded how this certainty can be gathered out of the Scriptures. I answer, that if we would attain unto it, we must not seek it in the law, where the promises of life and salvation are made upon the condition of our own works and worthiness, which condition we can never perform, and therefore can never be assured of the promise: But out of the Gospel, which doth not only show that some are predestinated to life, and some rejected, neither doth it only speak of our election, as it was ordained in God's secret decree in itself, or revealed in his word, but also it setteth out unto us the execution of the decree, with the causes, means, signs and effects of our election, and how it is accomplished for the bringing us to those joys to which God hath chosen us. First therefore it showeth the decree of God concerning our election. Secondly, God's decree concerning our redemption by the death and obedience of Christ our mediator.

Thirdly, the decree of God concerning the calling of his Church by the ministry of the word, that they may be engrafted into the body of Christ, and so participate with him in all his benefits to their salvation. Fourthly, the decree concerning the sending of his spirit into the hearts of his chosen, by the inward operation whereof the word is made effectual for the

begetting of faith and repentance. Fifthly and lastly, his decree concerning the justifying and saving of those who repent truly of their sins, and apprehending and applying unto themselves by a lively faith, Christ and his merits and obedience, do approach unto the throne of grace to receive mercy and forgiveness. And all these are so linked together that they can never possibly be severed, so that he who is assured of one, may be assured of all; whosoever is certain that he hath faith and repentance, may be certain also of his election, though he never presumptuously search into God's secret counsel.

Fifthly, they object that there is no certainty of faith, which is not grounded upon God's word: but there is no place of God's word which assureth us of our particular election and salvation: and therefore we can have no certainty of faith concerning our particular election and salvation. I answer; though the Lord give us no particular promise in his word, yet he giveth us that which is equally effectual, and of like force; namely his general promise without any limitation, exception or condition, but the condition of faith and repentance, with a commandment to apply the same. And because naturally we are unable in ourselves to perform this, therefore he hath ordained the ministry of the word, and the use of the sacraments, which he maketh effectual by the inward operation of his spirit, for the begetting and confirming of our faith, and stirring us up to repentance; which being wrought in us, we may as certainly be persuaded that the general promises belong unto us, as if they were made unto us particularly and by name.

Sixthly, they object that we cannot be assured of the sufficiency of our faith and repentance, and therefore we can have no certain assurance of our election and salvation. I answer; this reason were good if our election and

salvation depended upon the worthiness or measure of our faith and repentance; but seeing that they depend not thereupon, but upon God's free mercy, and the worthiness and sufficiency of Christ's merits and obedience, therefore though our faith be never so weak, and our repentance but in small measure, yet so they be true and unfeigned, not dissembled and hypocritical, we may certainly be assured of our election and salvation, for a weak faith doth apply Christ and all his benefits unto us as well as a strong, though not in so strong and perfect a manner, as shall appear hereafter. But yet we must not content ourselves with a small and weak measure, but labor to grow up from faith to faith, till we become perfect men in Christ.

Seventhly, they object that though there were no cause of doubting, so long as we look upon God's mercy and truth in his promises, and Christ's obedience and merits, yet at least there is cause of doubting when we look upon ourselves, and find our great indisposition to perform the condition of faith and repentance, which God requireth of all who shall be partakers of his promises, and our manifold imperfections and great unworthiness of the least of God's mercies. And thus these jugglers play fast and loose, making their faith like unto the ignis fatuus, or going fire, which interchangeably sometimes shineth clearly, and sometimes vanisheth and leaveth behind it nothing but black darkness. But let us constantly oppose ourselves against such inconstancy, and in no wise admit of such mutable variety in our faith, which maketh it more changeable than the Moon, which one while shineth with full brightness, and in small distance of time cannot be discerned; and to this end let us know, first, that though in ourselves we be not worthy of the least of God's mercies, yet our unworthiness maketh us not incapable of the greatest, for all God's benefits are his free gifts, which he promiseth and

bestoweth without any respect of our worthiness or deserts, of his mere grace and undeserved love: and therefore as when we are most worthy in our own conceit, there is no reason why we should presume the more; so when we find ourselves unworthy, there is no cause why we should hope the less, or be more weakly assured of God's promises; for as they are not made upon the condition of our worthiness, so they are not disannulled and made void by our unworthiness, otherwise no man living could have assurance of them, seeing all men living are unworthy of them. But the Lord hath made all his promises unto us in Christ, who was sent to be our Mediator, to the end that we who were altogether unworthy in ourselves, might be made worthy in him of all God's mercies and benefits. And therefore whosoever lay hold upon Christ, with a true though a weak faith, and bring forth the fruits thereof in repentance, they may certainly be assured of their election and salvation, notwithstanding their unworthiness. Secondly, we are to know that our faith doth not respect ourselves in ourselves, neither are we the object thereof, but Christ and his merits and obedience; whom our faith doth not behold standing aloof of (as the Papists dream) but as he is united unto us, and become our head and we his members; so as now we cannot look upon ourselves but we must look upon Christ, because he is in us and we in him. And therefore when we consider the greatness of our sins we despair not, because now we look upon them as they are translated from us and laid upon Christ, who hath fully satisfied his fathers justice by his alone and all-sufficient sacrifice upon the cross; when we consider our imperfections we doubt not of God's promises, because they are covered with his perfect righteousness; when we consider our unworthiness we are not discouraged, seeing by communicating of Christ's worthiness we are made worthy; when we consider that in ourselves we are

subject to the curse of the law, the anger of God and eternal condemnation, we are nevertheless assured of everlasting life and salvation, because we are united to Christ our head, who hath taken away our curse and nailed it to his cross, borne his fathers displeasure to reconcile us unto him, and was condemned and suffered death to free us from death and condemnation, and to make us heirs of life and salvation. So that now we behold the huge debt of our sins, as it is, discharged and cancelled with his merits and full satisfaction; we behold our imperfections, but as perfected by his perfections; we look upon our unworthiness, but as it is, ennobled with his worthiness; when we set before us the curse of the law, the anger of God and sentence of condemnation, we consider them as taken away and swallowed up of Christ's death and full obedience; because now we are united unto Christ, and he is become ours that we might become his; he hath taken upon him our sins and unworthiness, that he might make us partakers of his righteousness and worthiness. And therefore that which God hath wisely joined together let not our faith fondly separate; for if it be unlawful in carnal marriages, then much more in the spiritual marriage between Christ and his Church. But let us look upon ourselves, not in our selves, but as we are united unto Christ, and then our self-worthiness of hell and destruction will not abate our assurance of life and salvation.

Eighthly, they object that every heretic, epicure and worldling, continuing in their sins and wickedness, may fain unto themselves such a persuasion of the certainty of election: but this is nothing to the purpose; for the question is not of epicures and worldlings, who have no faith or a dead faith, but of true believers, who bring forth the fruits of their faith, at least in a holy desire and endeavor of serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness. For they that cannot be assured that they have faith, cannot have any certainty

of their election; but none can have any assurance of faith, unless they bring forth the fruits of their faith in dying to sin and rising again to newness of life, for faith purifieth the heart and worketh by love: and therefore such as live in their sins without repentance having no faith, can have no certainty of their election, though they may delude themselves with a fond persuasion which hath no other ground but carnal security and fond presumption: but hence it followeth not, that because a dead faith affordeth no true certainty, therefore a lively faith doth it not; because a profane epicure or carnal worldling, deceiveth himself with a vain opinion, therefore those that are truly converted, mortified unto sin and raised up to newness of life, can have no certainty of their election and salvation. For what similitude is there between light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness, the children of God and the children of Belial, the repentant and unrepentant, faith and no faith?

Lastly, they object that if we teach this doctrine of the certainty of election, men will abuse it to nourish in them carnal security and presumption. To which I answer, that wicked men abuse the whole doctrine of the Gospel to their destruction; for when they are taught that God is most gracious and merciful, that Christ hath died for us, and given himself as a sufficient price to redeem us out of the power of sin, Satan, death and damnation, and maketh intercession for us to God his father; that the Lord is slow to wrath and ready to forgive, they take occasion hereby of continuing in their sins, and deferring their repentance, till God take them away and consume them in his heavy displeasure: but hence it followeth not that the Gospel must not be taught, because carnal men abuse it to their just condemnation; for though to these it be the savor of death unto death, yet to those who are saved it is the savor of life unto life, as it is, 2 Cor. 2:16.

Though it be foolishness to those that perish, yet it is the power of God to those whom God hath ordained to salvation, and God is no less glorified in the one by showing his mercy, than in the other by showing his justice. Though worldly men abuse it to carnal security, yet the godly are the more incited thereby to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life: for like loving children, the more they are assured of the love of their heavenly father, and secured of his mercy and bountiful benefits, the more they love him again, the more they love him the more zealous they are of his glory, and the greater their zeal is, the greater is their care in making the light of their godly and Christian lives to shine before men, that their heavenly father may be glorified. So that it is not the fault of this precious seed, but the barrenness of the ground which maketh it fruitless, or else for good wheat sendeth tares cockle and darnel; it is not any defect or ill disposition in this sweet smelling flower, but the venomous nature of these spiders which turn honey into poison: and therefore the seed must be cast upon the earth, though there be stones with the good ground which will never bring forth fruit; the flowers of sweet consolation must not be pulled up by the roots and cast away. For though the spider gathereth poison, yet the profitable Bee will gather honey out of them. Secondly, when we teach the certainty of election, we do not teach that men must gather it out of God's secret counsel, but from their own sanctification, by which they may be assured that they are justified, called and elected: and therefore whosoever are not sanctified but continue in their sins without repentance, can have no assurance by our doctrine that they are elected or shall be saved; nay contrariwise, we teach out of God's word, that whosoever live in the flesh shall die, Rom. 8:13, that they which perform the lusts thereof shall never inherit the kingdom of God, Gal. 5:19,20,21, that none who continue in

their unrighteousness and uncleanness shall enter into the heavenly Jerusalem, 1 Cor. 6:9,10. Rev. 21:27; but shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; as it is, ver. 8. Now what stronger bridle to curb in our unruly flesh when it is ready to run into sin, than to be assured that if we live in sin and fulfill our carnal lusts, we are in the state of condemnation? What sharper spur to prick us forward when we are ready to faint, or slack our pace in the Christian race of holiness and righteousness, than to consider that our sanctification and newness of life, is the only means whereby we may come to the assurance of our election and salvation?

CHAP. XIII. OF OUR REDEMPTION.

And thus much concerning our election and the certainty thereof. The next cause of our salvation is our redemption by Jesus Christ: for as the Lord hath from all eternity elected us to salvation, of his mere mercy without any respect of our works or worthiness; so he hath ordained in this his eternal decree, our Savior Christ to be the Mediator who should work the work of our salvation, and as it were the conduit whereby he would convey his grace, mercy and everlasting salvation unto us; and hath set him apart to be our Savior and Redeemer, who should save and deliver us out of the captivity and bondage of our spiritual enemies, and restore us to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

This our redemption is an effect of God's election, whereby our Savior Christ (being set apart of his father for this purpose) hath freed and delivered all God's elect out of the captivity of their spiritual enemies, sin death and the devil; by offering himself for the price of their redemption, and a sufficient sacrifice for sin, for the appeasing of his fathers displeasure and satisfying of his justice; to the end that being delivered, they may serve

him in holiness and righteousness all the days of this life, and afterwards may inherit the kingdom of glory, and the crown of eternal happiness which is purchased for them.

First I say, that it is an effect of God's election; for whom he had chosen to everlasting life in Christ, those by Christ he hath saved and redeemed, and those only as we shall see afterwards.

Secondly, I show who is our Savior and Redeemer, namely Christ Jesus, who only saveth us from our sins, as it is, Matth. 1:21; Neither is there salvation in any other, as it is, Act. 4:12. For as there is but one God, so there is but one Mediator between God and man, which is the man Jesus Christ, as it is, 1 Tim. 2:5. And by him alone we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and that without any respect of our worthiness, but according to his rich grace, Eph. 1:7. And though we do not exclude God the Father, from the work of our redemption, for he is the author and first cause, who hath so loved us that he sent his son to save and redeem us; nor the holy Ghost who applieth unto us the merits and efficacy of Christ's death, making them effectual for our salvation; yet if we speak properly, our Savior Christ only can be called our Redeemer, and that in these respects; first, because he alone was ordained and deputed to perfect the work of our redemption; secondly, because he only was God and man, both which were necessarily required in our Mediator and Redeemer, that he might have full right and ability to redeem us; thirdly, because he alone gave himself to be the price of our redemption; and lastly, because in him only there is perfect redemption as being our head, who not only hath salvation in himself, but also deriveth it to all the members of his body.

Thirdly, I set down the captivity itself out of which we were redeemed; namely, not the captivity of Egypt or Babylon, nor out of the slavery of the

Turk, Spaniard, or any other earthly Tyrant, whose thralldom might well be bitter but not long, because our lives are short; and grievous to the body, but extendeth not to the soul: but Christ hath delivered us out of the bondage of sin, Satan, hell and death, in which we should have been enthralled and fearfully tormented forever and ever, not in body alone but in soul also.

Fourthly, I show the price which he hath given for our redemption, namely, not silver and gold, or any corruptible thing, but himself; even his body to be crucified and his blood to be shed, that so his fathers justice being satisfied and his wrath appeased, we might be set free out of the thralldom of our spiritual enemies. But it may be demanded, how it can truly be said that Christ hath redeemed us by paying the price of our redemption, seeing the scriptures testify that by his power he hath forcibly delivered us out of the hands of our spiritual enemies. So, Heb. 2:14, it is said, that Christ destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil. And Col. 2:15, the Apostle showeth, that he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath led them openly and triumphed over them. And Luk. 11:22, he is compared to a valiant champion who hath thrust the strong man Satan out of his possession: by which it may appear, that our Savior hath not redeemed us by giving a price after a legal manner, but by force, and as it were by conquest. I answer, that Christ hath both paid the price of our redemption, and also hath delivered us forcibly by his power; for he paid the price unto God to whom he offered the sacrifice of himself, that it might be a full satisfaction for sin, and a sufficient price to redeem us out of the captivity of our spiritual enemies, and to purchase the favor of God, and our heavenly inheritance in his kingdom: and therefore in respect of God the Father, to whom our Savior offered himself, he is said to have redeemed us by giving a ransom for us. But when God's justice was fully satisfied, Christ

dealt not with our spiritual enemies by entreaty (much less offered he this price of our redemption to Satan; for if no sacrifice might lawfully be offered unto any save God alone, much more unlawful was it that this sacrifice of Christ's body, should be offered unto the devil) but by his almighty power he overcame the power of darkness, vanquished Satan, subdued death, and broke open the prison of the grave, and so by strong hand set all God's elect at liberty. For after that the debt of our sins was discharged, our ransom paid, and the handwriting of ordinances cancelled and nailed unto the cross, these our spiritual enemies had no just interest unto us, nor anything to allege why they should longer hold us in their captivity; but yet the strong man who had taken possession would not willingly lose it, unless he were overcome with a greater strength: and therefore our Savior Christ having bought us of his father, and so become our true owner, buckled with our spiritual enemies, overcame these principalities and powers, triumphed gloriously over them, and freed us out of their tyrannical jurisdiction.

But it may be objected that we were captives unto Satan, and therefore the price of redemption was to be paid unto him, and not unto God the father who held us not in his captivity. I answer that though Satan held us in his captivity, yet not in his own right, for we had not sinned against him to whom we were not bound to perform obedience, nor were indebted unto him; but we had sinned against God, whose servants we were by right of creation, and had infinitely run into his debt, which we were altogether unable to pay; and therefore like a just judge he condemned us to the perpetual prison of death, and committed us to the custody of Satan, as unto a iaylor, to be kept in his bondage, till we had satisfied for our sins and discharged our debt: which being impossible to us, our Savior Christ having

assumed our nature and become our surety and mediator, paid that we owed, and suffered that which we had deserved, and so fully satisfying his fathers justice, hath purchased our redemption; so as now Satan had no more authority to retain us in his captivity, then the jailor hath of holding him in prison who by the judge is released, or the executioner of hanging him whom the judge hath acquitted or pardoned. And therefore tyrannically exercising still his jurisdiction, our Savior by strong hand overcame him and all the power of hell, that so he might set us at liberty whom his fathers just sentence had acquitted and his mercy pardoned.

The last thing to be considered is the end of our redemption, namely that we should no longer serve sin and Satan, out of whose bondage we are released; but become the servants of Christ, who hath redeemed us, serving him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives; that so glorifying him here on earth, he may glorify us in heaven, and make us partakers of those everlasting joys, which by his death and bloodshed he hath purchased for us.

CHAP. XIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
CONCERNING OUR REDEMPTION,
WHEREWITH HE MOVETH THE
WORLDLING TO PRESUMPTION,
ANSWERED.

And thus have I shown what our redemption is: now let us consider of those temptations of Satan which he suggesteth into the minds of men, whereby he laboreth to deprive them of this great benefit, and to keep them still in his captivity, or to pull them back again when they are escaped. And these are of two sorts, the first leading to security and presumption, the other to doubting and desperation. For if he have to deal with worldly men; who were never truly converted unto God, he laboreth to persuade them that they are redeemed by Christ, and therefore though they live in their sins, yet they shall be saved, for Christ came into the world to save sinners: but when he assaulteth the true Christian, who is indeed the redeemed of the Lord; then he moveth him to doubt and despair, either of the sufficiency or of the efficacy, of the work of our redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.

That he may continue the worldly man in his carnal security, and fond presumption, he useth two principal reasons; the first, that the redemption wrought by Christ is universal, and effectual for the salvation of all the

world; out of which he frameth this temptation. Christ hath shed his precious blood, and suffered death for all the world; and hath redeemed all mankind which were lost in Adam, out of the bondage of Satan death and hell; why therefore shouldest thou be so strict in flying sin, with which thou art so much delighted? Why dost thou strive against the stream of thy corruptions? And wherefore shouldest thou take any great pains in the works of holiness and righteousness, which are so bitter and unpleasant to thy taste and appetite? For Christ came into the world to save all men, and not those only who are so strict in their ways; he came to redeem the whole world, and gave himself as a sufficient ransom for all men: and therefore doubtless he will not lose his labor, nor spill his blood in vain; he will not willingly let any perish, whom he hath purchased at so high a rate, and redeemed with so dear a price: he is also so powerful that nothing shall be able to pull them out of his hand, as himself affirmeth, John. 10:28; and so wise that he would not shed his blood, for those whom he would not save. And who can imagine that God who is most just, will impute those sins unto thee for which Christ hath suffered, inflict death on thee for whom Christ died, and require that debt again which is already discharged? Or who can imagine that God, who is immutable, should show such inconstancy as to send his son into the world, to suffer death for the redemption of those whom he now will not save; for if he would who could resist his will or withstand his power? And therefore if he hath redeemed all, surely he will save all, and consequently thee amongst the rest, though thou live as thou list and follow the lusts of thine own heart: for thy sins and unbelief cannot make his purpose void, nor annihilate the work of thy redemption; nay the more thy sins abound, the more his grace will abound also.

For the answering of which temptation, we are to know, that universal redemption which is the ground and foundation thereof, is an idle dream of man's brain, which cannot be justified by the word of God which is the touchstone of all truth; neither hath our Savior Christ redeemed any other, than those whom he effectually calleth unto the saving knowledge of their redemption, indueth with true faith and unfeigned repentance, justifieth, sanctifieth, and lastly saveth, if we respect the purpose of God, and the will of our blessed Savior; although indeed the price he gave for our redemption, was of sufficient value for the sins of all the world, if it were applied by a lively faith.

But because this doctrine hath many enemies, it is not sufficient to propound it unless I prove it: and therefore I will show first by testimonies of scriptures, and after by strong reasons, that our Savior Christ hath died for, and by his death redeemed, those only whom he endueth with true faith and unfeigned repentance, and not for all the world as they imagine. Matth. 20:28, it is said, that he came into the world to give his life a ransom for many, and 26:28, that his blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. And Isa. 53:11, that Christ should justify many by bearing their iniquities. So that he hath not given his life a ransom and shed his blood, and by bearing their iniquities justified all, but many, that is, part of all. Luk. 2:34. Simeon saith, that Christ was appointed by God's decree, for the fall and rising again of many, that is for the fall of many reprobates, and the rising again of many who are elected, and therefore not for the redemption of all. So Christ saith that he layeth down his life for his sheep, John. 10:15, and therefore not for wolves and goats, for his friends, John. 15:14, and therefore not for his wicked enemies; for us, that is, for the company of the faithful believers, Rom. 8:32,33, and therefore not for the synagogue of

Satan and wicked unbelievers. So Matth. 1:21, he is said to be the Savior of his people, and not of aliens and strangers; and to have given himself for his Church, Eph. 5:25, and not for those who have no fellowship in the communion of saints; that he should die for the nation, that is as John saith for all God's children, Jews and Gentiles, John. 11:52, and therefore not for the wicked, and the children of Satan. So that Apostle, Rom. 3:22, saith that the righteousness of God (that is, the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed unto us by God, or the righteousness of Christ God and man) is manifested upon all and unto all that believe; and ver. 23, that God hath set forth Christ to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, and ver. 26. That he is the justifier of him, which is of the faith of Jesus. Where the imputation of Christ's righteousness, reconciliation with God, and justification, is restrained to the believers only. And to the same purpose is that of the Apostle, Heb. 5:9, where Christ is said to be the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him, and therefore not unto them who continue in their rebellion not observing his will, nor submitting themselves to be ruled by the scepter of his word.

And as by these places it is apparent, that Christ and his benefits are restrained to the faithful, so also in other places the unbelievers and such as continue in their wickedness, are flatly excluded from the participation of them. John. 3:18. He that believeth in him shall not be condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already. And ver. 36. He that believeth in the son hath everlasting life, and he that obeyeth not the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. So, Rom. 8:9. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is not his; and consequently it followeth that if he be not Christ's, then Christ and his benefits belong not unto him. And the Apostle, 1 John. 3:8, plainly affirmeth that he who committeth sin

(that is, he who liveth in sin without repentance) is of the devil, and that he who is borne of God (that is, regenerate by his spirit) sinneth not, that is, liveth not in his sins, neither committeth them with full consent of will. And Paul willeth Timothy to instruct his hearers, that they might come to amendment out of the snare of the devil; whereby it is manifest that those in whom sin raineth, are not of Christ but of Satan, and that notwithstanding Christ's death they are still in the snare of the devil till they come to amendment of life; because the blood of Christ is not effectual to free any out of their spiritual bondage, till it be applied unto them by a lively faith.

And thus it appeareth by plain testimonies, that the redemption wrought by Christ belongeth only to the faithful; which also by virtue of Christ's death and bloodshed, have their sins and corruptions in some measure mortified; and not unto the wicked, who live and die in their sins without repentance. Now I will also confirm this truth by strong reasons. First, those who were never known of Christ (that, is acknowledged for his) were never redeemed by his precious bloodshed; neither is it probable that the father would give his well-beloved son, and that the son would give himself for the redemption of those, whom in his eternal council he had decreed to reject, or (as all confess) whom he foresaw should perish: but our Savior will profess to the workers of iniquity that he never knew them, Matth. 7:23: and therefore he never gave himself for their redemption.

Secondly, for whomsoever Christ hath offered a sacrifice unto his father, for them also he maketh intercession and is become their advocate; neither is it probable that Christ would die for those for whom he will not entreat, and that he would offer the sacrifice of his body for those for whom he would not offer the sacrifice of his lips. Besides it was the office of the same high priest to offer sacrifice and to pray for the people, and

consequently of our Savior Christ, as appeareth, 1 John. 2:1,2, where he is said as well to be our advocate, as the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins: and the Apostle Paul, Rom. 8:35, saith, that as Christ died for us, so he maketh intercession for us; but our Savior Christ flatly excludeth, from all participation of the fruit of his intercession, all those who are of the world, that is, all mere worldlings. John. 17:9. I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me; and the Apostle saith, that as he perfectly saveth, so also he maketh intercession for those who come unto God by him, that is, true believers only: and therefore for them alone he hath offered himself, a sacrifice unto his father.

Thirdly, Christ hath died for those alone in whom he hath attained unto the end of his death; for whatsoever attaineth not his end is done in vain, which argueth want of wisdom, or power, in the agent and efficient, neither of which without blasphemy can be ascribed unto Christ, who is in both infinite: but the end of Christ's death (that is, the eternal salvation of those for whom he died) is attained unto only in the elect and faithful; for as it is, Mar. 16:16. He that shall believe, shall be saved; but he that will not believe, shall be damned. And John. 3:36. He that believeth in the son hath everlasting life, and he that obeyeth not the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him: And therefore, Christ hath died for those alone, who believe and bring forth the fruits of their faith in obedience, and not for the unbelievers and disobedient.

Fourthly, if all were redeemed by the death of Christ, then should they also be saved: for what should hinder them from salvation, who are redeemed, seeing they have received the pardon and remission of their sins, as appeareth, Eph. 1:7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of our sins. Col. 1:14. And consequently whosoever are

redeemed are justified, and also heirs of eternal blessedness; for blessed are those whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, as it is, Psal. 32:1. Seeing also Christ who hath redeemed us, is stronger than Satan and all the power of hell, and therefore all their spiritual enemies conjoined together, cannot pluck those whom he hath redeemed out of his hand violently and against his will, neither can we with any probable show of reason imagine that he would willingly lose those whom he hath redeemed with the inestimable price of himself, neither will it stand with the justice of God to impute the sins of any to their condemnation, for which Christ hath fully satisfied, nor to exact that debt again which he hath paid: and therefore if Christ had died for all, God in his justice could not choose but save all: and Christ might well say to his father, to what purpose have I died if thou destroyest those whom I have saved? What profit is in my blood, if thou condemnest those whom I have redeemed?

Lastly, if he died and by his death redeemed all; then also he died for and redeemed the Pagans, Turks, Atheists and Epicures, who were out of the Church and covenant of grace; and so justification, redemption and salvation should be out of the Church, and be extended to those whom God never received into his covenant; which is quite contrary to the whole course of the scriptures, where it is said, that all who are saved are also added unto the Church, Act. 2:47, and that Christ hath given himself only for his Church, Eph. 5:25. Yea if Christ died for all, and by his death redeemed them, then it must necessarily follow that he had redeemed even those damned souls who were in hell before his coming, which is most absurd to be imagined; for if they were redeemed, how did they again fall into condemnation, seeing they being once become Christ's can never perish, neither is any able to pull them out of his hands, as it is, John. 10:28.

But against this it is objected, that in the scriptures Christ is said to have died and to have given himself a ransom for all men. 1 Tim. 2:6. Who gave himself a ransom for all men. And Heb. 2:9, he is said to have tasted death for all men; and 1 John. 2:2, he is said to be a reconciliation for the sins of the whole world. To which I answer; first, that these speeches are not to be understood of all and singular men, but of all the faithful which are gathered out of the whole world; for the drift of the Apostles is to show that our Savior Christ died not only for the believing Jews, but for the Gentiles also, of what country, nation or condition soever they were. And so these general speeches are expounded, John. 11:52, where our Savior Christ is said to have died, not only for the Jewish nation, but that also he might gather together in one, the children of God which were scattered. So also he is said Rev. 5:9, to have redeemed us (that is all the faithful) unto God by his blood, out of every Satan's temptations grounded upon the doctrine of &c. kindred, tongue, people and nation: and Galat. 3:26, that all are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and ver. 28. That there is neither Jew nor Grecian, bond, nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus. So that these places are not to be understood of all and singular men, but of all believers, of what nation or condition soever they be. For all the promises and benefits promised in the Gospel, which is the covenant of grace, are to be restrained to the condition of the covenant, be they never so general and universal; and this condition is sometimes expressed and sometimes understood, but never excluded. So, John. 3:16. So God loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have life everlasting. Rom. 3:22, it is said, that the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ, is given to all that believe. So, Gal. 3:22. The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by

the faith of Jesus Christ should, be given to them that believe. As also, Act. 10:43.

Secondly I answer, that Christ in some sense may be truly said to have died for all the world, namely in respect of the sufficiency of his death, though not in respect of the efficacy; for by his death he paid a sufficient price for the sins of all the world, and a full ransom for all mankind, if all would or could apply his merits and obedience unto themselves by a lively faith; but in respect of God's counsel, Christ's will, and the event, his death was not effectual for the redemption of all, but the faithful only. Even as a sovereign salve, may have sufficient virtue in itself to cure innumerable wounds and sores, but yet it is effectual for the healing of those only to which it is applied; so the precious balm of Christ's blood, is of sufficient virtue to heal the wounds of all sinners whatsoever, but notwithstanding it is effectual to those only, to whom it is applied by a true and lively faith.

But it is further urged that it is plainly said in the scriptures, that he died for all without exception. I answer, that it is a usual thing in God's word, to put this word (all) for many, or for all those which are of one kind. So it is said, Mar. 1:5, that all the country of Judea and they of Jerusalem, went out unto John the Baptist and were baptized of him; that is, not every man without exception, but great multitudes. So it is said, Matth. 4:23, that our Savior Christ healed every disease and sickness amongst the people, that is, many that were diseased, or diseases of all kinds. And Act. 10:38, it is said, that Christ healed all that were oppressed by the devil, that is, very many, for otherwise great numbers oppressed of the devil never came into our Saviors presence. Thus also it is said ver. 12, that there was in the sheet which Peter saw in his vision, all four-footed beasts, that is, beasts of all kinds. And thus sometimes, by all, we are to understand all the elect and

them only, and sometimes all the reprobate and them alone. In the first sense are these places to be understood. John. 12:32, our Savior saith, that after he is crucified he will draw all men unto him, that is, all the faithful and elect, for they only are converted unto God and drawn unto Christ. So it is said, Isa. 54:13, that all shall be taught of God. And Jer. 31:34, that all shall know him from the least to the greatest. And Joel 2:28, the Lord saith, that in the latter times he will pour out his spirit upon all flesh; which places cannot be understood of the reprobates and wicked, but of all God's elect and faithful. Sometimes also we are hereby to understand all the reprobate and wicked. So, Phil. 2:21, the Apostle saith, that all seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's, that is, all worldlings and wicked men. And John. 3:32, the Baptist saith, that no man hath received Christ's testimony, that is, none of the wicked and reprobate, for all the faithful and elect receive it and believe. By all which places it is evident that this word (all) sometime signifieth many, and sometime all of one kind; and therefore in those places where it is said that Christ hath died for all men, we may understand it of many, as it is expounded, Matth. 26:28, or of all the faithful, as in many places it is restrained.

Secondly, it is objected that Christ died even for the wicked and damned; for it is said that some shall deny the Lord who hath bought them, 2 Pet. 2:1, that some who are purged afterwards become blind and forgetful, 2 Pet. 1:9, that he may be destroyed for whom Christ died, Rom. 14:15, that they who are sanctified may count the blood of the Testament an unholy thing and tread it under their feet, Heb. 10:29. To which I answer, that these and such like places are to be understood of men, not as they are in truth and in God's sight, but as they are in outward show, profession, and in the estimation of men, who according to the rule of charity judge the best, when

they see not evident reason to the contrary; or it may be understood of hypocrites as they are in their own opinion, or according to their vain boasting; and so those that are in show, or in their own opinion redeemed by Christ's death, may be reprobates and condemned, but not any who are redeemed in truth. Secondly, those hypocrites that are in the outward visible Church are said to be redeemed, in respect that they are numbered for a time amongst the faithful, till they bewray their hypocrisy, and depart from the communion and fellowship which they have outwardly with the Saints, though they are not in truth redeemed, unless they be of the Church and members of Christ's body.

Lastly, it is objected that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 15:22, but all died in Adam, and therefore all are made alive in Christ. I answer, that the Apostle here understandeth all the faithful, of whose resurrection he here disputeth; and it is as much as if he had said, as all the faithful died in Adam, so all shall be made alive in Christ: or though it be understood of all, that they died in Adam, yet it proveth not that all are redeemed by Christ, for then the sense is thus much; as Adam derived death unto all his, by natural propagation, so Christ hath derived life to all his by grace: and this appeareth in the verse following, where he saith, that first Christ rose, and afterwards they that are of Christ shall rise at his coming: now they only are Christ's who are led by his spirit, and therefore they who have not their part in the first resurrection, whereby being sanctified they rise again, from the death of sin to newness of life, shall not have their part of the second resurrection, whereby they rise to inherit those joys which Christ hath purchased for them.

But it may be further urged, that if all do not live in Christ who died in Adam, Adams sin shall be of more force than Christ's death and

satisfaction, and Adam shall be more strong to destroy than Christ to save. I answer, that their power and strength is not to be measured by the number of those who are destroyed and saved; but according to the manner whereby they were destroyed and saved, or according to the virtue and force required to saving and destroying; for it is far more easy to hurt many than to help a few, to kill a multitude than to restore one to life; for even brute beasts can kill and destroy, but neither man, angel, nor other creature can give life save God alone; and so it was no hard matter for Adam to plunge all mankind into the gulf of perdition, but to save and deliver us out of this wretched estate, neither he nor any other could perform save Christ alone: and therefore though our Savior had freed and restored to life but only one, and Adam by his sin destroyed all, yet Christ's death was stronger and of more virtue in saving, than Adams sin in destroying. Secondly I answer, that Christ's death is as sufficient for the redemption of all the world, as Adams sin for their condemnation, in respect of the infinite value and price thereof; if, as Adams sin was derived unto all by natural propagation, so Christ's death and merits were applied unto them by faith; for there is no want of virtue in this precious salve to heal, but the cause why it healeth not, is because it is rejected and cast away through incredulity. Thirdly, Christ's death is of far more virtue and force than Adams sin, in that it bringeth unto us far better things than we lost in Adam; for we lost by Adam but earthly benefits, but we have derived unto us by Christ heavenly glory and everlasting happiness; Adam cast us out of the possession of the earthly paradise, but Christ gives us possession of the heavenly Jerusalem; Adam made us of the servants of God the bondslaves of Satan, but Christ made us of the bondslaves of Satan, the sons of God and heirs of his kingdom.

CHAP. XV. THAT ALL WHO ARE REDEEMED ARE ALSO SANCTIFIED.

And thus I have taken away the ground of Satan's first temptations, whereby he moveth carnal men securely to continue in their sins, because Christ hath redeemed and will save the wicked as well as the godly, by proving that Christ hath redeemed the faithful only.

The second temptation which he useth to the same purpose, he thus frameth; Christ hath redeemed all, at least who believe in him, be their sins never so many and grievous: and therefore thou mayest continue in thy sins with pleasure and delight, and satisfy the lusts of thine own flesh; only believe and thou shalt be saved, for Christ requireth no other condition. Neither is there any other end of Christ's coming, but that he should by his suffering take away thy sins; and therefore why shouldest thou vex and torment thyself, in embracing bitter mortification and newness of life, and in shunning thy sweet and pleasing sins, seeing Christ redeemeth the greatest sinners as well as the least?

To this we are to answer, that there are no sins so innumerable in multitude, and so heinous in their quality and nature, which will exclude us

from the benefit of our redemption wrought by Christ, so we apply his death and merits unto us, by a true and lively faith: but yet notwithstanding, this can be no encouragement for any to continue in their sins; for first, we are to know, that none have part in this redemption wrought by Christ, but those only who are made partakers thereof by a true and lively faith; which is never separated from the fruits thereof, true repentance and holiness of life; neither is it possible that any should be assured of God's love, but this assurance will make them to love God again, and this love will work in their hearts a zeal of his glory, and a care to glorify his name, by causing the light of their godly lives to shine before men; it is not possible that any who truly believe that that they are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, should not highly esteem and be exceedingly thankful to Christ for this inestimable benefit, which none can do who tread the blood of Christ under their feet, and voluntarily cast themselves into the bondage of sin, out of which we are redeemed with so precious a price, and so scorn this benefit and despise our Savior who hath bestowed it; it cannot be that any should be so foolish as to sell their souls unto sin for every vain pleasure and trifling commodity, if they be assured that Christ redeemed them with the price of his precious blood, which was of more value than many worlds; and therefore whosoever make no conscience of sin have no true faith, and consequently the work of our redemption wrought by Christ, doth not appertain unto them.

Secondly, whomsoever Christ redeemeth with his blood, those he sanctifieth with his spirit; and in whomsoever his death is effectual for the taking away of the guilt and punishment of sin, in them it is effectual for the mortifying of their corruptions and the sin itself; for, being the members of Christ, we are grafted with him into the similitude of his death and

resurrection, and our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, as it is, Rom. 6:5,6. And as our Savior Christ is our wisdom, righteousness and redemption, so he is our sanctification also, as it is, 1 Cor. 1:30. So that whomsoever he redeemeth and justifieth, those also he sanctifieth, as it may further appear by many and evident testimonies. Tit. 2:14, he is said to have given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purge us to be a peculiar people unto himself zealous of good works. Luk. 1:74,75, the Lord bindeth it with an oath, that whomsoever he redeemeth out of the hands of their spiritual enemies, they shall worship him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. 1 Pet. 2:24, the Apostle saith, that our Savior bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being delivered from sin should live in righteousness. And Paul showeth, Rom. 6:18, that as soon as we are freed from the bondage of sin, we are made the servants of righteousness. So, Heb. 9:14, it is said, that the blood of Christ doth purge our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God; neither are we only justified, but also sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ once made, as it is, chap. 10, ver. 14, and as he is appointed of God to be a prince and Savior to give remission of sins, so also to give repentance, as appeareth, Act. 5:31. So the Apostle saith, that Christ gave himself for his Church, not that it might continue still in pollution and the filthiness of sin, but that he might sanctify it and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word, Eph. 5:25,26. If therefore we walk in the light as he is in the light, then his blood purgeth us from all our sins, 1 John. 1:7. If we are sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, then we may draw near with a true heart in assurance of faith, Heb. 10:22. But if we continue in our sins without repentance, and commit them with delight and

greediness, then let us brag as much as we will that we are redeemed by Christ, yet we are still in the bondage of the devil; for Christ appeared not only to free us out of his captivity, but also that he might loose the works of the devil, as appeareth, 1 John. 3:8. He hath redeemed us out of the thralldom of Satan, that we might become his own servants, whom he will rule and govern by his word and spirit; and therefore if we have not this spirit to lead us, we are none of his, as it is, Rom. 8:9, if we will not submit ourselves to the scepter of his word, we are none of his subjects, but continue still the servants of sin and Satan. Seeing then it is manifest by God's word, that whosoever are redeemed are also sanctified, and whomsoever Christ hath washed with his blood, from the guilt and punishment of sin, he doth also purge and cleanse them by virtue of the same blood, from the sins and corruptions themselves; and seeing he hath redeemed us out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, to the end we should become his servants, worshipping him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life: let us never be persuaded by Satan's temptations, foolishly to imagine that we may the more securely live in our sins, because Christ Jesus hath paid a sufficient price of our redemption: for, first, what horrible ingratitude is this unto God, to take occasion by this inestimable benefit the more to offend him? What a blasphemous imagination is this against Jesus Christ, to think that he came into the world, to be a bolster whereupon we may more securely sleep in sin; and that he shed his precious blood to purchase liberty for us, that we may live in all wickedness; that he reconciled us unto his father by his death that we might the more freely offend him; that he hath redeemed us out of the bondage of Satan, that we may more diligently serve him; that he hath with his blood washed us from the filth of sin, that we may more securely wallow in this stinking puddle

again? For, what were this but to make Christ another Sisiphus, who as soon as he hath ended his labor is new to begin again? What is it but every day to crucify the Lord of life afresh, and to tread his precious blood under our feet as an unholy thing? What is it but to contemn and basely to esteem of, the inestimable price of our redemption, if we will not stick to sell again our souls unto sin, for every beastly pleasure and base commodity, which Christ hath purchased at so high a rate? Secondly as hereby we shall show horrible ingratitude against God and our Savior Christ, so also shall we be most injurious to our own souls, seeing we can never attain unto any true assurance of our redemption, till we find ourselves freed in some measure from the power of sin, and sanctified by God's spirit, for the Lord who is truth itself hath said it, and if this be not enough he hath solemnly sworn it, that all those whom he hath redeemed out of the hands of their spiritual enemies, shall worship and serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life; and therefore as well may God speak, nay swear an untruth, as those may be redeemed who live in their sins, destitute of all holiness towards God, and righteousness towards their neighbor.

Thirdly, we are to consider that the Lord hath redeemed us to a twofold end: the first and principal is his own glory, the second which is subordinate unto the other, is our salvation and everlasting happiness: both which concur in all those, to whom the redemption of Christ is made effectual. Now God is not glorified by redeeming such as continue in their rebellion towards him, and will not by any means leave the service of sin and Satan, but rather in showing his justice and power, in punishing their sins which they commit with greediness: but he is glorified when he mercifully delivereth repentant sinners, out of the bondage of sin and Satan, who are weary of their captivity, and desire nothing more than freedom, that they

may in the rest of their lives serve him their redeemer in the duties of holiness and righteousness. And therefore they who live in their sins without repentance, continuing still traitors to God and servants of Satan, can have no assurance of their redemption; for the Lord hath therefore bought us, with a price that we should glorify him both in our bodies and souls: and therefore those who instead of letting their lights of holiness and righteousness shine clearly before men, that their heavenly father may be glorified, do nothing else but dishonor him by their sins and wicked conversation, show plainly that the redemption wrought by Christ doth not as yet appertain unto them.

Fourthly, we are to know that the work of our redemption wrought by Christ, consisteth of three parts or degrees; for first Christ redeemed us by paying the price of our redemption, and thus he is said in the Scriptures to have redeemed us with his blood. Secondly, he redeemeth us when as he applieth this benefit of our redemption unto us in particular, and doth thereby free and deliver us from the devil sin and death, so as we are no longer in their bondage subject to their power and government, although we be continually assaulted and often foiled by them; thirdly, he redeemeth us when as he perfectly freeth us, not only from the power and government, but also from the assaults and molestations of all our spiritual enemies, and giveth us eternal peace in his kingdom. The first was wrought immediately by himself, when as he paid a sufficient price for our redemption, and thereby fully satisfied his fathers justice; the second he worketh by his own spirit, whereby he doth dispel out of our minds and hearts the dark mists of ignorance and infidelity, and by the glorious light thereof doth illuminate our understandings, with the beams of true knowledge and a lively faith, so that we know acknowledge and believe that Christ is our savior and

redeemer, and are assured that he hath freed us from the bondage of our spiritual enemies: after which assurance he begetteth in us an earnest desire, of being more and more freed from them actually, and an holy endeavor of withstanding all their assaults and temptations, whereby they labor again to bring us into their captivity, and withal enableth us with some measure of strength, to withstand and overcome them; and reneweth and confirmeth this strength received, when in the conflict of temptation we are weakened, and have received the foil, that we may rise up again and afresh maintain the fight. Lastly, our Savior Christ redeemeth us, when as he perfectly freeth and delivereth us from our spiritual enemies at his second coming, when as we shall not only not be overcome nor foiled of them, but also not so much as once assaulted. And of this redemption our Savior speaketh, Luk. 21:28. When (saith he) these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth near. And these are the three degrees of our redemption, which always follow one another, for, for whomsoever Christ hath given himself as the price of their redemption, to those also he giveth his holy spirit, which doth illuminate the eyes of their understanding blinded with ignorance, and sanctifieth their will and affections, working in them a desire and holy endeavor of serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness, and of withstanding the temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil. And whomsoever he thus redeemeth out of the power and government of their spiritual enemies, those he will perfectly redeem and deliver from all their malicious attempts, and give them the eternal peace of his kingdom. But those who have not their part in the second degree, that is, those who continue in their blind ignorance, and in the natural pollution of their will and affections, willingly subjecting themselves to the service of sin and Satan, and stubbornly withdrawing

their stiff necks out of the yoke of holy obedience unto God's commandments; they can never have any assurance that Christ hath redeemed them by paying the price of his blood, nor will deliver them at his second coming out of the bondage of Satan, in which they have lived all their life time, with pleasure and delight; for, whomsoever he ransometh with the price of his blood, those he freeth out of the government of their spiritual enemies, sin, death, and the devil; and therefore they that still live in sin, as our Savior saith, John. 8:34, yea the servants of Satan also, as the Apostle teacheth, 1 John. 3:8. For their servants we are to whom we obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness, as it is, Rom. 6:16: and those who still remain in the service and slavery of sin and Satan, have no part in the first redemption, wrought by the shedding of his blood, nor shall have any part in the last redemption, at his second coming to judgment.

Lastly, we are to know that Christ hath redeemed the whole man, body, and soul, and hath freed and delivered every part and faculty of them, out of the bondage of our spiritual enemies, that all and every of them may perform service unto God. For example, our understandings were captived in the dark prison of ignorance and blindness, and appeareth, Eph. 4:17,18: but our Savior Christ redeemed us, and hath dispelled these mists of darkness with the preaching of the Gospel, which like a glorious sunshine hath appeared unto us, and by the operation of his holy spirit, he hath caused the scales of ignorance to fall from the eyes of our understanding, so that we can see the mystery of our redemption, and work of our salvation wrought by him, as it is, Luk. 1:77,78,79. Our wills which were so enthralled that we could not so much as desire anything pleasing and acceptable unto God, hath our Savior redeemed and freed out of this

spiritual bondage, and by the good motions of his holy spirit doth so rule and incline them, that to will is present with us, and we are delighted in the law of God concerning the inner man; as the Apostle speaketh of himself, Rom. 7:18:22. And though the law of our members and corruptions of the flesh, do rebel against the law of our mind, leading us captive to the law of sin, yet do we abhor this sin, and earnestly desire to be freed from it, and to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, endeavoring and striving to mortify the flesh and the corruptions thereof, and to rise again to newness of life. Our affections also were wholly corrupted and disordered, so that we hated God, and loved the world, feared man, and not the Lord, trusted upon the inferior means, never regarding the fountain of all goodness; in a word we were given over to our own hearts lusts, and unto vile affections, as it is, Rom. 1:24,26: but by the redemption wrought by Christ becoming his, and being quickened and strengthened by his holy spirit, we have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, as the Apostle speaketh, Gal. 5:24. Lastly, the members of our body were servants to uncleanness and iniquity, to commit iniquity, Rom. 6:19, our eyes full of adultery, our tongues forges of lies, our feet swift to shed blood: but our Savior Christ redeeming us hath delivered our bodies also from the thralldom of sin and Satan, so as though sin dwell, yet it shall no longer reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey the lusts thereof, as appeareth, Rom. 6:12. In a word, both body and soul were in miserable captivity to our spiritual enemies: but our Savior hath bought us with a price, to the end we may glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, for they are God's, as it is, 1 Cor 6:20. And hath redeemed us not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation, but with his own most precious blood, as Peter teacheth us, 1 Pet. 1:18,19.

If therefore we are redeemed by Christ, then our blind understandings are enlightened by the preaching of the Gospel, and we freed from our former ignorance: our wills which were rebellious are inclined to obedience, so as we earnestly desire to leave our sins, and to serve the Lord in the duties of sanctification, and have an endeavor of mortifying our sins, and rising again to newness of life; our affections also are purged from their corruptions, so that we love, fear, trust in, hope, and expect all good from him, who is the fountain of all goodness; our bodies which were given as servants unto sin, are now become the servants of righteousness unto holiness; In a word both in body and soul we are freed from sin, and made servants unto God. But if our understandings are still blind and ignorant, our wills backward to embrace any goodness, and most prone unto all evil, our affections as corrupt as ever they were, and our bodies the ready instruments to act all sin and wickedness, then have we as yet no fruit of the redemption wrought by Christ, for it is not a titulary but a powerful redemption, which indeed and truth delivereth us, even in this life, from our spiritual enemies: so that though they may assault, and grievously vex us, yet they shall never govern and reign over us; and therefore whosoever feel not the redemption wrought by Christ, powerful in this life to free them in some measure, from the rule and jurisdiction of sin, Satan, the world and the flesh, shall never find it fruitful and effectual to free and deliver them, from condemnation hell and destruction in the life to come.

CHAP. XVI. OF THOSE TEMPTATIONS WHICH SATAN USETH AGAINST THE FAITHFUL CONCERNING THEIR REDEMPTION.

And thus much concerning those temptations which Satan suggesteth into men's minds to nourish in them carnal security: now we are to consider of those which he useth to move men to doubting and desperation. First therefore he objecteth that it is a thing unreasonable, and utterly repugnant to God's justice, that Christ who was innocent should be punished for us who are guilty, that we should deserve the blame, and he suffereth the stripes, that the righteous should be condemned, and the wicked acquitted, that we who like Barabbas were cruel murderers and wicked sinners should be let lose, and the immaculate lamb of God in whom there was no fault should be delivered up to be crucified; for what were this but to make the just God like unjust Pilate? What were this but to deny his own word, having said that the righteous should live in his righteousness, and the sinner die in his iniquity? To which I answer, first, that it would not indeed have stood with God's justice, to have punished Christ as he was innocent and righteous, nor to have acquitted and absolved us who were unrighteous and wicked; but he punished Christ in respect that

he had taken upon him the sins of all the faithful, and absolveth us as we are freed from our sins, and clothed with his righteousness and obedience. He punished Christ, not as he was most just and free from sin, but as he was our surety who had taken upon him to discharge our debt, and to satisfy for our sins; and thus the creditor may justly require his debt of the surety though in respect of himself he owed him nothing, and thus he may, nay ought to release the principal, when the surety hath already discharged the debt. Secondly I answer that it had been injustice in God, if he had forced our Savior Christ, who was just and innocent, to undergo the punishments which were due unto us, who were malefactors and offenders; for this were to condemn the righteous, and to justify the wicked: but our Savior Christ of his own free accord, did voluntarily offer himself to stand in our place, and to discharge that debt which we owed, and to make satisfaction to his father, by suffering that punishment which we had deserved. And this appeareth, John. 10:18, where our Savior saith, that no man took his life from him, but that he laid it down of himself. And the Apostle telleth us that he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, Phil. 2:8. In which respect, his death is called a sacrifice or free oblation, which he voluntarily offered unto his father, Heb. 9:14: and therefore the Lord might justly take that which Christ freely gave, nay it had been cruelty and injustice if he should have refused, the payment of such a sufficient surety, when he voluntarily offered it for our discharge, choosing rather still to have kept us in prison, bound in the chains of everlasting death. Lastly, there might have been some show of rigor and injustice, if Christ the innocent had been overwhelmed, in suffering the punishments which were due unto us, who were the offenders; but being not only man which suffered but God also, and therefore of infinite power and majesty, he was able to pay our great

debt, and yet is never the poorer; to suffer death and overcome it by suffering: and by yielding a while to the malice of our spiritual enemies, he finally vanquished and gloriously triumphed over them all; and therefore it was not injustice in God to suffer our Savior Christ, to undergo that which he was sure to overcome; but unspeakable mercy towards us, in sending his son to pay that debt which we could never have discharged, and to suffer punishments for a time, which otherwise we should have endured forever.

By this then it appeareth, that God might justly receive the price of our redemption, which Christ freely offered. But seeing by the laws of redemption there is required, not only that the redeemer pay a price or ransom, but also that he have right to that which he doth redeem, it may be demanded what right our Savior had over us, that he should pay this price for us. I answer, that as our Savior Christ consisteth of two natures, so also he had a twofold right unto us; for as he was God, he had the right of propriety, and was our true owner; he was our Lord and therefore had right to redeem his own servants; he was our King, and therefore had right to redeem us who were his subjects; yea he was our creator, and therefore he had more right than any Lord or King to redeem us who were his creatures; as he was a man he was our kinsman, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; yea he was our brother, as it is, Heb. 2:11,12, and John. 20:17; and therefore had also the right of propinquity, which was required by the law of redemption. Lev. 25:25.

Secondly, Satan may object that the death of Christ is not a sufficient price for our redemption; for how could the death of one, be a sufficient satisfaction for the sin of all the faithful, seeing everyone by their innumerable sins, had deserved innumerable deaths? And how could the temporary and short punishment which Christ endured, free us all that

believe from the everlasting punishments of hell fire, seeing the justice of God requireth that there should be some proportion, between the punishment which we deserved, and the satisfaction which Christ made and offered? I answer, that Christ who suffered for us, was not man only but God also; in which respect it is said, that God purchased his Church with his blood; not that God hath blood, but because he that shed his blood, was not only man but also God; and therefore his short sufferings were of more worth, virtue and value, than the everlasting sufferings of all the world; for they should ever have suffered, but could thereby never have satisfied, because our sins deserved infinite punishments, in that we had by them offended the infinite justice and majesty of God; which because finite creatures could not bear, God's justice required that they should be infinite in time and everlasting, seeing they could not be infinite in measure; but the sufferings of Christ, though short in time, yet were they infinite in value, worth and merit, because he was not man alone, but God also, and therefore at once he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by his one oblation he took away the sins of many, as it is, Heb. 9:26,28. As therefore: Adams sin, which in itself was finite, as proceeding from a finite creature, notwithstanding deserved infinite punishment, because God whom by his sin he offended was infinite; so contrariwise Christ's sufferings were but of short continuance in respect of time, but yet of infinite merit and worth, because he that suffered was not man alone, but also God, and therefore infinite.

Lastly, the tempter will object that Christ's death and merits, though they be in themselves a sufficient price for our redemption, yet they do not belong unto us, neither will be effectual for our salvation. Let it be granted (will he say) that the death and merits of Christ are sufficient for the

salvation of all: yet what comfort canst thou receive hereby, seeing thou canst have no assurance that they belong unto thee, or will be effectual for thy redemption? For either he hath redeemed all or but some only; if all, then some who are redeemed may perish notwithstanding, seeing the scriptures show that the greater part of the world are the children of destruction, and it is not unlikely but that thou art in the greatest number. But if he have redeemed some only, how canst thou conclude that thou art one of these whom he hath redeemed, seeing out of mere particular propositions thou canst not infer any sound consequence? For example, if thou dost thus conclude, some men are redeemed by Christ, but I am a man, therefore I am redeemed: thou mightest as well reason thus, some men are kings, but I am a man, therefore I am a king. To this we must answer, that though Christ hath only redeemed some, yet we may after a more sound manner conclude that we are in this number, not using the help of Satan's absurd fallacions; but inferring our conclusion out of general propositions grounded upon God's word after this manner; whosoever believe in Christ, those he hath redeemed and will save; for this is the voice and promise of Christ in the Gospel: but I (may every faithful man say) do truly believe in Christ: and therefore I am redeemed and shall eternally be saved.

But against this particular application of Christ and his merits unto us, the tempter urgeth diverse objections; first, that Christ only saveth and redeemeth his own body which is his Church, and that this his Church is glorious without spot or wrinkle, holy and unblameable, as it is, Eph. 5:25,27, and therefore (will he say) what hope of redemption or salvation canst thou have, who art defiled not only with original corruption, but also with innumerable actual transgressions? To this we must answer that the Apostle saith not, that the Church which Christ redeemeth and saveth, is

now already without spot or wrinkle; but that he hath by giving himself for it, redeemed it, that hereby he might wash and cleanse it from all spots, and might make it holy and without blame; either by his merits and righteousness imputed unto it which is done in this life; or by freeing it altogether from corruptions and the filthy spots of sin, wherewith naturally it is defiled, which is begun in this life, but shall not be perfected until the life to come.

Secondly, he objecteth, that if Christ had redeemed us out of the thralldom of sin, then we should not still be overcome thereby, nor so often, will we, nill we, transgress God's commandments. To which we are to answer, that our Savior Christ hath delivered us from our sins, first in regard that for his merits and satisfaction sake, the Lord hath pardoned and remitted them, so as they shall never be imputed unto us, nor arise up in judgment to our condemnation, neither in this world nor the world to come: secondly, he doth deliver us from our sins, whilst he doth give unto us his holy spirit, whereby our sins are in some measure mortified, and the strength of them abated, so that they do not reign and rule in us as in former times, although we cannot wholly expel them from dwelling in us, according to that, Rom. 6:12, Sin shall not reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. And though we cannot utterly subdue this Canaanitish brood of our corruptions, but that still whilst we continue in this life, they are as thorns in our sides, always vexing and grieving us: yet by the help of God's spirit assisting us, we weaken their force, abate their courage, and make them become tributaries; and if at any time they rebel, we curb them in, and give them the overthrow; yea, though sometimes they gain ground, and give us the foil, yet we rise again by unfeigned repentance, and recover

ourselves, being assisted with the fresh supply of God's spirit, till at last by death we obtain a final victory.

Thirdly, he objecteth that we are still under the law, and tied to the obedience thereof, and therefore Christ hath not freed us from it: I answer, that though Christ hath not freed us from the obedience of the law, yet he hath freed us from the curse and malediction, as it is, Gal. 3:13, so as though we do not perform it in that exact manner and measure which God requireth, yet our transgression shall not be imputed unto us; for he hath perfectly fulfilled the law for us, that his righteousness might become our righteousness, and he hath suffered death, that by his blood he might wash away our sins. And thus when the law was impossible to be performed, by reason of the weakness and corruptions of our flesh, the Lord sent his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, as it is, Rom. 8:3,4. Moreover, we are not now tied to perform obedience to the law, to the end that thereby we may be justified, nor yet shall we for the imperfections of this our obedience be in danger of condemnation, but now only it is a means before our conversion to bring us to Christ, by showing unto us our sins and insufficiency in ourselves, and after our conversion it serveth for a rule or square, according to which we are to frame our lives in holiness and righteousness, that so we may show our thankfulness unto our heavenly father for his inestimable benefits, by glorifying his name in a godly life. And because this also is bitter and unpleasant to flesh and blood, therefore the Lord hath also granted and given unto us his holy spirit, which mortifieth our corruptions, whereby we are made less prone unto sin; and quickeneth us in the inner man, enabling us to perform obedience in some measure to the law of God, with alacrity and cheerfulness, so that now his

commandments are not grievous unto us, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 John. 5:3, but his yoke which so much galled us while we were rebellious, and like untamed oxen, is now become easy, and his burden which heretofore was so heavy and irksome, is now become light, as our Savior telleth us, Matth. 11:30.

Fourthly, the tempter may object to the weak conscience which laboreth under the burden of sin, that our Savior Christ hath not redeemed us from the anger of God due for sin, seeing we still see his frowning countenance, and apprehend the scorching heat of his wrath inflamed against us: but let all know, that if they truly believe in Christ, and only rely themselves upon this their mediator, if their sins past grieve them, and they purpose for the time to come, to labor that they may forsake them; then they are reconciled unto God by Christ, and in him he is become their loving and gracious father, as the Apostle telleth us, Col. 1:20,21. Let not such therefore be discouraged, if God seem to frown upon them for a time, for he will not frown forever, nor always retain his anger, as the Psalmist speaketh, Psalm. 103:9. Nay, in truth he is not angry with us at all as a Judge to punish, but as a Father to correct and amend us: and if we will speak properly, he always loveth and delighteth in us; for as he is well pleased with Christ our head, so is he always well pleased with us in him, as being members of his body: notwithstanding as a tender Father when his Son offendeth, maketh semblance as though his wrath were kindled, to the end that he may be careful in the time to come, to avoid the like fault, and to amend; so the Lord who is our gracious Father, seemeth oftentimes to be grievously displeased with his children when they have sinned against him, hiding from them his amiable loving countenance, and showing nothing but signs of wrath, not that he hath in truth cast them out of his love and favor; for he

never falleth out with those whom Christ hath reconciled unto him, neither can he cease to love the members of Christ, nor Christ's members cease to be his members after they are once engrafted into his body by his holy spirit and a lively faith: only like a wise father he frowneth upon them and seemeth angry, to make them in the time to come forsake their sins, whereby they have incurred his displeasure.

Fifthly, the tempter will object that we are not freed and delivered out of his power and jurisdiction, seeing he doth often assault and overcome us with his temptations, and leadeth us captive fast bound in the fetters of sin. To which we must answer, that our Savior Christ by his death hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil; that he might deliver all them which for fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage, as the Apostle showeth Heb. 2:14,15. That God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son, as it is, Col. 1:13. That our redeemer Jesus Christ hath spoiled the principalities and powers, and hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them upon his cross, and that not only for himself, but for all his members, Col. 2:15. That he hath now broken the Serpents head, so that well may he hiss against us, but yet he cannot sting us. And whereas heretofore he was the prince of the world, who did rule and govern us at his pleasure and according to his will, now he is cast out by the prince of princes, as it is, John. 12:31, and our Savior Christ hath established his kingdom in us, ruling and governing us with the scepter of his word and holy spirit. Whereas he was the strong man who quietly kept his possession in us, Luk. 11:21; our Savior Christ who is stronger than he, hath spoiled him of his armor wherein he trusted, and hath thrust him out of his possession. Whereas he was a cruel tyrant who held us fast bound in his

captivity, our Savior Christ hath redeemed us out of his thralldom, so as now he cannot hurt us though he never ceaseth to assault us; and though he goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, yet now we are enabled by God's spirit to resist him steadfastly in the faith, and so armed with the coat-armor of God's spiritual graces, that though he may with the violence of his assaults foil us, yet shall he never be able to overcome us. God doth indeed suffer this wicked enemy to make war against even his dearest children, and that sometimes after a strange and extraordinary manner, not that he will give them over again unto his thralldom, out of which he hath purchased them with so dear a price, but partly to drive them hereby to fly unto him by earnest and effectual prayer, imploring his aide against Satan's cruelty, and that having received it they may ascribe the whole glory of the victory to him alone, by whose strength they have overcome; and partly to show unto them their own weakness, that they may not rely nor rest upon it. Sometimes he suffereth them to be thus assaulted, that his power may be magnified in their weakness; and sometimes that the graces which he hath bestowed upon them, may shine gloriously to all the world. Sometimes for the confirmation of others who shall hereafter be tried with the like temptations, when they have in their brethren often experience of God's love power and fatherly assistance; and sometimes the more to strengthen themselves in his spiritual graces, and to confirm them more fully in the assurance of his love and their salvation. For as a city which hath once been besieged and not sacked, will ever after be more strong to hold out if it be assaulted by the like danger, because the citizens will carefully fortify their walls and increase their bulwarks; and as he who hath been once robbed by thieves, will ever after ride better provided to make resistance, that he do not again fall into their hands; so

those who are besieged and assaulted by their spiritual enemies, will ever after more carefully arm themselves against them with the graces of God's spirit, that they may not be overcome nor foiled by them. We know that whilst men quietly enjoy their possessions and inheritance they rest secure, keeping their writings in a box without ever looking on them from yere to yere, but when their title and right is called into question, and some man labors to thrust them out of their possession, then they peruse their writings and deeds with all diligence; & not satisfied with their own judgment they resort to skillful Lawyers, craving their counsel how they may maintain their right, and answer the plea which their adversary makes against them; whereby oftentimes it cometh to pass that they make their title not only much more strong in itself, but also more clear and evident unto all others, so that afterwards none dare once adventure to trouble them again, or call their right into question: so whilst we never doubt of our heavenly inheritance we rest secure, and let the book of God which is our best deed and evidence, lie under our cupboards till it mold for want of use; but when Satan by his temptations doth call our title into question, and pleads that we have no right to God's kingdom, then do we most carefully and diligently peruse the book of God, then do we go unto God's Ministers, desiring their counsel how we may answer Satan's plea and clear our title, then do we most carefully use all good means to increase our knowledge, that thereby we may thoroughly inform ourselves of our right, and confirm our assurance against all cavils and objections. And hereby it cometh to pass, that those who before had very weak titles to their heavenly inheritance, whilst they remained reckless and secure, and but slender assurance ever to enjoy it; now, by their care, pains and diligence, have so confirmed it unto themselves, and so cleared it to all the world, that Satan dare never after call

it into question, unless he do it (like many contentious men in these dates) rather that he may trouble and vex them with a tedious suite, than for any hope of prevailing in the end. And thus you see that Christ hath redeemed all the faithful out of Satan's thralldom, notwithstanding that he still assaulteth them with his temptations; neither doth he hereby overcome them and again enthrall them in his captivity, but rather by God's blessing they serve to strengthen them in the spiritual graces of God's spirit, and to confirm them in the full assurance of their salvation.

Sixthly, the tempter will object that we still die, and therefore are not redeemed and delivered out of the bondage of death. To which we may answer, that God's just sentence once denounced could not be revoked, Gen. 3:19, Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return; and therefore the Apostle saith, Heb. 9:27, It is appointed unto all men that they shall once die. But as Ahashuorus, though he could not revoke the sentence of death against the Jews after it was once pronounced, because it was a decree of the Medes and Persians which might not be altered; yet at Hesters suite sent out another decree, whereby he armed and strengthened the Jews against their enemies, to the end they might resist, overcome, and destroy them: so the Lord having pronounced the sentence of death against all the sons of Adam, could not revoke his decree and sentence, as being far more unchangeable than the decree of the Medes and Persians, yet at the suite of our Savior Christ he made another decree, whereby we might be armed against our enemy death, and overcome him. So that now though we die, yet are we not subject unto death, neither shall we be held under the dominion thereof; though we are not wholly exempted from death, yet now the nature thereof is quite altered; for heretofore it was unconquerable, but now easily overcome; heretofore it was a curse for sin, but now turned into

an exceeding blessing, as deriving unto us many benefits: for first it freeth us from all our afflictions, with which in this life we are so much molested; it delivereth us from the irksome company of profane wicked men, who grieve the very souls of the righteous, and make them to cry out with David; Woe is me that I remain in Meshech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar; it wholly freeth us from sin, and purgeth away those corruptions which in this life cleave so fast unto us; so that though heretofore there was great amity between sin and death, for sin was the only cause which enlarged death's dominions, and made all the world to become his tributaries, yet now they are at odds, and death now is the means, to free us out of sin's thralldom and utterly to destroy it. And thus hath the Viper sin, bred a young one which eateth out its own belly; for sin brought forth death, and death destroyed sin: had it not been for sin, death had never entered into the world, and were it not for death, sin would never go out of the world. Moreover, by death we obtain a full and perfect victory over the flesh, the world, and the devil; for whereas in this life we are in a continual fight, and sometimes Amaleck, sometime Israel hath the upper hand: death puts an end to this battle, and giveth us full victory over the flesh, the world, and the devil; so as they shall never afterwards not only not prevail, but not so much as assault or trouble us: and thus doth every Christian, with David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword; for death was the weapon which Satan used to destroy us, and with this weapon we give Satan a final overthrow. Lastly, death which heretofore was the high way to hell and destruction, is now become the ready entrance into God's kingdom, and like a foul gate whereby we enter into a fair palace; heretofore it was a fiery serpent which by stinging killed and destroyed us, but, now our Savior hath pulled out the sting, it is become so harmless that we may safely put it into our bosoms, without

receiving any hurt: and in this respect it may not unfitly be compared to the brazen Serpent, which looked like other Serpents, but in stead of wounding it presently cured, in stead of killing it preserved life; so though death retain his former shape, so that we are afraid and ready to flee from it, yet it is but in outward appearance; for in stead of an ever dying life, it giveth us possession of a never dying life and endless happiness. Heretofore it was the devils sergeant to arrest and carry us without bail, into the perpetual prison of utter darkness, but now it is the Lord's gentleman-usher to conduct and place us in the kingdom of heaven. Heretofore it was like the devils cart wherein we were carried to execution, now it is like Elias fiery chariot whereby we mount up into heaven. And this Paul showeth, 2 Cor. 5:1. We know (saith he) that if the earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building given us of God, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. Why therefore should we fear, nay why should we not desire death, seeing now it is unto us advantage? As it is, Phil. 1:23, why should we not desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, seeing that is best of all? As it is, ver. 21, for now we may say, not that we die, but that we depart and go to our father, as our Savior speaketh, John. 8:21.

But yet we must take heed that we do not imagine, that death in its own nature worketh and procureth for us these great benefits; for in itself this temporary death is but a step to everlasting death, and as it were a fearful prologue to a more fearful tragedy: but our Savior Christ it is alone who hath gathered wholesome honey out of this pernicious poison, and by mingling the flesh of this venomous serpent with his own most precious blood, he hath made thereof a wholesome Triacle.

And thus have I proved, notwithstanding Satan's temptations and objections, that Christ hath perfectly redeemed us, out of the hands of all

our spiritual enemies; now in the last place Satan suggesteth, that though Christ hath once redeemed us, yet we may come into their bondage again, and then there is no hope of a second redemption. But we are to know that our Redeemer is God omnipotent, whose power all the power of hell cannot withstand; and therefore nothing is able to pluck us out of his hand, as himself speaketh, John. 10:28; neither are we to think, that he will easily and willingly lose them, which he so entirely loves that he spared not his precious blood, but freely gave it as a price of their redemption. And therefore, as he is able, perfectly to save all those who come unto God by him; because he ever liveth to make intercession for them, as it is, Heb. 7:25, so we need not doubt of his will, seeing he hath redeemed us with so dear a price: for if he would not lose us when we were his enemies, much less will he suffer us to perish when we are become his subjects, yea his spouse, nay members of his own body: and therefore we may assure ourselves that if our Savior, our spouse and head hath once redeemed us, then he hath also obtained eternal redemption for us, as the Apostle affirmeth, Heb. 9:12. So that though the devil rage like a roaring lion, and the flesh betray us and harbor whole legions of unlawful lusts which fight against our souls, and the world sometime frown, and sometime fawn, and all of them by all means labor to destroy us; yet our omnipotent redeemer, our loving and careful spouse and head, will not suffer us to be lost whom he hath so dearly bought, but will give us the possession and fruition of that heavenly inheritance, and those unspeakable joys which he with his own most precious blood hath purchased for us.

CHAP. XVII. OF OUR VOCATION.

And thus much concerning our redemption; the next cause of our salvation is our vocation: for, whomsoever the Lord hath elected unto everlasting life, those also he hath redeemed out of the hands of their spiritual enemies; and whom he hath redeemed, those in his good time he effectually calleth, and applieth this great benefit of their redemption unto them, by separating them from the world, and ingrafting them into the body of Christ, whereby they become his, and he with all his benefits becometh theirs.

In speaking hereof, I will show first what this calling is, and afterwards answer Satan's temptations, whereby he laboreth to make it frustrate and unprofitable unto us. For the first, our vocation or calling is an effect of God's election, whereby our Savior Christ, God and man, doth by his kingly authority call and invite us whilst we live here, unto the participation and embracing of the inestimable benefit of our redemption, that thereby we may attain unto everlasting life.

And thus are we called sometimes sooner, and sometimes later, when it seemeth good unto the Lord: as appeareth in the parable of the householder, who hired laborers into his vineyard, some at the dawning of the day, others at the third, sixth, and ninth hour, others at the eleventh hour, not long before the sun setting, as it is, Matth. 20.

Moreover, this our calling, is either commune and general, or else special and effectual. The general calling, is whereby all indifferently, good and bad, elect and reprobate, are outwardly invited by the ministry of the Gospel, to embrace the benefit of our redemption wrought by Christ: which outward calling is ineffectual to the wicked and reprobates, because being invited to the supper of the King they refuse to come, that is, they either altogether neglect the hearing of the heavenly ambassage of the Gospel, or else contemn those inestimable benefits which are therein offered, preferring before them the honors, riches, and pleasures of this life; whereby it cometh to pass, that the word of God findeth no place in their hearts, but vanisheth away, leaving nothing behind it but the savor of death, to their more deep condemnation.

The special and effectual calling is, that which is proper to God's elect, when as with the outward ministry of the word, wherein grace and salvation is offered to all believers, our Savior Christ joineth the inward operation of his holy spirit; which openeth our deaf ears, enlighteneth our blind understandings, and softeneth and sanctifieth our hard and corrupt hearts, so as we attentively hear, truly understand, and by a lively faith apply, the doctrine of grace and salvation which is preached unto us; whereby also we are separated from the world, given to Christ and he to us, whereupon followeth that near union, whereby we being engrafted into his body, mystically do become his members, and he our head.

That this effectual calling is proper to those that are elected and shall be saved, it appeareth by the parable of the supper, where many, outwardly invited to the great supper of the king, refuse to come, and therefore are excluded from the marriage, Matth. 22:3.8. And, Rom. 8:30, the Apostle saith that whom he did predestinate, them also he called, and these also he justifieth. So, Act. 13:48, it is said that as many as were ordained to everlasting life, believed at the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, and therefore these only were effectually called. And John. 6:45, our Savior saith, that everyone who hath heard and hath learned of the father, cometh unto him. So that, outward hearing is not sufficient to bring us to Christ, unless the father also inwardly instruct us with his holy spirit, opening our deaf ears, enlightening our blind understandings, inclining our wills, and sanctifying our affections, that we may attentively hear, truly understand, and heartily embrace the Gospel preached unto us. And this appeareth in the example of Lydia, Act. 16:14, whose heart the Lord is said to have opened, that she might attend unto the things which Paul spake, and be converted: by which speech the holy Ghost implieth thus much, that her heart was (as it were) close shut, and fast locked up, so as he could not receive the word preached, till the Lord had opened it by the inward operation of his holy spirit. Which matter need not seem strange unto us, seeing it is continually confirmed by our own experience: for how comes it to pass that many amongst us, hear the word preached from day today and year to year, and yet are never the nearer, but still remain as ignorant in their minds, as perverse in their wills, as corrupt in their affections, as profane in their lives as ever they were? On the other side how happeneth it that some attentively hear God's word, treasure it up in their memories, and thereby have their minds enlightened with the knowledge of God, their wills inclined to

holiness and righteousness, their affections sanctified, their lives reformed? Surely because the Lord doth join in these, the inward operation of his spirit with the outward ministry of his word, making it effectual for their true conversion; whereas he leaveth the other to their own corrupt affections and hardness of heart.

And thus it appeareth that the elect only are effectually called: as for the wicked and reprobate, though they hear the outward preaching of the word, by which they are invited unto Christ; yet they stubbornly refuse to come unto him, and reject all the gracious promises of the Gospel, to their eternal perdition; because the Lord leaveth them to their own lusts and corruption, not opening their hard hearts, nor inclining their perverse wills nor sanctifying their corrupt affections.

In the next place let us consider, the parts of our effectual calling; the first is our separation from the world, of which in former time we were citizens and true members, that from henceforth we should be of God's household and family: for naturally we are mere worldlings, dead in our sins, and to every good work reprobate, living without God and serving Satan, the world and the corrupt lusts of our flesh, until it please the Lord to make choice of us among many other, calling and separating us from this corrupt mass of mankind, that he may make us subjects, first of his kingdom of grace, and afterwards of his kingdom of glory. Of this our Savior speaketh, John. 15:19. If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. And the Apostle saith that after our calling and conversion, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Now the Lord maketh this choice of us before others, not for any respect of worthiness or excellency in us

more than in them, but of his mere mercy, undeserved grace, and free good will; neither doth he therefore entertain us into his Church and family, because we are already, or because he knoweth we will be hereafter holy and righteous; but having freely called us without any our deserts, he doth also of his own undeserved love give us his holy spirit, whereby we are purged from our corruptions, sanctified and raised up from the death of sin to newness of life; so that our holiness is not a cause of our calling, but God's election and calling is a cause of our holiness. And this appeareth both by testimonies of Scripture and examples. For the first, the Lord professeth, Isa. 65:1, that he offered himself to those that asked not after him, and was found of them that sought him not &c. The Apostle, Eph. 2:1, affirmeth that even those who are the Church and people of God, were before their calling and conversion, not sick only, but even dead in their sins, in which they walk according to the course of the world; that they were by nature the children of wrath as well as others, as it is, ver. 3, and that they were without Christ, aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, and had no hope, and were without God in the world, as it is, ver. 12. So, 1 Cor. 6:11, he saith, that those who were now sanctified and justified, were in time past fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, wantons, buggerers &c. The Apostle Peter likewise writing to the Church of Christ, saith both of himself and them also, that they had spent the time past before their conversion, after the lust of the gentiles, walking in wantonness, gluttony, and in abominable idolatries, 1 Pet. 4:3. And the Prophet Isaiah saith, that we all were wandering sheep, until the Lord gathered us into his sheepfold. So that it was so far of, that we should deserve nay grace or mercy at God's hand, that in his justice he might rather

have consumed us as his enemies, than called us to be his Church and people.

This also is plain in the examples specified in the book of God: for, what excellency or worthiness was in Abraham who before his calling was an idolater? Or in Rahab who had spent her time in lust and filthiness? Or in Manasseh who was a cruel idolater, a murderer, a sorcerer? Or in Matthew who was a publican? Or in Paul who was a bloody persecutor? Or in the thief, who had spent his life in all outrage and wickedness? What excellency or desert was in any of us, who have not so much as a thought, or inclination to any good thing, or any power to perform it? And therefore we must conclude with the Apostle, that we are called with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose of grace, &c. 2 Tim. 1:9.

The second part of effectual calling, is that reciprocal donation whereby God the father giveth Christ Jesus his only begotten son, truly and effectually to all his elect, to be their head, redeemer, and Savior; and also whereby he giveth his elect unto Christ to become his members, that so they may be saved and redeemed by him: whereupon all God's elect may truly say, that this Christ Jesus, God and man, is mine head, my Savior and redeemer; and all his merits obedience and benefits, purchased by both, are become mine by this right, as being a member of his body; and our Savior also, may as truly say of God's elect, that they are his whom he hath right to redeem and save, because he is their head and they his members. Of this mutual donation and gift, the Scriptures speak evidently; and first that Christ is given unto us; Isa. 9:6. Unto us a child is borne, and unto us a son is given. John. 3:16. So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

life. Rom. 8:32. Secondly, that we are given unto Christ, it is manifest, John. 17:6. I have declared thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world, thine they were and thou gavest them me, &c. So. John. 10:29. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to take them out of my fathers hand. By which places it plainly appeareth, that Christ is given unto us by God his father, and we unto Christ. But in what manner is this mutual donation made? Surely not grossly and corporally; but spiritually and after a celestial manner: for the means whereby it is brought to pass on God's part, is his divine and holy Spirit, and on our part a true and lively faith.

The third part of effectual calling, is the union and communion which is betwixt Christ and God's elect: which followeth upon the donation before spoken of, whereby Christ Jesus and they are mystically coupled together into one body, he becoming their head and they becoming his members. Of this the Apostle speaketh, Eph. 4:15,16, where he exhorteth the faithful, to grow up into him which is the head, that is Christ, by whom all the body being coupled together by every joint &c. receiveth increase. And chap. 5:30. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. And of this our Savior Christ speaketh in the parable of the vine John. 15:1, where he compareth himself to the stock and root, and all the faithful to the branches; and the Apostle expresseth it by a metaphorical speech taken from a building, comparing Christ to the foundation, and the Church to the rest of the building, Eph. 2:20,21,22. Now we must not conceive of this union, that it is either natural, as the three persons in Trinity are united in the same divine nature, or personal as the body and soul being united make one man, or corporal as the parts of a building are coupled one with another: but this conjunction and union is made by the spirit of God, which

dwelling in the manhood of Christ above measure, filling it with the graces thereof, is from it derived unto all the faithful and true members of Christ's body, filling them with the like graces in measure; and on our part by a true and lively faith, whereby we do apply unto us Christ Jesus and all his benefits. And this appeareth, Eph. 2:22, where the Apostle saith that we are the habitation of God by the spirit. And, 1 John 4:13. Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. So that by the spirit of God dwelling in us, we are made one with Christ and Christ with us. Now the manner whereby this union is made is this; the faithful man, body and soul, is united unto whole Christ God and man; but first and immediately to the human nature, and mediately thereby to the divine nature, both which are most necessary; for life and salvation is wrought for us by virtue and power of the Deity, but it is derived and communicated unto us by the human nature of Christ. According to that, John. 6:54. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. And this is the union which is between Christ our head and us his members, by virtue whereof we have sure interest and just title, both to Christ and all his benefits, his obedience death and merits, by which we are justified, sanctified and saved.

And so much concerning the parts of our effectual calling; the means whereby the Lord thus calleth us, are first on God's part the preaching of the word, which is made effectual by the inward operation of his spirit; first to mollify our hard hearts, and truly to humble us, by setting before us our sins and corruptions, and this is done by the preaching of the law: and after we see our inability and insufficiency of working our own salvation, we are thereby brought out of ourselves, to seek for salvation in Christ Jesus,

applying him and his merits unto us by a true and a lively faith, and this is done by the preaching of the Gospel.

The means on our part is the saving hearing of the word, whereby our hard hearts are mollified, and we truly humbled, and brought out of ourselves to seek for salvation in Christ, whereby also true faith is begot in us, wherewith we apply, Christ unto us, and rely upon him alone for our salvation.

And thus have I shown what our vocation is, and the means thereof. Now let us consider of those temptations, which Satan suggesteth into men's minds in respect of their vocation, to the end he may hinder them from the participation and fruition of Christ and his benefits, whereunto in the preaching of the word they are called and invited. And these are of two sorts, first those wherewith he assaulteth them who are not called: secondly, those wherewith he assaulteth them who are truly called and converted.

CHAP. XVIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
WHEREBY HE SEEKETH TO MAKE
OUR CALLING INEFFECTUAL,
ANSWERED.

Those who are not called he tempteth diverse ways, that he may hinder their effectual calling; and first he laboreth to persuade them, to neglect this their calling as a thing not necessary, and to contemn the ministry of the word, which is the means whereby we are effectually called.

But we are to withstand these temptations: and to this end we are first to know, that before our effectual calling we are not true members of the Church, though we may outwardly thrust ourselves into this society; for what else is the Church but that company or congregation which is truly called and selected out of the world? And from hence it hath its name, for it is called Ecclesia, from the calling thereof: unless therefore we be called we are not members of the Church, and if we be out of the Church there is no salvation; for our Savior gave himself for his Church alone, and he is the Savior of his own body, as it is, Eph. 5:23,25, and he addeth daily unto the Church such as shall be saved, as it is, Act. 2:47.

Moreover, unless we be truly called we shall never be truly justified, and without justification there is no glorification: for this is the gold chain of

our salvation, as appeareth, Rom. 8:30.

Lastly, we can never come unto Christ, nor communicate with him in any of his benefits, nor receive any sanctifying and saving grace of God's spirit, till by the grace of God we are made partakers of this holy calling; for naturally we are mere worldlings, destitute of all grace and goodness, and so we remain till by this holy calling we are separated from the world, and engrafted into the body of Christ, by whose spirit we are quickened who were dead in our sins, and have sanctifying graces begotten nourished and increased in us.

Seeing therefore this our effectual calling is so necessary, let not Satan persuade us to neglect it, neither let us when the Lord inviteth us to this royal feast pretend excuses, one that he must go see his farm, another that he must go try his oxen, a third that he must go about his merchandize, and a fourth that he is hindered by a carnal marriage: for if we will not come when the Lord inviteth us, like unworthy guests we shall be shut out of the doors, and not suffered to be partakers of this banquet of eternal blessedness. Whilest today we hear his voice let us not harden our hearts, for he hath not promised that he will call again tomorrow, whilst now he standeth at the door and knocketh and calleth for entrance, let us hearing his voice open the door of our hearts, that he may come in and sup with us and we with him; for if unkindly we deny him entertainment, we can have no assurance that he will return again to such churlish and ungrateful hosts. In a word, seeing the Lord passing by many other in the world maketh choice of us, calling and inviting us to the participation and fruition of eternal blessedness and happiness, let no worldly business, though it seem as necessary as the burying of our dear father, hinder us from harkening, and obeying this heavenly call; let no transitory trifle stay us from coming to

God, when he offereth to make us good assurance of his royal kingdom: for though many things be convenient, yet one thing is necessary, and thrice happy are they which make choice of the better part.

But it is impossible that ever we should be truly called, unless we carefully use the means when the Lord offereth them unto us, and attentively listen unto the Lord's voice when he inviteth us to come unto him: and therefore Satan laboreth, not so much to persuade us that our vocation is in a thing unnecessary unto salvation, seeing this is manifestly repugnant to plain testimonies of scriptures, as to move us to neglect the means whereby we are called, namely the ministry of God's word: partly working upon our inbred corruption, which not conceiving the things of God condemneth them of foolishness, and not being delighted with those things which it understandeth not, they seem irksome and tedious; and partly enticing us with the commodities and pleasures of the world, which are more pleasant to carnal men than their meat and drink, he causeth us to spend that time in our earthly businesses or vain delights, which we should bestow in the hearing of God's word, whereby we should be effectually called, that is, separated from the world, and engrafted as lively members into the body of Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore strongly arm ourselves against this temptation, as being most pernicious unto our own souls: and to this end let us briefly consider of some reasons, whereby we may be stirred up diligently to frequent God's holy assemblies, to be made partakers of this heavenly ambassage. First therefore we are to know, that the ministry of the word is God's own ordinance, which he hath instituted and ordained for the gathering together of the Saints, and building the body of his Church, as appeareth, Eph. 4:11,12. Neither doth he use ordinarily any other means (especially where

this is to be had) for the true conversion of his children, and for the working of the sanctifying graces of his spirit in them. And therefore though he could by extraordinary means, have sufficiently instructed the Eunuch in the ways of salvation, yet he would not, but rather useth his own ordinance, and sendeth Philip to preach unto him, Act. 8. Though he could have illuminated the eyes and understanding of Paul, by the immediate work of his spirit, yet he chose rather to send him to Ananias, Act. 9:6.17. Though he could by the ministry of his Angel, have sufficiently informed Cornelius in things necessary to salvation, yet he would not offer so great disparagement to his own ordinance, and therefore he causeth him to send for the Apostle Peter, Act. 10:5,6. And therefore if we would have any assurance, of our effectual calling and true conversion unto God, let us with all care all diligence hear the word of God preached unto us.

Secondly, let us consider that it is even God himself, who speaketh by the mouths of his Ambassadors, and that they come not in their own names but in Christ's stead, to entreat us that we would be reconciled unto God, as it is, 2 Cor. 5:20; that though they be but earthen vessels, yet they bring from the world, and is yet hid to those that perish, 2 Cor. 4:7. And hence it is that the Prophets, being to pronounce their prophecies, still begin with, The word of the Lord, and, Thus saith the Lord; and God himself sending Jeremiah to preach, saith, that he had put his words into his mouth, Jer. 1:9. Whosoever therefore refuse to hear the word of God preached, refuse to hear the Lord himself, as our Savior plainly affirmeth Luk. 10:16. He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and what hope can they have of coming unto God, who cannot endure to hear his voice calling them unto him?

Thirdly, the titles which are given unto the word in the Scriptures, may serve as strong arguments to move us carefully to hear the same: for it is called the ministry of reconciliation, whereby we are reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5:18, and therefore without it, there being no other ordinary means of reconciliation, we remain still God's enemies. It is called the Gospel of peace, Eph. 6:15, without which we have neither peace with God, nor the peace of conscience; It is called the word of grace, Act. 14:3, and 18:32, because it is the means whereby the Lord deriveth unto us his grace and mercy, and all the spiritual graces of his sanctifying spirit; It is called the word of life, Phil. 2:16, and the word of salvation, Act. 13:26, because it is the means whereby we are saved out of the hands of spiritual enemies, and are certainly assured of everlasting life and happiness; It is called the kingdom of God, Matth. 13:44, because thereby we are brought, first into the kingdom of grace, and afterwards into the kingdom of glory; It is that heavenly seed whereby we are begotten unto God, in which respect the ministers thereof are called spiritual fathers, 1 Cor. 4:15, and therefore without it we can never be regenerated and borne unto God; It is the food of our souls, even milk for babes, and strong meat for men of ripe years, 1 Cor. 3:2. Heb. 5:12, whereby we are nourished unto everlasting life: and therefore let us not refuse this heavenly food like wayward children when our heavenly father offereth it unto us, for so our souls being hunger-starved, nothing can follow but eternal death and destruction; It is the physic of our souls, whereby being sick in sin they are cured and restored: for as Christ is our heavenly physician, so is his word the potion which he giveth to purge us from our corruptions, and the preservative which confirmeth us in health, and preserveth us from the leprous infection of sin, yea this physic is so sovereign, that though with Lazarus were have lien

dead in our graves four days, that is, continued long in our natural corruptions, yet this physic being applied will raise us up to newness of life; and therefore those who neglect this divine physic, are subject to all infection of sin, and being infected can never attain to their health again. It is the square and rule of our lives, from which we must not decline neither on the right hand nor on the left, Deut. 5:32, and therefore without it our works must needs be crooked in God's sight. It is a lantern to our feet, and a light unto our paths, Psal. 119:105, whereby we are guided in the ways of holiness and righteousness which lead us to everlasting happiness, which being taken away we shall walk in darkness, and be every step ready to fall into sin and eternal destruction. It is the sword of the spirit, wherewith we defend ourselves and offend our spiritual enemies, Eph. 6:17; which being neglected, or not skillfully used, we shall lie open to all thrusts and blows, and be easily overcome. In a word, it is profitable for all uses, as being the only ordinary means ordained to convey unto us all good, and to preserve us from all evil: and therefore great folly it is for any man to contemn it, or to prefer before it vain pleasures, or trifling commodities, which also are momentary and uncertain.

Fourthly, the manifold benefits which by the word of God are derived unto us, may serve as a strong argument to stir us up to the diligent and careful hearing thereof; for first thereby we become true members of the Church, out of which there is no salvation, and being engrafted into the body of Christ, are made partakers of all his benefits. And this appeareth, Eph. 4:11,12, where the Apostle showeth that the end of the ministry is for the gathering together of the saints, and for the edification of the body of Christ. A notable example whereof we have, Act. 2:41, where, by one sermon three thousand souls were added to the Church. Secondly, hereby

we are regenerated and begotten unto God, and therefore in this respect Paul professeth himself, the father of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 4:15, and without this regeneration and new birth, none shall ever enter into the kingdom of God, as our Savior showeth us, John. 3:5. Thirdly, unless the blind eyes of our understandings be illuminated, we shall fall into a labyrinth of errors, and never find the hard way which leadeth to God's kingdom; but the word of God is that heavenly light, which shineth unto us who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, guiding our feet into the way of peace, as it is, Luk. 1:79, and in this respect, God's ministers are called the light of the world, Matth. 5:14. Act. 13:47, because, as lights, they guide and direct men in the ways of salvation, and reveal unto them the great light, even the Sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus. Fourthly, through faith we are saved, Eph. 2:8. Neither is it possible, that without saith we should ever attain unto salvation, for this is the condition of all the promises of the Gospel, without which we cannot have any assurance of them, John. 1:12, and 3:16,18. Moreover, whatsoever is not done of faith is sin, Rom. 14:23. And without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11:6. But the preaching of the word is the ordinary means of begetting faith in us, as appeareth Rom. 10:17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And therefore whosoever contemn or neglect the hearing of God's word, they refuse the means of faith; and being without faith, all they do is sin, and cannot please God, neither can they ever have any assurance of God's promises, or their own salvation. Lastly, by the hearing of God's word we are saved, and therefore God's ministers in this respect are called Sowers of the people, 1 Tim. 4:16. Take heed unto thyself and unto learning; continue therein, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee; because they are the ministers of God, whom he useth as means,

and instruments in working the salvation of the elect: and therefore seeing by the preaching of the word, we are made members of the body of Christ, regenerated and enlightened; seeing thereby we attain unto faith, and everlasting salvation, let us as we love our own souls, diligently hear the word, and not suffer ourselves to be hindered from frequenting the holy assemblies of God's saints, with every vain pleasure and base commodity.

But here the tempter will be ready to object, that though the word preached be thus necessary and profitable at sometimes when we are at leisure, yet this should be no reason to move us to neglect our business, or abandon our pleasures; for when once by the hearing thereof we are converted, enlightened with the knowledge of God's true religion, and endued with faith, it is sufficient if we but seldom hear it; for what in substance can we learn, which we have not already learned, or what can the preacher teach us, which we do not know as well as he? Against which temptation, which is so common and pernicious, it behooveth every Christian most carefully to arm himself; and to this end let us know, first that this neglect of God's word is a manifest sign that such are not as yet truly converted, nor endued with any measure of saving knowledge and true faith; for whosoever are of God hear his word, John. 8:47; and all Christ sheep hear his voice and follow him, as it is, John. 10:3,4,27. Whosoever have attained unto knowledge, faith, and the rest of the graces of God's sanctifying spirit, they will be so ravished with the excellency of them, that it is not possible for them to content themselves with a small measure, but still they will labor to grow from knowledge to knowledge, from faith to faith, from one grace to another, till they become perfect men in Christ. And as those who have but once tasted of some delicious meat, are not satisfied therewith, but again and again feed upon it if easily they may come by it,

because their taste is exceedingly delighted therewith; so if ever we did but truly taste of this heavenly Manna, and spiritual food of our souls, the word of God, we would not rest so contented, but when opportunity is offered, we would often feed upon it, until our souls were fully satisfied, and nourished unto perfect strength; and forasmuch as so long as we continue here, our knowledge is but in part and our faith weak, and God's graces but in small measure, therefore we would continually feed on this heavenly nourishment, to the end of our lives, that thereby our knowledge may be increased, our faith strengthened, and all other graces confirmed and multiplied in us. But if on the other side we loath this heavenly Manna, it is a manifest sign, we never tasted thereof in truth, or that our souls are exceeding sick in sin, which maketh them that they cannot relish this dainty and delicious food, and that we have not knowledge, faith, or any grace begotten in us, neither that ourselves are begotten unto God. For as the child being begotten and conceived, doth presently draw nourishment from the mother; and the bigger it waxeth, the more it desireth till it come unto perfect age and strength: so as soon as the graces of God's spirit are begotten in us by the preaching of the word, they draw nourishment from their spiritual mother, the Church; and the stronger they wax in grace, the more earnestly they desire a greater pittance till they become perfect men in Christ. And therefore where there is no desire of this food, there is no regeneration nor new birth.

Moreover the word of God is the food of our souls, whereby we are nourished, and the graces of God's spirit confirmed and increased in us; and therefore it is not sufficient to eat of this food once or twice, but continually, even as often as the Lord calleth us to this spiritual banquet. For as the body will wax faint, and quickly perish, unless that which wasteth away be

continually supplied by nourishment: so will the soul languish and wax faint in spiritual graces, unless it be often nourished with this heavenly Manna. Let not therefore Satan persuade us, that seldom hearing of God's word is sufficient, whereas this banquet is often provided; for though in the time of scarcity by the extraordinary blessing of God, we may go with Elias forty days in the strength of one meal, yet if we feed no oftener when the Lord granteth unto us plentiful provision of the spiritual food, our souls will be hunger-starved. Neither let our often receiving of this heavenly nourishment, cause us with the unthankful Israelites to loath it, or like wayward children, or impatient sick patients, spit it out of our mouths again; for if our appetites be thus cloyed through a surfeit of satiety, surely we are to fear, lest the Lord who is a cunning physician, will prescribe us a long fast, till we have recovered our stomachs, as he threateneth, Amos. 8:11. I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. And then we shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East shall we run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it.

Lastly, though it should be granted that we had attained unto such a measure of knowledge, that we should need no more, yet are there many reasons why we should continually hear God's word with as great diligence as ever we did; for the end of our hearing is not only to know, but also to practice; not only to inform our judgments, but also to reform our affections; not only to beget the graces of God's spirit in us, but also to nourish and increase them; not only to teach us what we should do, but also to stir us up to the doing thereof; and the word of God is not only a light for our feet to show us the way, but also a prick in our sides to make us go in the way, and a bridle in our mouths to keep us from wandering; it is not

only profitable to teach, but to improve, to correct and instruct in righteousness. That the man of God may be absolute, being made perfect unto all good works, as it is, 2 Tim. 3:16, it is not only profitable for doctrine, but for edification, exhortation and consolation, as appeareth, 1 Cor. 14:3. And therefore it is not sufficient to come once or twice to the assemblies of God's saints, but we must above all things desire with the prophet David, that we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple, Psal. 27:4. For though our knowledge be never so great, yet so long as we have any sin hanging on, or any grace imperfect in us, we had need to be continual hearers of God's word, for the suppressing of the one and perfecting of the other.

CHAP. XIX. SATAN'S TEMPTATION, WHEREBY HE PERSUADETH MEN THAT THE SCRIPTURES ARE NOT GOD'S WORD, ANSWERED.

The second temptation which Satan suggesteth into men's minds, to the end he may move them to neglect the hearing of God's word, or though they do hear it, to reject it through unbelief, he thus frameth. What folly is it to take such pains in hearing the scripture, and what madness is it so steadfastly to believe it, seeing thou knowest not whether it be God's word, or the subtle devise of man's brain, to keep the people in awe, and to restrain them from such secret faults, as other human laws ratified and confirmed with temporal and outward punishments and rewards cannot keep them from; because the laws of princes cannot (no more than the lawgivers themselves) either fore see, prevent or punish any faults and offenses, which are not open and manifest? Why shouldest thou thereby be moved to forsake thy delightful sins, and to embrace unpleasant godliness, to abandon thy pleasures, and to undertake an austere and strict course of life, seeing thou knowest not whether the scriptures be true or false, the word of the everlasting God or the invention of mortal man.

Against which temptation it behooveth every man most carefully to arm himself, as undermining the very foundation of all true religion; for take away the authority of the scriptures and you shall open a wide door to all carnal worldliness, beastly epicurism, and devilish atheism; they being the only true rule of virtue, whereby we are directed to choose the good and refuse the evil; the scepter of God whereby he ruleth all the subjects of his kingdom, which being rejected we give over ourselves to be ruled by the devil, and the lusts of our own flesh; the light of our eyes without which we are blind and walk in darkness; the food of our souls which being taken away, they languish in all spiritual graces, and fall into miserable death and destruction; and the sword of the spirit whereby we defend ourselves, and beat back our spiritual enemies, which being plucked out of our hand, we are easily vanquished and led captive unto all sin and wickedness.

And that we may be the better provided against this temptation, let us propound some reasons whereby gainsayers may be convinced, and God's children persuaded of the truth and authority of the scripture. The first argument to prove the scriptures to be written by the motion and revelation of God's spirit, is the antiquity thereof; for whatsoever religion is most ancient, that proceedeth from God: but the religion contained in the scriptures, is of all other most ancient: and therefore God was the author thereof. The first part of this reason is clear and manifest; for seeing man was created for God's glory, to the end he should worship and serve him, and could not perform acceptable worship and service unto God, unless he revealed his will unto him; therefore, that man might attain unto the end of his creation, it was necessary that the Lord should from the beginning reveal unto him his true religion, whereby he might know how to worship and serve him, according to his will. And consequently, the first and most

ancient religion is the true religion, which proceeded from God; and all other are false and counterfeit, which are disagreeing and repugnant hereunto, seeing God's will is one and the same, constant and immutable. The second part of this reason, namely that the religion delivered in the scriptures is of all others most ancient, is of undoubted truth; for it is within a few days as ancient as the world itself, taking it beginning from man's creation, and so continuing in a constant and unchangeable course unto this day. Now all other religions are but new and upstart in comparison hereof, taking their beginnings diverse thousand years since the creation; yea even the God's themselves which they worship (which in truth were men like themselves) had their beginning for the most part, long since the time of Abraham, as their own histories manifestly declare. Neither did any other religion of the heathen continue one and the same; for that which one received another rejected, that which one confirmed another changed, and time hath worn them all out, leaving scarce any small remnants or relics of them. And therefore all other religions, saving that which is delivered in the scriptures, are false and counterfeit; and this only the truth of God.

Secondly, the purity and perfection of the scriptures, do evidently show that they are the word of God, indited by his holy spirit; for they manifest unto us the only true God, and propound him alone unto us, to be worshipped, expressing also the manner and means of his service, from which we must not decline on the right hand, or on the left: but all other religions teach us either to worship many God's, which is a thing absurd in reason, and contrary to the light of nature, as diverse of the wisest philosophers well discerned; or to worship the true God not according to his revealed will, but according to their false imaginations, and erroneous superstitions. Now, nature, reason, and experience itself teach us, that there

is no wise King but will set down rules and laws, according to which he will be served and obeyed, and not leave it to everyone's fantasy and vain imagination; and shall we think God less wise than man, that he should not have a perfect law for the government of his people, but suffer every man to follow his own blind conceit and ignorant superstition?

Thirdly, the sincerity and uprightness of the writers of the holy scriptures, is a manifest argument that they were guided and directed by God's spirit; for they deliver nothing in their own name, but in the name of the Lord, not arrogating any praise unto themselves, but ascribing all glory unto God; neither did they in their preachings or writings seek themselves, or aim at any worldly benefit; nay rather they were content to be contemptible, subject to scoffs and taunts, yea to offer themselves to death, and deprivation of all worldly felicity, for the truth of God which they had delivered. And whereas diverse of them might have lived in all pomp, if they would have followed the times, winked at the sins of rulers, and suppressed the word of the Lord, which they had received of him; they chose rather to suffer persecution, yea death itself, then they would keep back any of the counsel of God, as appeareth in the example of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Michaeas, Zacharias, Amos, and many others of the Prophets, and Apostles. Neither do they in their writings abstain only from seeking their own glory and praise, but also set down those things which might tend to their discredit, to the end God might be glorified in their infirmities, the truth confessed and preserved, and the Church of God benefited, when by seeing the weakness of the most strong, they are kept from presuming on their own strength, and from despairing in God's mercy. And thus Moses concealeth not the fall of our grandparents, the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the lie of Isaac, the whoredom of

Judas; nay which more nearly concerned him, he plainly revealeth the horrible and bloody sin of his grandfather Levi, and Simeon, in murdering the Shechemites, and the curse of their father Jacob pronounced against them for this their outrage, Gen. 49:5,6, which could not in human reason but be dishonorable to his stock and progeny, and offensive to all who were of that tribe: furthermore he displayeth the corruptions, imperfections, and often rebellions of that people whose salvation he preferred before his own soul; he spareth not to set down the Idolatry of his own brother Aaron, nor the sin of his sister Miriam in murmuring against him, nor of Aaron's sons in offering with strange fire. Nay he leaveth the remembrance of his own sin of impatency and unbelief, for which he was debarred from entering into the land of promise, unto all posterities, as a perpetual note of his own weakness and infirmity. Neither sought he at all his own glory, and the advancement of his posterity, but the glory of God and the good of the church, as may hereby appear in that when the government was established in his hand, he doth not make his own sons his successors, but Joshua his servant, because God had so appointed it. The like may be said of Jeremiah, who hath in his prophecy left record of his murmuring and impatency, Jer. 20; Of Jonah who hath set down his own rebellion, punishment, and repining against God; Of the apostle Paul who hath not spared to call himself a cruel persecutor and chief of all sinners. Now we know that naturally, we desire to conceal the faults of our friends and kindred, and we count him an evil bird that defileth his own nest; naturally we seek our own praise and the advancement of our children, and can brook nothing less than that our faults should be divulged and become table talk: and therefore this detection of their own and their friends faults could not proceed

from nature, or any worldly policy, but from the direction of God's spirit which overruled their affections, and took away all partiality.

Fourthly, the wonderful consent which is amongst the diverse writers of the Scriptures, doth evidently show that they were guided and directed, by one and the same spirit of God: for whereas it is truly said of other men, *Quot homines tot sententiae*, Look how many men there be, and so many minds there be; whereof it cometh to pass that every writer almost varieth from another, gainsaying and confuting that which another hath delivered, that so out of the ashes of their credit and reputation they may build a monument of their own fame: the quite contrary is to be observed in the writers of the scriptures, who successively writing one after another the space of diverse thousand years, do notwithstanding consent together in the same truth, the later ratifying and confirming that which the former had delivered without any alteration, opposition or emulation, as though they were diverse hands set on work by the same soul, which could not possibly come to pass unless they were overruled by God's spirit.

Fifthly, the mighty oppositions which have been made by the devil and his wicked imps against this doctrine of the scriptures, and yet all in vain, do evidently show that they are God's word and truth, the patronage and protection whereof he hath himself undertaken, above all human reason and power. For hath not the devil in former times, and doth he not still at this day oppose himself against the word of God? And do not his cursed instruments, ungodly men, the more they exceed in wickedness the more bend their whole power maliciously to oppugn this truth, persecuting the children of God, for this cause only that they are professors and practicers of God's true religion? And whence proceedeth this malicious opposition but from this, that the scriptures are the word of God? And therefore as they

hate and oppose themselves against God himself, so also against his word; and because they know that by this light their works of darkness are discovered, therefore they labor to put it clean out, that their wickedness may not be descried; because it is pure and holy they cannot endure it, they themselves being corrupt and wicked; because it is the rule of justice which showeth the crookedness of their ways, they would, if they were able, burn it or cut it in pieces; because it is the word by which they are condemned, therefore they loathe as much to hear it, as the prisoner doth abhor to hear the sentence of the just Judge. And hence proceedeth their opposition and oppugning of the holy scriptures with all their force and might; but all in vain, for the more the devil and wicked men rage against the word of God, the more by the almighty power of God supporting it, the glory thereof appeareth and spreadeth itself over the face of the earth; the more they labor to keep it down, the more it flourisheth. And as they who go about to stop the current of a mighty river, do but make it to swell the higher and overflow all the country, whereas before it was contained within the compass of his own banks: so when Satan and his wicked imps, do seek to stay this heavenly stream which floweth from God's Sanctuary, and labor might and main to hinder the passage and propagation of God's truth; the more it spreadeth itself, maugre their malice, and overfloweth the whole earth. And whence can the defeating and frustrating of this powerful violence proceed, but from a greater power, even the power of God? For though all men should combine themselves together, they were unable to resist Satan's rage, or protect the word of God from utter ruin: only the Lord whose power is omnipotent could thus uphold it, and make it prevail against all the power of hell.

And as the Lord by preserving and defending the scriptures, from the beginning unto this day, doth evidently show that they are his own word and revealed will: so also by punishing, even in this life, with utter ruin and destruction, all those who have most violently and maliciously opposed themselves against it, and persecuted the Saints of God for the profession hereof; as may appear notably in the examples of Antiochus Epiphanes, Herod, Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, Julian the apostata and many others; who by their shameful and horrible deaths testified and proved the scriptures to be the truth of God, which they had oppugned and persecuted the whole course of their wicked lives.

Sixthly, the Lord hath approved the scriptures to be his truth by wonderful miracles, which Satan himself cannot so much as imitate; as by giving the blind their sight, raising the dead to life, turning back the course of the Sun in the firmament, dividing the sea in two parts, and such like; which miracles were wrought by the almighty power of God, to this end that the faithful might be confirmed in the assurance of God's truth, and the wicked convinced. But against this, Satan will be ready to suggest, that there were never any such miracles as are recorded in the scriptures. To which I answer, that these miracles were not done in a corner, or in hugger mugger, but in the presence of great multitudes; otherwise the Prophets and Apostles who were but mean and simple men, should have labored in vain to have persuaded men, to have embraced their doctrine and religion (especially being so contrary to human wisdom, and our natural disposition and affections) if they had only themselves reported, or brought some few witnesses of their miracles wrought, and not publicly shown them to all the people. Moreover, seeing this doctrine hath had so many enemies from the beginning, it is not probable but that they would have exclaimed, and

written against the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, as soon as they were published, for writing such things as were never done: but amongst all those who have opposed themselves against the scriptures, there is no man so impudent as to deny that such miracles were done, of which so many were eye-witnesses: nay contrariwise the Heathen themselves, who neither knew God nor his true religion, have made mention of them in their writings; and the Jews who to this day withstand the work of redemption wrought by Christ, do notwithstanding confess that such miracles were wrought by Christ and his Apostles; neither in truth are they able to gainsay them, seeing they have received this truth by tradition from their fathers: and therefore they are driven to confess, that Christ was a great Prophet, though not the promised Messias.

Seventhly, the constant testimony of innumerable Martyrs, who have sealed this truth with their dearest blood, is a notable argument to assure us that it is indeed the word of God: for it is not likely that so many would so constantly and cheerfully have suffered for their profession, the most exquisite torments that wit and malice could invent, if the spirit of God had not certainly assured them that it was the truth of God, and if it had not supported them in suffering these torments above all human power and strength. And whereas it may be objected, that wicked men have suffered also for their sects, opinions and heresies, we are to know that there is great difference between them; first, because the number hath been few who have suffered for their several sects and heresies, but the Martyrs almost innumerable who have suffered for the same truth; secondly, the same cheerfulness, constancy and rejoicing in their sufferings hath not been in them who have suffered for their errors, which hath always been observed in God's Saints. And lastly, these heretics have always been confuted and

convinced of their errors and heresies before their sufferings, whereas God's Saints directed by his holy spirit, have stopped the mouths of their adversaries with the wisdom of God's word, which Satan himself cannot resist, and through violent rage being unconvicted have been led to the slaughter.

CHAP. XX. OTHER REASONS TO
PROVE THAT THE SCRIPTURES
WERE INDICTED BY GOD'S SPIRIT,
TAKEN FROM THE SCRIPTURES
THEMSELVES.

The eight reason to prove that the scriptures are the word of God, is the argument which they handle, and the end whereunto they tend. For the subject whereof they entreat are the great works of the ever-living God, how he exerciseth his mercy towards his children in sustaining, defending, and saving them from all their enemies, and his justice towards the wicked in turning their counsels to foolishness, in overthrowing their designs and purposes, curbing in their rage and violence, and in punishing and destroying them. Now if you consider and peruse all other writings in the world besides, you shall find no such matter contained in them; for some labor in polishing human Arts; some set out large histories of the actions, counsels, success, policies, enterprises and perturbations of men like themselves: so that at the first sight we may know that they are indicted by the spirit of man, seeing they are wholly spent in human affairs, never intermeddling with any spiritual matter appertaining unto God. Moreover, the scriptures attribute the governing and wise disposing of all things to

God's all-ruling providence, that he may have the whole praise of his own works; as when they speak of some famous victory, they do ascribe it neither to the wisdom of the Captain, nor to the valor of the common soldier, but unto the Lord of hosts alone; neither do they make poems in the praise of Moses, Joshua, David, Hezekiah, or any other of the Kings and Leaders, but in the praise of the Lord, who by his own strong arm hath given his children victory over their enemies. Now whence can this proceed but from the spirit of God inditing them, who contrary to the nature of man which desireth rather all praise himself, doth move him to refuse all glory attributed to himself, that all the praise may be ascribed unto God? So when they speak of any benefit received by the Church, they do not attribute it to worldly friends, their good fortune, or their own industry and labor, but to the blessing of God proceeding of his mere mercy and goodness towards them. And contrariwise, when they set down the destruction of the wicked, they do not ascribe it to any want of their own care and providence, nor to the malice or power of their enemies, nor to blind chance, or other outward accident, but to the hand of God exercising his judgments upon them, and punishing them for their sins. Now if you peruse all other writings, you shall find that they aim at nothing less than God's glory; for some write to show their eloquence, others to extol their wits and deep learning, others to advance the praise of mortal men above the clouds, some for one end, and some for another, all aiming at their own praise, pleasure or profit, never so much as once respecting God's glory in their least thought; and hence it is that setting down any victory they ascribe it to the weakness or want of wit, providence or courage of the adverse part, or to the fortitude of the Captains, the resoluteness of the soldiers, the advantages of the place, Sun, wind, and such like circumstances, in the meantime excluding the God of

battles, as though he had no stroke in this business. So likewise when they speak of any other affairs or accidents which fall out in the government of the world, they ascribe all to outward circumstances, inferior means and subordinate causes, as though God had given over the government of the earth, and had committed the ruling of the stern to blind fortune. Now whence can this exceeding difference proceed, that they should altogether aim at the glory of God, and these wholly at the praise, pleasure, and profit of man? That they should always ascribe the government and disposing of all things to the wise providence of God, and these to outward accidents, natural causes and inferior means? Surely because they were indicted by the spirit of God, and therefore themselves are divine, savoring wholly of the author of them: and these by the spirit of man, and therefore all contained in them is merely human carnal and natural.

The ninth reason may be taken from the style and manner of penning the Scriptures, in which they much differ from all other writings whatsoever: for whereas men in their writings affect the praise of flowing eloquence and loftiness of phrase, the holy Ghost in penning the Scriptures hath used great simplicity and wonderful plainness, applying himself to the capacity of the most unlearned: in which low and humble manner of speech, he doth notwithstanding set forth the deep wisdom of God, and the profound mysteries of religion, the bottom whereof the most wise and learned in the world cannot search into: and under the veil of simple and plain speech, there shineth such divine wisdom and glorious majesty, that all the human writings in the world, though never so adorned with the flowers of eloquence, and sharp conceits of wit and learning, cannot so deeply pierce the heart of man, nor so forcibly work upon his affections, nor so powerfully incline his will either to the embracing of that which is good, or

avoiding of that which is evil, as the word of God: and whence can this proceed but from the virtue, power and wisdom of the spirit of God who is the author of them?

Moreover, we may observe in the style of the Scriptures, a majestic authority above all other writings, which only beseemeth the glorious King and sovereign commander of heaven and earth: for they speak in the same manner, and enjoin the like obedience, to prince and people, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, without any difference or respect of person; not using any arguments, reasons, or persuasions, but absolutely commanding that duty which is to be done, and forbidding that sin which should be left undone, and that under the promise of everlasting life and blessedness, and the pain not of the gallows, rack, or wheel, but of eternal death and damnation; and whom beseemeth it to promise everlasting life, or to threaten everlasting death, but him only who is himself eternal and everlasting? And who hath this absolute authority of commanding all without any difference, but he who is Lord, Creator and governor of the prince as well as the people? Lastly, this word of God doth not only extend itself to the outward actions and conversation, requiring only the external obedience which is in fact and outward behavior, which is the uttermost that human laws respect, because the lawgivers can see no further; but the law of God requireth especially the obedience of the heart, and forbiddeth not only consent to any evil, but even concupiscence and lust? Now who can make laws for the heart and conscience, or though he should be so fond to make them, who could either reward the obedient, or punish the disobedient, but God alone who searcheth the heart and reins? The style therefore of the scriptures being peculiar unto themselves, showing majesty in lowliness and meanness, an overruling power in persuading, without

rendering reason or bringing any argument besides absolute authority, and a universal jurisdiction over all without difference or respect, and that as well in regard of the secret thoughts as the outward actions, doth manifestly show that they are not the invention of man, but the word of God indicted by his holy spirit.

But it may be objected, that if the Lord who is infinite in wisdom were the author of the Scriptures, they would have excelled all human writings in conceit of wit, and excellency of phrase and style, as far as God excelleth man, whereas we see that they are penned after a most simple plain and unpolished manner. To which I answer, that it doth not become a Prince to play the Orator when he setteth out an edict, nor to use Rhetorical figures and alluring persuasions when he hath to deal with his subjects, but rather peremptory commandments and plain phrases, full of gravity and authority without all affectation; and how much less should the chief commander of King and subject, use such a style as savored any whit of human eloquence, seeing, it better beseemeth his majesty plainly to command, than to persuade, or allure with enticing speeches? Secondly, the Scriptures were penned by the holy Ghost, not only for the wise and learned, but also for the simple and ignorant: and therefore howsoever the Lord in the profundity of his wisdom, could have written in such a lofty style as would have filled even the most learned with admiration, yet he useth a simple easy style fit for the capacity of all, because it was for the use of all, and necessary to salvation to be understood of all sorts and conditions. As therefore he frameth himself to our shallow capacity in the penning of the Scriptures, and speaketh not according to his unsearchable wisdom, but after the manner of men, or else no man, no not the most wise and learned could understand him: so he thought it fit to speak as well to the capacity of the

simple as the wise, because the knowledge of his word was no less necessary to salvation to these than to the other; and in his mercy and goodness he vouchsafed as well milk to the babe, as strong meat to those who were come to more ripe years in knowledge and spiritual wisdom. At which the wise and learned have no reason to be offended, seeing the salvation of one is as dear to God as of another, and they may with greater facility understand the Scriptures being plain and easy, which could not be understood of the simple, if they were penned in a lofty eloquent phrase. And yet if they examine the Scriptures in the balance of a true judgment, they may find food therein contained fit for their own palate and taste; for under this humility they shall discern more majesty, under this simplicity more deep wisdom, under this unpolished plainness more powerful persuasions to work upon and incline the affections, than in all human writings whatsoever. Thirdly, human eloquence and witty sharp conceits, are not only unfitting the grave majesty of our heavenly King, but also needless in respect of the Scriptures themselves; for what are they but God's truth, and what is more agreeable and beseeming truth, than plainness and simplicity? For what needs beauty the help of painting, or a precious Diamond much art to polish it, seeing they are glorious in their own nature? And what needs the truth of God, which in itself shineth clearly like the Sun in his chiefest brightness, the goodly ornaments of human eloquence which would but darken the beams thereof? Or what needs that which is heavenly and divine, any help from that which is earthly and carnal to commend it to man's judgment? No, no, the flowers of Rhetoric and help of witty Sophistry, is more fit for Tullius orations, whereby oft times a good cause is made bad, and a bad one good, right wrong, and wrong right, than for God's divine truth, which like the Sun shineth most gloriously when it is bare and

naked. Lastly, it is to be observed that the Lord in his wisdom doth manifest his power in weakness, his majesty in baseness; and his wisdom in foolishness, to the end that weakness baseness, and folly, may serve as foils to make his power, majesty, and wisdom appear to us more glorious, though in truth in themselves they are infinite, and nothing can be added to their excellency. But because we lie groveling on the earth, and are ready to ascribe all to the inferior means, and nothing unto God: therefore the Lord chooseth weak and simple means, that his own power and wisdom may be in them more manifest. For example, if the Lord had penned the Scriptures in such an eloquent style as would have ravished the readers with delight, we would like fools have stood admiring at the curious work of the casket, and never opened it to look upon the precious jewel therein contained; and have been so much affected with the words, that in the mean time we would have neglected the matter; but when this treasure is brought unto us but in an earthen vessel, when this beautiful feature is clothed in mean attire, and the divine wisdom of God set forth in an humble and simple style, we leave shadows and behold the substance, neither do we rest in the outward letter, but search after the inward truth. So also if the Lord had in the penning of the Scriptures used enticing eloquence, or affected human learning, men would have been ready to have said, that by the force thereof so many were drawn or enticed, to embrace religion and to spend their lives in God's service; but when as in outward show there is nothing but unpolished plainness and simple rudeness, by which nevertheless the hearers understanding is more enlightened, his will more powerfully inclined, his affections more strongly ruled, than by all the eloquent persuasions which wit and learning can invent, they are driven to confess that the wisdom of God is hidden under this simplicity, his power under this outward weakness,

and that the Scriptures have their virtue and force, not from the enticing speech of man's wisdom and excellency of words, but from the power and plain evidence of God's spirit, who was the author and inditer of them.

The tenth reason, to prove that the Scriptures are not the invention of man, but the word of God indited by his spirit, is, that many things contained therein are above the reach of human understanding, and so deep that man's wisdom and reason cannot conceive them nor search them to the bottom. For example, though all men know by the light of nature that there is a God, seeing this truth is written in large characters in the fair volume of the creatures, so as none can behold them but he must needs know and acknowledge it; yet that this God being one in nature should be distinguished into three persons, the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, without any division of substance or confusion of persons, man's reason cannot conceive, though the Lord hath revealed it, and much less could invent it seeing now it cannot comprehend it. So, that the world and the creatures therein contained were created, the light of nature sufficiently teacheth us, seeing they have an end and therefore had a beginning, a time of corruption and therefore a time of generation also, and as is the nature of every several part, so is the nature of the whole universal; seeing also one effect brings us to his cause, and that cause to a superior cause, and that to another until we come to the highest and supreme cause which is God, who having his being of himself giveth being to all things: but that all this goodly order should be brought out of confusion, this light out of darkness, that all these excellent creatures should be created of nothing, by the alone word of their omnipotent Creator, it passeth the conceit of human reason, and therefore his invention also. So, that we are wretched and full of misery, not only our reason but even our senses can teach us; but how we should be freed out of

this misery and attain unto everlasting happiness, is a thing above the reach of man's wisdom. And that we are unable to perform those duties we ought, and leave those sins undone which we should omit, and by both offend God, the law of nature written in our hearts, and the checks and fears which everyone feel in their own consciences do sufficiently teach us: but the means whereby we should be reconciled unto God whom we have offended, as they are set down in his word, namely, that the second person in Trinity should take upon him man's nature and be borne of a pure virgin, that in this nature he should for us perform perfect obedience to God's law, and suffer affliction, misery, yea death itself to reconcile us to his Father and procure his love, to free us from everlasting death and damnation, and to purchase for us everlasting life and happiness, and that his obedience and merits should become ours, by reason of that union whereby he becometh our head and we his members, which union is made principally by his spirit, and instrumentally by faith, do all seem strange, yea absurd to human reason; and therefore the Apostle saith, that the natural man perceiveth not the things which are of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; as it is, 1 Cor. 2:14. And if he cannot know and conceive them when in the preaching of the Gospel they are revealed unto him; how much less could he invent them having never heard of them? Or who can imagine that in policy he would have devised such a religion to keep the world in awe and obedience, as to every worldly man seemeth foolish and absurd, yea contrary to his nature? For what can be more against the hair, than to deny ourselves and to take up our cross and follow Christ? Than to reject our own works and worthiness, and to seek for justification in Christ's death and obedience alone? Than to imagine that manifold afflictions and great misery, is the

high way that leadeth to glory and endless felicity? And that pleasures, honors, and riches, make us unfit to enter into God's kingdom? And therefore seeing the doctrine of the Scriptures are not only above the reach of human reason, but also flat contrary to natural wisdom, it plainly proveth that they are not the invention of mortal man (for then the effect would be like the cause) but the word of the ever-living God, which savoreth of his hidden and spiritual wisdom.

The eleventh argument, to prove that the Scriptures were indited not by man but by God's spirit, are the prophecies therein contained, which were fulfilled in their due time; as that there should be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent, and that the promised seed Christ Jesus should vanquish the devil; that the posterity of Cham should be accursed; that Abraham should have a son by his wife Sarah, when they were both old, and she past the time of child-bearing; that his posterity should be bond men in Egypt four hundred years, foretold before he had Isaac of whom they came; that Judah's posterity who was but the fourth son, should have sovereignty and dominion over the rest; that the scepter should not be taken from him till the Messias should come; that the tribe of Ephraim should excel the tribe of Manasseh; that he who should reedify Jericho after it was destroyed, should be punished with the death of his sons, as appeareth, Josh. 6:26, which was five hundred years after fulfilled in Hiel the Bethelite, as it is, 1 King. 16:34; that Josiah by name should destroy idolatry and the idolaters, and restore the true religion, foretold almost 300 years before he was borne, 1 King. 13:1,2, 2 King. 22, and 23; that the people of Israel should be led captive into Babylon, and be set free by Cyrus by name, prophesied of above an hundred years before Cyrus was borne, Isa. 44:26,27,28. And to these we may add the prophecies of

Jeremiah, concerning the taking of Jerusalem and their captivity into Babylon, and the time of seventy years limited for their abiding there; the prophecies of Daniel concerning the four Monarchies, which are so clear and perspicuous as if he had seen them in his time; the prophecy of Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; the prophecies contained in the Revelation of S. John, many of which we see fulfilled in our time, especially that concerning the Antichrist of Rome, his manner of coming, his increasing, his works, seat and place of residence; and which are so manifestly and plainly described, as if the Apostle had written an history and not a prophecy. Which plainly proveth that the Scriptures were not devised by man, but penned by the inspiration of God's spirit, who by his provident wise dome foreseeeth all things, and by his wise providence ruleth all things.

But here Satan will be ready to object, that we are not able to prove that these prophecies were written by any such Prophets and holy men as are mentioned in the Scriptures, so long before the things contained in them were done, and that for ought we know they might be forged and foisted in by some cunning fellow after the things were come to pass. The like objections also he maketh against the rest of the Scriptures, as that either there was not any such Moses, or if he were, that he was but some cunning fellow who writ of miracles and wonders never done, to gain credit to his law which he had published; or if he wrote nothing but truth in his time, yet we know not whether these books which go under his name are perfect as he left them, or depraved and corrupted, having many things altered, added, and detracted, according to the pleasure of those who have had the keeping of them. And so also he objecteth against the other parts of holy Scriptures. To this I answer, that as it were great absurdity to call in question the

writings of Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch and other Heathen men whether they were penned by any such men or no, because the next age received them from the authors themselves, and delivered them to the next ensuing, and so by tradition from hand to hand they are come unto us; so it is no less absurdity to call into question whether the scriptures were written by the Prophets and Apostles who lived in their several times, seeing the Church hath received them from time to time, and delivered them to their successors to this day. Moreover, the law published by Moses was not in secret or in a corner before some few witnesses, but in the presence of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and the strange miracles and works of God full of wonder, which he wrought for the better confirmation of his law given, were done and performed in the presence of many thousands, who made relation of them to their posterity, and they to theirs to this day. Neither was it easy to be corrupted, altered or changed, seeing the lawgiver did straightly charge all men that they should not add, detract, or alter anything upon pain of present death in this world, and everlasting death in the life to come; who therefore would incur the danger of such fearful punishment for the satisfying of his fruitless fantasy? Moreover, this book of the law was safely kept in the Tabernacle, and after in the Temple in the Ark which was placed in the holy of holiest, and diverse authentical copies written out of it for every one of the twelve tribes, which were every Sabbath day read and expounded in their Synagogues; yea so familiar were these writings with the Jews, that they were written in their houses, and upon their garments, so as it was not possible for any man to falsify them but it would presently be espied. Yea (will the tempter say) but though they could not be depraved or corrupted, yet they might at first be invented by some more subtle than the rest, and so

thrust upon men under the authority of God himself, as being the writings of his Prophets and Apostles. To which I answer, that there is no probability of truth in this objection; for I would fain know in what age this man should write. In the time of Moses? How then could he write the history of the Judges who succeeded him? In the time of the Judges? How then could he write the history of the Kings? What then? Could he write these things in the time of the Kings, and so fain a relation of such things as went before? Why then it is necessary that he should have lived in the time of the last Kings, or else he could not have penned their history also: but before this time, there were many copies abroad of the Scriptures in diverse nations, by reason that the Jews were scattered abroad through their captivity, where they as constantly professed their religion as in their own country. Besides, if these writings had been feigned, in what age could they come to light but men diligently inquiring into them, as being matters importing no less than their eternal salvation or condemnation, would have found them counterfeit? For if they had been penned in the same age wherein the things were done, who would have believed them, if they did not assuredly know that they contained nothing but certain truth? If in an after age, who would have straight subscribed unto them, unless they had by tradition from their ancestors been assured that such things were done in former times? Furthermore, it is not probable but that the Jews would have made mention of such an author if they had known him; or if they had by some accident found them written in this form, it is not likely that they would have been so simple as to have built their faith so firmly upon them, that they would rather choose to suffer all torments than be brought to deny any one part of them.

Lastly, it is objected that in the time of Antiochus, the books of the Scriptures were by his tyranny and extreme cruelty wholly abolished, and these which we have, afterwards invented by the Jews to grace their religion. To which I answer, that this objection is so sottishly foolish, that it savoreth not of common sense, much less of any force of reason, for seeing now there were extant almost innumerable copies of the Scriptures, what means could be invented by with and rage utterly to suppress them, especially seeing the Jews made far more precious account of them than of their lives, so that for the profession of this truth they were content to suffer even in this tyrants time cruel deaths? Besides, if they had been all destroyed and abolished in his time, how came it to pass that presently after his death they were again (as it were) pulled out of the ashes and revived? Or how could others be put in their place, seeing innumerable men lived before and after his persecution, who had the sight and perusing of the same books before they were suppressed, and afterwards again when they came to light? Lastly, though it should be granted that all the books of holy Scriptures had been utterly defaced in all the dominions of Antiochus, yet this were nothing for the tempters purpose: for the Jews were now scattered far and wide, and had their Synagogues and schools in sundry nations where he had no authority; and therefore though he had destroyed all the copies of the Scriptures in all places of his kingdom, yet there were many in other places where he bare no sway. Neither were they now in the Hebrew tongue alone, but also translated into the Greek by the 70 Interpreters, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and the translation carefully kept in his Library long before the time of this Antiochus. By all which it is more than manifest, that the Scriptures are the same which were penned by the Prophets and holy men of God, inspired with his divine spirit, confirmed

with so many and wonderful miracles, and sealed with the blood of innumerable Martyrs.

To this which hath been said, I might add the testimony of heathen writers, who in their several times have in their writings made mention of the most principal things which are contained in the story of the Bible: but as we need not the help of a candle to see the sun, which more sufficiently showeth itself by his own light: so this glorious light of God's truth is in itself so clear and manifest, that it needeth not the testimony of Infidels to confirm it, unless it be to those who far exceed them in infidelity. And that noble learned and religious Gentleman, Philip Mornay in his books of the Trueness of Christian Religion, hath eased me of this labor, from whose never wasting candle I have borrowed the chiefest part of my light in the handling of this question.

CHAP. XXI. THAT THE TESTIMONY
OF GOD'S SPIRIT, DOTHS ONLY
PERSUADE US, THAT THE
SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORD OF
GOD.

And these are the arguments whereby all gainsayers may be convinced, who deny the Scriptures to be the word of God, and his infallible truth; but though they are sufficient for the conviction of all opposers, and for stopping the mouths of all Atheists, Epicures and mere naturals; yet notwithstanding, not any of these, nor all these are in themselves sufficient, to beget faith in the heart of any, or to persuade him with full assurance, to believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, unless there be adjoined unto them the testimony of God's spirit, which doth not only convince, but also thoroughly persuade us of this truth; and this alone in itself is all-sufficient, though we never heard any other of the former reasons, for the working of faith in us, and a full persuasion of this truth.

That all other arguments are insufficient without the testimony of God's spirit, hereby it is more than manifest, in that not many wise, nor many learned in the world do believe the Scriptures, which is the cause why they

do not submit themselves to the obedience thereof; whereas if faith might be wrought in men by force of arguments or natural reason, they who best conceive them would most easily be persuaded by them: but contrariwise, we see that these things are hid from the wise and prudent, and are revealed unto babes, not by means of natural reason, but by the testimony of God's spirit. For naturally we are all blind in spiritual things, neither can the natural man discern the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, as it is, 1 Cor. 2:14, and therefore, though the Scriptures be the glorious light of God's truth, shining as bright as the sun in the firmament, to those whose eyes are enlightened with God's spirit; yet to those who continue in their natural blindness, and were never anointed with the precious eye-salve of God's spirit, this glorious light appeareth not, no more than the sunshine to those who want their sight, and hence it is that they grope at noon days. And as the poor woman, of whom Seneca speaketh, being suddenly in the night stricken with blindness, desired the next day to undraw the curtains and open the windows that she might see, whereas the cause of her not seeing was not want of light, but want of eyes: So these men who are stricken with natural blindness, complain that they cannot see the glorious light of God's truth shining in his word, and therefore desire to have it cleared by taking away the clouds of objections which seem to shadow it, and by adding unto it the light of human reason; but the truth is, the fault is not in this glorious light, which always shineth, but in their blindness who cannot discern it; and yet such is the pride, self-love, and vain opinion, which everyone hath of his own gifts, that they will sooner imagine that the sun wanteth light, than they eyes to look upon it.

True it is, that by the former reasons they may be convinced, so that they have nothing to object, and perhaps they may be brought to have a good opinion of the Scriptures, and to a doubtful conceit that they are the word of God in deed; they may with the two Disciples which travailed to Emmaus, when they hear the Scriptures interpreted, have their hearts burn and throb within them, imagining that which they hear, to be more than the word of mortal man; and as the blind man in the Gospel, when his eyes were a little illuminated by our Savior, discerned men, not as men, but as moving trees, so they may in some confused manner know and acknowledge the Scriptures to be the word of God; but before Christ hath fully opened their eyes, and by the precious eye-salve of his spirit hath dispelled their natural blindness, they will never certainly be persuaded nor assuredly believe, that the Scriptures are not the word of man, but the infallible truth of God. For it is not in man's power to beget faith in any, neither is it grounded upon any natural reasons or persuasions, but it is the supernatural gift of God's spirit, who illuminates our understanding, and inclines our will, so that we see, and steadfastly believe that truth which it delivereth, as appeareth, Eph. 2:8, 2 Thes. 1:11.

And when we have this testimony of God's spirit in our hearts, it will certainly persuade us of this truth, though we had no other reason: as appeareth by testimonies of Scripture, and by our own experience. For the first it is said, 1 Cor. 2:15. That the spiritual man, that is, he who is endued with God's spirit, judgeth all things, and yet himself is judged of no man. So, 1. John 2:27. But the anointing which ye received of him, dwelleth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the anointing teacheth you all things, and verse 20. But ye have an ointment him that is holy, and ye have known all things. Whereby he understandeth the spirit of God,

which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, which spirit is given unto us that we might know the things which are given unto us of God: as it is, 1 Cor. 2:10,12. So our Savior promiseth to send a comforter unto us, as it is, John 16:7,13. And in deed who is more fit than the spirit of God to confirm us in the assurance of that truth, which he himself hath indicted and inspired? Or who can better judge of the things of God then the spirit of God? Who can better inform us in this truth then he who is the spirit of truth? And therefore if we have the testimony of God's spirit in us, we shall need no other witness, nor any reasons invented by man's wit, to confirm us in this truth, that the Scriptures are the word of the ever-living God.

For whosoever are endued with God's spirit, do also by their own experience sensibly feel by the effects and operation of the scriptures in themselves, that they are not the word or invention of mortal man, but the word of the almighty and most wise God: for when they perceive that the eyes of their understanding are illuminated, which before were blind and full of darkness; that their will is inclined to the obedience of God's commandments, which before was stubborn and rebellious; that their heart is become soft and tender, so as like the heart of Josiah it melteth at the preaching of the law, which before was obdurate and more hard then the Adamant; that their conscience which was dead and seared, is now ready to check and control them when they commit any sin, and to allow and approve all good actions; that their affections are cast in a new mold, so that whereas heretofore they loved nothing but the world and worldly things, now their love is fixed on the Lord and those things that are above; and whereas nothing was more odious in former times then virtue and godliness, nothing more pleasing then sin and the delights thereof, now

contrariwise, nothing is more loathsome then sin, nothing more sweet and delightful, then obedience to God's commandments; and when they further consider, that this great alteration is made in them only by the hearing of God's word preached, they need no further persuasions, nor other instructor to teach them, that the scriptures were penned by the divine operation of God's spirit, seeing the word of mortal man could never make such a change in them, nor anything else but the word of the ever-living God; which at the first was alone sufficient for their creation and generation, and now only of power sufficient for their regeneration, and new birth. As therefore the blind man reasoned with the Pharisees, John. 9, not with any far-fetched reason, but from his own experience, to prove that our Savior was not a notorious sinner, as the Pharisees accused him, but some great Prophet sent from God; saying, doubtless this is a marvelous thing that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes; and, if this man were not of God he could have done nothing: so may we reason with those who affirm that it cannot be known whence the scriptures came, from God or man; using this argument taken from our own experience, saying, doubtless this is a marvelous thing that ye do not know whence the scriptures are, seeing they have opened mine eyes which were blind from my birth, inclined my will to obedience which before was rebellious, softened my heart and sanctified and quite changed mine affections, so that I now love that good which before I hated, and hate that evil which before I loved; and am delighted with those holy exercises which heretofore did most displease me; and am displeased with those vain pleasures and filthy sins, which in times past did most delight me; and therefore if it were not of God it could have done no such thing, if it were not inspired and indited by

his holy spirit, and made effectual by the virtue and power thereof, it could never have wrought in me such strange alterations.

CHAP. XXII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS SUGGESTED AGAINST THE TRANSLATIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURES ANSWERED.

And so much for answering Satan's second temptation whereby he laboreth to make men neglect the hearing of God's word, that so they may never be effectually called. Now thirdly, if he cannot persuade men that the Scriptures are not the word of God, that so he may take away all the authority thereof, then he will take exceptions against the translation; suggesting into their minds, that though the Scriptures be the word of God as they were penned in their own proper languages, by men inspired by his spirit, yet for ought they know being unlearned, the Scriptures may be corruptly translated, altered from their first original, and things added and detracted at the translators pleasure. To this I answer, that not only professors of religion, but also Pagans, Infidels, Epicures and Atheists, who are even the very limbs of the devil, have been skillful and learned in these languages; and therefore if the translations were not near the original; who could stop their mouths from inveighing against such falsehood? Who could restrain them from declaiming against such corruption, seeing they so hate and abhor this truth, as that they wish the utter extirpation thereof, and with

extreme malice oppose themselves against it, persecuting and murdering to their uttermost power, whosoever embrace and profess it? Moreover, we know that the Jews who more maliciously malign Christians and Christianity than the Turks and Pagans, do notwithstanding agree with us in the translation of the Old Testament, and can take no exception against the new. Thirdly, there hath been ever since Christ's coming many sectaries and heretics, who for the maintenance of their opinions have but sought to corrupt some few places of the Scriptures, but still God hath raised up some godly learned in the original tongues, who have confuted them and cleared the text; how therefore in such division and vehement discord should such a thing be concealed. How should any corrupt the whole Scriptures, or any principal places; seeing there is such controversies from time to time about every letter and syllable? Lastly, this truth of the Scriptures hath been sealed and confirmed with the blood of many Martyrs, who have been excellently learned in the original tongues: and who can imagine that they would have been so foolish, as to have given their lives for the maintaining that truth which is contained in the Scriptures as we have them translated, if they thought them corrupted and falsified in the translation?

But the tempter will object that the translations exceedingly differ one from another, and therefore some of them must needs be false, and who would ground his faith upon any, until he know which is the best and truest? I answer, that though there be diverse translations, and one better than another; yet even that which is most corrupt and imperfect is sufficient to instruct us in the knowledge of God, and in the principles of Christian religion; neither is there amongst them all, many errors which concern the articles of our faith, or come near the substance of doctrine which we are bound to believe, for all the translators have labored to conform their

translations according to the analogy of faith; and though they have not in all places delivered the proper sense, yet they have endeavored to come as near it as they can, and where they have failed, it is rather in circumstances than in substance, in the proper and special truth, than in the common and general; and though in one place they do not so clear the truth as they should, yet they do it in many other. And therefore let not Satan persuade us to neglect the Scriptures, because there are wants and imperfections in the translations; for if we study and meditate even in the meanest, and conform and frame our lives according to that truth which we learn out of them, we shall attain unto everlasting life and happiness. Men do not use to neglect their business, because by reason of some cloud the sun doth not shine upon them in his full brightness; for that light which they enjoy is sufficient, though not so gloriously bright as when it shineth in his full clearness: so we must not neglect the conforming of ourselves to the Scriptures, because we cannot see them shine in their own glorious brightness, as they were penned by the inspiration of the holy Ghost in the original language (for as well may a painter express in his table with artificial colors the glory of the Sun, as any man living can express that perfect beauty and divine glory which shineth in the natural phrase of holy Scriptures in a translation) but rather we are to enjoy the benefit of this glorious shining Sun of God's word, though the brightness be as it were veiled and somewhat shadowed with the cloud of another language; for notwithstanding, through it they shine and afford us such light, as may be sufficient to guide and direct us in the ways of holiness and righteousness, which will bring us in the end to eternal glory and endless felicity.

CHAP. XXIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS TAKEN FROM THE EVIL LIVES OF THE MINISTERS, ANSWERED.

And so much concerning the objections which Satan maketh against the Scriptures themselves, to the end he may make men neglect to hear and read them. But if this will not prevail, then he leaveth to disgrace the word itself, and seeketh by discrediting the Ministers thereof, to make them to contemn their Ministry; and to this end he useth all his skill to draw them into some gross and scandalous sin, and to neglect that doctrine themselves which they teach unto others, showing in their lives and conversations, neither zeal of God's glory, nor desire of their neighbors good; and when he hath attained unto his purpose in some, he thinketh it a sufficient ground for the slander of all, and a notable foundation whereupon he may build a most pernicious temptation. Art thou so foolish (will he say) as to think all Gospel which the ministers teach, that all truth cometh from their mouths, and that there is not a more easy way of attaining to everlasting life, then that which they show unto thee? Why, do but look upon themselves and thou shalt find their lives far dissonant from their words, that whilst they exhort thee to strictness, they take their liberty,

whilst they dissuade thee from taking thy pleasure, affecting honors, setting thy heart upon riches, themselves in the meantime are as voluptuous, ambitious, and covetous as any other; and whilst they endeavor to make sin to appear unto thee as black as hell, themselves embrace it with pleasure and delight as though it were the joy of heaven. Who therefore can imagine that they think as they speak, or that they are persuaded that heaven gate is so straight, and the way so troublesome and hard to find, as they go about to persuade thee, seeing themselves take the least pains in walking in this way which they prescribe unto others? Or if it be the truth which they teach, then surely they are not worth the hearing who in their lives deny this truth which in their words they profess; for what hope canst thou have that it will be powerful to work grace in thee, seeing it hath no power to work it in themselves? Or that they can persuade thee to that holiness, to which themselves are not persuaded?

And thus doth Satan seek to keep men from hearing of God's word, that so being weakened and hunger-starved for want of this heavenly Manna, he may vanquish them at the first onset, and lead them captive unto all sin; and being still hoodwinked with the thick veil of ignorance, he may lead them the direct way to hell and utter destruction: and therefore it behooveth everyone to arm themselves, that so they may beat back the violence of this temptation. First therefore, whereas he saith that the ministers speak not as they think, because they do not as they speak; we are to know for the answering of this temptation, that ministers are subject to the same corruptions and infirmities which are incident unto other men, and though they are called in the scriptures Angels in respect that they are God's messengers to bring and publish the glad tidings of the Gospel, yet are they not Angels in respect of their purity and perfection: but as they are flesh and

blood, subject to all human frailty; as they are borne in sin and defiled with original corruption, so are they as prone as others to fall into all actual transgressions, if the Lord restrain them not. Neither must we imagine that learning and knowledge do indue men with sanctification and the saving graces of God's spirit, for then we might attain unto them by our study, labor and industry; whereas the Scriptures teach us that they are God's free gifts which he bestoweth on whom he will; then it would follow that he who is endued with most knowledge and learning, should also have most grace and sanctification, whereas our own experience teacheth us, that many of the greatest Doctors of the world spend their lives in all voluptuous pleasures and licentiousness. What then? Do these men teach one thing and believe another. Surely it may be the case of many, for faith cometh not by variety of knowledge, neither is it tied to learning; but it is the free gift of God bestowed as well, yea and as often also, upon the simple fisherman as upon the learned Pharisee; and therefore though they have such great learning and knowledge, that they are able to instruct others and defend the truth against all opposers, yet may they be as hard hearted and full of infidelity, as the most ignorant and sottish in the world. Shall then their hardness of heart and infidelity move us to call the truth of God which they deliver into question, as though it were a matter doubtful whether it is the word of God or no? God forbid. Nay, let God be true and every man a liar. For their own consciences are convinced of this truth though not persuaded, and the Lord hath given them eyes to see it, though not hearts to believe it; to the end that the praise of our salvation may wholly be ascribed to his own free grace, who calleth and justifieth, sanctifieth and saveth whom he will, and not unto human learning or knowledge, which may be attained unto by man's industry and labor.

It may be also that these who teach one thing and practice the clean contrary, do notwithstanding believe, that is, know and give their assent to that which they deliver; but this general faith is incident as well to the devils themselves as unto men, and therefore those who have it may nevertheless be as worldly, carnal, and profane as ever they were; for before we attain unto a true justifying faith, and be sanctified by God's spirit, our knowledge and learning will not free us from our corruption of nature, wherein we are conceived, born, and bred; and therefore though we see the truth, yea know and acknowledge it to be the word of God, which shall one day either justify or condemn us, yet if the Lord do not join with this knowledge the inward operation of his spirit, making it effectual for our sanctification, and for the purging of us from our corruptions, we are as ready to fall into all sin, being enticed and carried away with the riches, honors and pleasures of the world, as if we were still most sottishly ignorant. A notable example hereof we have in Solomon, who though he had received such a measure of wisdom and divine knowledge, as never mere man attained unto the like, yea though he were a penman of an excellent portion of holy Scriptures, yet the Lord leaving him to the corruption of his own heart, he fell most grievously into all abominable wickedness: and yet who will dare to say, that Solomon did not write as he thought, and not rather that he was carried away through the violence of his corruptions, to commit that sin which his conscience condemned, and to neglect obedience to God's undoubted truth? So David who was endued with notable knowledge and no less grace, fell notwithstanding most fearfully into adultery and murder; but shall we therefore think that he was not persuaded that these were horrible sins, or that when he commended mercy, innocence and chastity, he spake not as he thought? And Peter

likewise denied and forswore his master, whom before he had acknowledged to be the son of God; but shall we hence conclude that Peter dissembled when he made that notable confession, because when he came to the trial he utterly disclaimed it? Nay rather we may certainly be persuaded, that David was carried away with his lust and concupiscence, and Peter overcome with fear and frailty, and both drawn, through their corruption, to commit those sins which their consciences condemned. But leaving such far-fetched instances, let every man, yea even he who hath attained unto the greatest measure of faith and sanctification, enter into a strict and due consideration with himself, and examine his own conscience before God's tribunal seat; and then let him tell me whether he perform obedience to all that truth which he knoweth and believeth, or whether he may not justly complain, that our corruption takes occasion by the knowledge of God's commandment, to work in us all manner of concupiscence; that he doth those things which he alloweth not, nay which he hateth and abhorreth; that though he do not only know the law of God, but also is delighted therewith in the inner man, yet that there is another law in his members which rebelleth against the law of his mind, and leadeth him captive unto the law of sin, as it is, Rom. 7:8,15,23. And if this be the case of Solomon, David, Peter, and of all God's children, who have attained to the greatest measure of knowledge and sanctification; let not Satan persuade us that we may safely neglect the ministry of the word, because the ministers thereof seem not persuaded that the doctrine which they deliver is true, in that they do not practice it in their own lives: for many knowing and believing that truth which they deliver, are notwithstanding destitute of the sanctifying graces of God's spirit, and therefore wholly carried away into all licentious wickedness; and many also who are

sanctified, being not wholly purged from their natural corruptions, are ready to show their frailty and infirmities to all the world, though they know, acknowledge, believe, and from their hearts embrace, that truth which they teach and profess.

But if Satan cannot thus prevail, nor cause us to doubt of God's truth, because the ministers live not according to that doctrine which they teach; then he will persuade them at least to refuse to hear such whose lives are scandalous, as being unworthy to take the word into their mouths, and unable to convert or amend others, seeing the word is not powerful which they deliver for the converting and reforming of their own lives. Which temptation of Satan is most dangerous and pernicious unto many: for what greater discouragement can there be to a sick patient, than to take physic of such a Physician who cannot cure himself of the same disease? Or who will willingly eat of that food, which he who giveth it unto him so loatheth and abhorreth, that he will not so much as taste of it? Or who taketh delight in hearing him discourse of mercy, chastity, and liberality, whom he knoweth wholly possessed of cruelty, lust, and covetousness? And therefore it were to be wished that God's ministers should be Physicians to themselves, before they take upon them the cure of others; that they should not stand like Images by the high way sides, directing others in their journeys, themselves never moving foot, but that they should like guides go before them, and instruct them not only by their word, but also move them to receive their instruction by their example. But yet let us take heed, that Satan do not take occasion upon the neglect of their duty to make us neglect ours; and that he do not rob us of the inestimable treasure of God's word, and deprive us of this heavenly Manna and food of our souls, whereby all the graces of God's spirit are begotten, nourished and increased in us,

because the minister who offereth it unto us doth not feed upon it himself. And to this end we are to know that the ministry of the word is God's ordinance, which dependeth not upon the worthiness of him who delivereth it, neither is it made void and ineffectual by his unworthiness; but it hath it virtue force and power from the blessing of God, and from the inward operation of his spirit, who applieth it to the hearts and consciences of men, and thereby illuminates their understandings, begetteth faith in them and all sanctifying and saving graces. And hence it is, that the minister himself, findeth not the word which he delivereth, effectual for the begetting of faith or any grace in him, which notwithstanding is powerful in many of the hearers for these purposes, because the Lord vouchsafeth not the assistance and inward cooperation of his holy spirit with the outward ministry of the word unto him, which notwithstanding he mercifully granteth unto others. Seeing then the ministry of the word is God's own ordinance, which he maketh effectual to whom he will by the inward operation of his holy Spirit, by whomsoever it is delivered; and seeing those ministers which are most holy and virtuous cannot at their pleasure infuse grace into their hearers; for Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase; so that neither the one nor the other are anything in themselves without God's blessing; seeing also those who are loose and vicious, if they truly preach the truth itself, cannot by their badness hinder God's ordinance, but that coming from their mouths it will be effectual for the conversion of men unto God, and the eternal salvation of those that believe; for though unto himself it be but a dead letter, yet the spirit of God may give life unto it in those who receive it; and though he preacheth for glory or gain, or for envy and strife, yet we must with the Apostle rejoice that Christ is preached any manner of way, and reap the fruit thereof to our eternal comfort. Lastly,

seeing the wisdom of God thinketh it good to send ambassadors of both sorts, sanctified and unsanctified, and oftentimes maketh the word in the mouth of a faithful and godly minister the savor of death unto death, and the same word in the mouth of one who is void of grace and sanctification the savor of life unto life, to the end that we should not depend upon man, but wholly rest and rely ourselves upon God's own ordinance, giving and ascribing unto him the whole glory and praise of our conversion and salvation; let not Satan persuade us to think the worse of the pure word of God, because of his corruption who delivereth it: for what were this but to refuse a comfortable ambassage from a gracious prince, because we dislike the qualities of the ambassadors? What were this but to scorn to receive a kind letter from a loving father, because the carrier doth displease us? What is this but to refuse a rich treasure, because it is brought unto us in an earthen vessel which is frail and brittle? What is it but like proud beggars to refuse the bountiful alms of a merciful prince, because it is delivered unto us by an Amner which is covetous and hard hearted? Yea what is it but to cross our Savior Christ's express commandment, who commanded all to hear even the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses chair, and to do after their words though not after their works? In a word, what is it else than to pin God's ordinance upon man's sleeve, and to make the preaching of the Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation unto everyone who believeth, to depend upon the weak strength of frail flesh, either to be made effectual by his worthiness, or to be made vain and unprofitable by his unworthiness?

CHAP. XXIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS TAKEN FROM SUNDRY OPINIONS, SECTS, AND RELIGIONS, ANSWERED.

And thus Satan may be answered, when he taketh occasion of discrediting the Gospel and hindering the course thereof, by objecting the wickedness and worldly profaneness, or the infirmities and frail weakness of the Ministers thereof. But if he cannot thus prevail, he leaveth their lives and cometh to their doctrine. Doest thou not see (will he say) that there are innumerable sects and contrary factions amongst those who profess Christianity? Some Papists, some Protestants, some Arians, some Anabaptists, some Pelagians, some Libertines, some Familists, some Donatists, and many other who all cite and allege Scriptures for the defending of their contrary opinions, and confidently affirm that they only have the truth amongst them? How therefore canst thou know which is truth and which is falsehood; who interpret the scriptures aright, and who wrest and misconstrue them? Or if thou wert disposed to be religious, what religion wilt thou profess in this great confusion? To what Church wilt thou adjoin thyself seeing one is contrary to another, and thou knowest not which is in the truth? If thou beest wise therefore keep thyself quiet and let all

alone, hearken not to any of them, or if thou dost, believe them not over hastily, be of that religion which will best stand with thine advantage; or if thou wilt needs serve God, follow thine own conscience, have a good intention in that thou doest, and it is enough; but profess not one religion more than another, till thou seest those who are learned agree amongst themselves, for until then thou canst have no assurance that thou professest the truth. For the answering of which temptation we are to know, that the scriptures have foretold unto us that there should be sects, divisions, heresies and false teachers, even unto the end of the world; as appeareth, 1 Cor. 11:19, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Pet. 2:1. And the experience of all times both under the law, and under the Gospel, may sufficiently teach us that wheresoever the truth of God is published and preached, there it is opposed by innumerable sectaries and heretics, which by the malice and subtlety of Satan, are stirred up to impugn and discredit the true religion: and therefore if Satan can still keep us blindfolded in ignorance, and restrain us from the confession and profession of our faith, till there be a general unity and agreement in the true religion, without all opposition or gainsaying, then he hath attained his desire; for so shall we never join ourselves in the communion of the saints, nor be true members of the Church, professing and practicing the religion of Jesus Christ, seeing the devil will not cease to stir up his wicked instruments, false Prophets, sectaries and heretics, to the end they may oppugn and contradict the truth when it is sincerely preached, and make it fruitless in the hearts of unbelievers; seeing also our Savior hath taught us that his Church is but a little flock, which is assaulted and grievously vexed, not only with Lions, Tigers and open enemies, but also with Foxes, and Wolves in sheep's clothing, and secret enemies who under the show and profession of religion, seek to undermine and bring it to ruin.

And the Apostle also hath forewarned us that there must be heresies among us, that they who are approved might be known. 1 Cor. 11:19. Though therefore there be many sects, and heresies, many false religions, and but one truth, this must not make us to neglect all, till there be a universal agreement, for as well may be reconcile light and darkness, the children of God with the children of the devil, grace and natural corruption, truth and error, as the true religion with those which are false, or the professors of the one with the professors of the other.

Those who have important businesses abroad, do not stay at home and refuse to travail because some go out of the way; but therefore they are more careful to inform themselves of every turning in their journey, because they would not err with others: those that have a desire to live, do not refuse all meat because some surfeit and die, by eating that which is unwholesome; but rather hereby they are made more wary in making good choice of such diet as is fit for the preservation of their health: those also who are sick, do not neglect all physic, because there are many cozening Imposters and unlearned Emperics who kill instead of curing; but this maketh them with more circumspection to find out a skillful and learned physician. Let us therefore follow the like practice in these spiritual things: and seeing there is but one direct way which leadeth unto heaven, and many byways which lead to destruction, let not this keep us from traveling this heavenly journey, but rather move us with more diligence to inquire the right and perfect way: seeing also there are many which offer us poison instead of the wholesome food and physic of our souls, let us learn with more care to make choice and to put a difference between the one and the other.

But here it will be demanded how those who are simple and ignorant can judge which is the true religion, and which is the false, who teacheth the truth and who falsehood? To which I answer, that everyone must labor to inform himself of the truth, by studying and meditating in God's word: this must be his light to guide him, his counselor to inform him, his touchstone whereby he may discern the stubble and straw of men's inventions, from the pure gold of God's true religion. Neither are we to receive all doctrines hand over head, but as the Apostle exhorteth us, we must try the spirits whether they be of God or no: and with the men of Berea, we must search the scriptures, to see if those things be so as they are delivered, and accordingly either receive them if they are consonant with God's word, or reject them if they be dissonant thereunto. Yea (will some say) this were a direct course if those only who have the truth on their side had scripture to allege, but seeing every heretic is as ready to quote scripture, for the upholding and defending of his heresy, as the professors of God's truth for the maintenance thereof; all the question is, whose interpretation is to be received as good, and whose to be rejected as false and erroneous? To this I answer, that though there be some places in the scripture hard and somewhat doubtful, and therefore the more easy to be wrested unto a wrong sense, yet are there others clear and evident, for the confuting of all sects, heresies, and errors whatsoever: and therefore we must expound those places which are dark and ambiguous, by those which are perspicuous and manifest. For example, if we would know whether Popery be the true religion or no, we must examine the doctrines thereof by God's word, not making choice of those places which seem any way hard and doubtful, but of those which are clear and manifest; and so we shall find that their doctrines are as contrary to God's truth, as light to darkness. For whereas they teach that we are able to

fulfill the law, and to merit heaven, the scriptures affirm the clean contrary, namely that in many things we sin all, Jam. 3:2, and whosoever shall keep the whole law yet faileth in one point is guilty of all, Jam. 2:10, that there is no man who sinneth not, 1 King. 8:46, that in God's sight none that liveth can be justified, Psal. 143:2, that when we have done all those things that are commanded us, we are unprofitable servants, and have done but our duty, and therefore merit nothing. Luk. 17:10. So whereas they teach that we must pray to Saints and Angels, because they make intercession for us, the Apostle flatly excludeth all other from this office, but Christ alone. 1 Tim. 2:5, there is one mediator between God and man. Whereas they teach that marriage is unlawful for some men at all times, and some meats unlawful for all men at sometimes, the holy Ghost telleth us plainly that this is erroneous and a doctrine of devils; and that every creature of God is good, and nothing ought to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. 1 Tim. 4:1,3,4. And that marriage is honorable for all men and the bed undefiled. Heb. 13:4, that to avoid fornication every man must have his wife, and every woman her own husband. 1 Cor. 7:2, and that better it is to marry then to burn. Ver. 9. Whereas they teach that our Savior Christ is carnally and corporally present in the sacrament, the scriptures teach us the contrary, namely that he is ascended into heaven, and therefore not upon the earth. Matth. 28:6. That when he was taken into heaven he was taken from us, Act. 1:11. That the heavens must contain him until the time that all things be restored, Act. 3:21. Whereas they teach that we must make and worship images, both are expressly forbidden in the second commandment, and in many other places of scripture. Whereas they teach that the scriptures should be kept from the common people, in an unknown language; the Apostle plainly affirmeth that he had rather in the Church speak five words

with his understanding, that he might also instruct other, than ten thousand words in a strange tongue; and flatly enjoineth that the Prophets should keep silence in the Church, rather than speak strange languages, where there is no interpreter, 1 Cor. 14:19,27,28. Whereas they hold that the cup in the administration of the Lord's supper, is to be withheld from the common people, and given only to the Priests, the quite contrary is to be observed in the institution, whereas our Savior saith, Drink ye all of it, because it is his blood of the new testament that is shed for many, for the remission of sins: plainly thereby inferring, that this sign and sacrament of his blood belongeth to as many as were redeemed by it, Matth. 26:28. And whereas they say that here the disciples were only, and that to them alone this speech was directed, the Apostle plainly taketh away this cavil: for setting down the words of institution for the use of the whole Church of Corinth, he willeth everyone indefinitely to examine himself and so to eat of this bread and drink of this cup. 1 Cor. 11:28. And thus if we study and meditate in God's word, we shall find most clear and manifest places for the confirmation of the truth, and confutation of all sects errors and heresies. But what if this means be taken away from us, of reading and studying the scriptures, either because they are only to be had in an unknown language, as in the time of popery, or because we cannot read and have nobody to teach us? What if both reading and studying them, we find many doubts and difficulties, and diverse places which seem to favor diverse and opposite opinions and religions? How the must we quit ourselves out of this labyrinth of ambiguity and doubtfulness, seeing it is prejudicial to appeal to the judgment of either faction? I answer, that in these days the means of knowledge are not so scant, but that they may enjoy them that labor for them; for either they may obtain the use of the Scriptures in their own

language where they dwell, or else in some other place by removing their habitation; and though they cannot read, yet it is no hard matter to learn, to those who will use pains and diligence, or at least to get the help of others to supply their want and defect in this behalf. But let it be granted that we were abandoned of all these means, or that using them, there were some doubt remaining of which we cannot be resolved; are we therefore destitute of help, and forsaken of all means, whereby we might attain unto the knowledge of the truth? No surely. For, if when all other means fail us, we have our recourse unto God by earnest and effectual prayer, instantly craving his holy spirit to guide and direct us, we have a merciful promise that he will hear our request and grant unto us his holy spirit, as it is, Luke 11:13, and that thereby he will illuminate the blind eyes of our understanding, enlighten our minds with the knowledge of the truth, and take away from us all prejudice of opinion and forestalled judgment, so as we shall discern truth from falsehood, and God's true religion, from errors and lies, sects and heresies. For this spirit of truth will lead us into all truth, as it is, John. 16:13. He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God; and to this end we receive him, that we may know the things which are given unto us of God, as it is, 1 Cor. 2:10,12: He is that precious eye-salve, wherewith being anointed we see, who before were blind, Rev. 3:18. And if once we have received this anointing, we need not that any man should teach us, for this anointing teacheth us all things, as it is, 1 John. 2:27. Though therefore we were abandoned of all other means, yet let not Satan persuade us to neglect all religion, because we cannot discern the true religion from that which is false: for if we earnestly and sincerely labor after the knowledge of the truth, and with good Cornelius continually implore the assistance and direction of God's spirit, we shall be sure to

obtain our desire, for the Lord hath promised it, and he will undoubtedly be as good as his word.

CHAP. XXV. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
TAKEN FROM OUR UNWORTHINESS
AND UNFITNESS TO HEAR,
ANSWERED.

And so much concerning the temptations of Satan, which he draweth from the Ministers, to discredit the Gospel, and to dissuade men from the hearing thereof; but if he cannot thus prevail, he will leave the Ministers, and come to the parties themselves, suggesting into their minds that they are unworthy, in respect of the innumerable number of their sins, to be hearers of the Gospel, which is so pure and excellent; and that their corruptions are so great, their understandings so blind, their memories so slippery, their wills so perverse, their heart and affections so wicked and profane, that it is to be feared in regard of this their unfitness to hear, that the word of God, which in itself is the savor of life unto life, will become unto them the savor of death to their more deep condemnation. For the answering of which temptation, we are to know, first, that our sins and unworthiness should be so far from hindering us from the hearing of God's words, that they should rather serve as forcible arguments to move us more attentively and diligently to hear it: because it is the means ordained of God to pull us out of our sins, to purge us from our corruptions, to work in us

true sanctification, and to make us of the sons of wrath the children of God. Moreover, though we want faith and all other sanctifying graces, yet we are to hear the word of God: for therefore the Lord hath ordained the ministry of the word, not only to increase grace where it is begun, but also to beget and begin it where it is wanting; so that we must not only hear because we are fit, but also that we may be made fit, who before were unfit. Neither are we to imagine that faith and other graces go before hearing, but follow after as fruits and effects thereof; as the Apostle plainly showeth, Rom. 10:14. But how shall they call on 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? And ver. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If then there be no faith without hearing, nor no grace without faith, it must needs follow, that before we hear, we are destitute of faith and all saving grace, and that by hearing they are wrought in us, God preventing us with his grace, and calling us unto himself, not only when we had no deserts to merit his mercy, but also not so much as any grace to desire it. And hence it is that the Apostle saith, 2 Tim. 1:9. That God hath called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given unto us through Christ Jesus before the world was. The truth hereof may appear in all the examples of God's saints, who before their calling were so far from deserving any grace at God's hand, that rather they deserved confusion and utter destruction. For example, what worthiness was in Abraham before his conversion who lived in gross idolatry? What worthiness in Rahab the harlot? In Manasseh a cruel tyrant, a wicked sorcerer, a horrible idolater? What worthiness in Marie Magdalene possessed by seven devils? Or in Matthew and Zacchaeus the Publican's? Or in Paul who persecuted the Church of God? In a word, what

worthiness is in any of God's saints, before the Lord by the preaching of his word, made effectual by the inward operation of his spirit, hath called and converted, and pulled them out of their sins and corruptions in which they wallowed, and endued them with some measure of his sanctifying and saving graces?

Secondly, whereas he objecteth our unfitness to hear, because our ears are dull, our eyes blind, our hearts hard, and our wills, affections, and all the powers and faculties of our bodies and souls wholly corrupted and disordered, this must not move us to neglect the hearing of God's word, but to become hearers thereof with more care and diligence: for it is the two-edged sword of the spirit, which will pierce and make way for itself to enter, and will build a lodging for itself to dwell in; it is not only a light to guide those that see, but a precious eye-salve to give sight unto those who were borne blind; it is not only the heavenly dew which maketh God's graces to spring in us, but also that divine seed which giveth them being and rooting in our hearts; it is not only the food of our souls to preserve and increase that strength which we already have, but also that immortal seed by which we are first begotten unto God and borne again, who before were dead in our sins, and that excellent physic of our souls by which they are purged from their corruptions and restored unto health, which before were deadly sick in sin; it maketh us first to will that which is good, and then further to desire it; it giveth us life who before were dead in our sins, and then preserves this life; it begets and begins faith and sanctification and all other graces in us, and being begotten and begun it strengtheneth and increaseth them: and therefore let not Satan dissuade us from the hearing of God's word, because of our sins, unworthiness and unfitness; for as it is a notable means ordained of God for the increasing of grace where it already

is, so is it no less effectual for the begetting of grace where it never was. There is no wise man that will neglect his trade and live idly because he is poor, but rather this will move him to be more painful therein, as being the means whereby he may become rich; neither do men refuse all nourishment, because they have empty and hungry stomachs, but do more earnestly desire meat that they may be filled and satisfied; yea even those whose stomachs are weak do not altogether refuse their food, but eat something to sharpen their appetite, and so by little and little in using their stomachs they get stomachs: let us follow the like practice, and when we perceive our beggarliness in God's graces, let us more earnestly labor after this heavenly treasure and precious pearl, that we may be made rich; when we feel our emptiness of all virtue and goodness, let us more eagerly hunger after this spiritual Manna that we may be filled and satisfied; when we find our appetite weak and our stomachs indisposed to eat of this heavenly food, let us a little force ourselves against the appetite, or use all good means to quicken and sharpen it, and so we shall find that the oftener we eat, the oftener we shall desire, the more we hear the word of God, the more we shall desire to hear, and the greater benefit we shall receive by it. Whereas neglect of hearing will make us every day more unfit to hear, even as long abstinence doth quite spoil the stomach.

CHAP. XXVI. HOW WE MUST ARM
OURSELVES AGAINST SATAN'S
TEMPTATIONS, WHEREBY HE
LABORETH TO MAKE THE WORD OF
GOD FRUITLESS.

And these are the temptations which Satan useth to dissuade us from hearing the word; but if we break these snares and cannot be withheld from frequenting God's holy assemblies; then he will labor by all means to make the word of God which we hear, fruitless and ineffectual for our conversion and salvation; and to this end he will labor to work in us a negligent carelessness in hearkening to those things which are delivered; and this is usually accompanied with dullness of spirit, drowsiness and sleepiness: or if we set ourselves to hear the word, with any care and conscience to profit thereby, then he will seek to distract our minds with wandering thoughts, either by offering and suggesting to our consideration and memory the world and the vanities thereof, as our affairs and business and those pleasures wherewith we are most delighted; or if this will not prevail, by casting into our minds things in their own nature good and religious, if they were thought upon in time convenient, to the end that we may be distracted, and be made unfit to hear the word with profit.

Which temptations we are to withstand as being most dangerous and pernicious: and to this purpose there is something required at our hands to be performed before our coming to God's assemblies, and something afterwards. Before we come to the hearing of the word, there is required due preparation, whereby our minds are made fit vessels to receive the spiritual treasure and food of our souls. For if we come into the congregation of the faithful, without any premeditation, reverence, or regard of the action which we are to take in hand; if we present ourselves rashly and unadvisedly, as if we went to a play, or to dispatch some worldly business: we shall hardly keep our minds from negligent wandering and worldly distractions, which will make the word of God fruitless and unprofitable.

Now this preparation doth principally consist, first in the purging of our corrupt affections, to which duty the wise man exhorteth us; Eccl. 4:17. Take heed to thy feet when thou enterest into the house of God, that is, be careful to purge thine affections which are the feet of thy soul. And this was typically signified by the outward washing of the Israelites before the promulgation of the law, Exod. 19:10, where by the washing of their clothes and bodies, the purging of the secret corruptions of the heart was signified and represented. Which duty is necessarily to be performed, of all those who will hear the word with profit: for as the most pure liquor is defiled and made unprofitable for use, if it be put into a polluted and stinking vessel; so the pure liquor of God's word is defiled and made fruitless, unto all those who receive it into an heart polluted with unclean affections: As therefore Moses was enjoined by God to put off his shoes from his feet, before he might tread on that ground made holy by God's presence, or receive the Lord's ambassage to his people; so he requireth of us that we put off the

shoes, that is, the corruption of our affections, before we tread upon the holy ground of his Church, there to hear the glad tidings of the Gospel, concerning our everlasting delivery out of the bondage of our spiritual enemies. What these affections are the Apostle James partly showeth, Jam. 1:19, namely wrath, filthiness, maliciousness, to which Peter addeth dissimulation and hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking, 1 Pet. 2:1. And to these also we may add all other like unto them.

Secondly, we must banish out of our minds all prejudice, forestalled opinions, and sinister conceits, of the minister of God's word whom we are to hear; whereby men are either carried away with a vain admiration of his gifts, and in the meantime make no conscience of feeding upon that food which is offered; like unto them who in stead of drinking of the wine, stand wondering at the curious workmanship of the cup; or else with a prejudicate opinion of his insufficiency in gifts, or imperfections of life, whereby they are so forestalled that they think nothing which he can deliver will be worth the hearing.

Thirdly, we must expel out of our cogitations, the remembrance of all worldly businesses, pleasures and delights, least they distract our minds in the hearing of the word, and so choking this heavenly seed make it fruitless; for as the vessel which is already full, will receive no more, and whatsoever is poured into it, spilleth upon the ground: so the mind that is full of worldly meditations, is not fit to receive the word of God, but as soon as it offereth to enter, it is kept back and so perisheth; for God and Mammon, the holy word of God and the cares and vanities of the world, can never dwell at the same time together, but as soon as one entereth it expelleth the other. As therefore men purposing to write a sermon, do make clean their writing tables, by blotting out that which was written in them before, for otherwise

there would be such a mixture and confusion, that nothing would be legible; so when we purpose to carry away a sermon fair writ in the tables of our memories, we must first blot out all worldly affairs and businesses, otherwise there will be nothing but confusion, and we shall not be able to recall anything to our remembrance.

Fourthly, before the hearing of the word we must search and examine our hearts both concerning our sins and corruptions, as also concerning our wants and imperfections; for the first we must consider to what sins we are most addicted, and with what temptations we are most easily subdued, to the end we may bring our sins to be slaughtered and mortified with the sword of God's spirit, being otherwise unable to overcome them ourselves; and that we may also thereby so strongly arm all parts, both of our bodies and fowls, so as they shall not in time to come, bring us again under their dominion. And as citizens being besieged with their enemies, do learn by their assaulting which part of the city is most weak, and so with more care and labor fortify it, with men and munition, trenches and bulwarks; so when we who are continually besieged by our spiritual enemies, do learn by their assaulting of us where we are weakest, and the enemy most like to enter, then we must go into God's armory and provide sufficient weapons and munition, whereby we may be enabled to hold out and make resistance. So also we are to consider of our wants and imperfections, that so we may be stirred up with an earnest desire, to have them supplied, and hereby may be moved with more care to apply unto ourselves such food as shall be most fit to supply these our wants, and amend our imperfections; for as men who hunger earnestly desire to be satisfied with wholesome food, neither will they willingly without any difference eat of all meats, especially if they have weak stomachs, but of that which is most fit and best agreeth with

them; so those who find their spiritual wants earnestly desire to be satisfied, and to have their defects supplied: and for as much as all food contained in God's word, is not fit for this purpose, nor agreeable to their stomachs, to the end that God's graces may be nourished in them, therefore they will wisely make choice of that which best agreeth to their present state, and apply it unto themselves accordingly. For example, he who findeth his heart hard and secure, must feed upon the threatening's of the law, to the end he may be humbled, and his heart mollified, and resolved into tears of unfeigned repentance; he that is of a broken heart and contrite spirit, must feed upon the sweet and gracious promises of the Gospel; he that is ignorant, must hunger after milk, and desire to be instructed in the principles of religion; he that hath a good measure of knowledge, may desire stronger meat, that is, attend unto the more deep points of divinity; in a word, every man is to examine his particular state, and to search out his greatest wants, that so coming to hear the word, he may more diligently apply such doctrines, instructions, and exhortations as shall be most fit for his use and benefit; for that which is food to one is poison to another, and that salve which is fit to heal one sore, doth make another to fester and rankle, and one part of the word of God being applied to men of diverse estates, doth work diverse effects, one it feedeth, another it poisoneth, one it healeth another it woundeth, to one it is the savor of life unto life, and to another it is the savor of death unto death: and therefore before we come to the hearing thereof, we are to examine our states that we may apply and make profitable use to ourselves of that which is most fit to nourish and strengthen us in God's graces.

Lastly and most especially we are to use earnest and hearty prayer unto the Lord that he may open our blind eyes, so as we may see the wonderful

things of his law, that he will take away our stony hearts, and give us fleshy hearts in which his word may more easily be imprinted; that he will with the oil of his grace bow our stubborn wills, and make them flexible and inclinable to perform obedience to his will, revealed in his word, that he will sanctify our affections and purge them from their natural corruptions, that he will distill the heavenly dew of his holy spirit into our minds and barren hearts, that so the seed of his word being watered there by may yield a plentiful harvest in grace and godliness.

And these are the duties which we must perform in the time of our preparation: now after we are thus prepared and have presented ourselves into God's holy assemblies, there are also other duties to be performed to the end that Satan may not distract our minds and so make the word which we hear fruitless: first we are to set ourselves in the presence of God who looketh upon us, and beholdeth all our behavior in this action, according to the example of good Cornelius. Act. 10:33. Here (saith he) we are all present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. And if we thus do we shall not carelessly and negligently hear the word of the Lord, but with fear and trembling as in his presence, before whom the earth trembleth, and the foundations of the mountains move and shake as it is, Psal. 18:7.

Secondly, we are to hear the word preached not as the word of a mortal man, but as it is in truth the word of the ever-living God, according to the example of the Thessalonians. 1 Thes. 2:13, when (saith the Apostle) ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the word of God. For the minister is not his own spokesman but the ambassador of the Lord, it is not his own message which he bringeth, but the Lord's embassy, and hence it is that the

Prophets and Apostles prefix before their writings; these and such like speeches, The word of the Lord, the burden of the Lord, thus saith the Lord; so also the Apostle professeth in his own name, and in the behalf of all God's true ministers, that they are the Lord's ambassadors who in Christ's stead beseech their hearers that they will be reconciled unto God. 2 Cor. 5:20. We must not therefore look upon the man but on God who sendeth him, nor on the earthen vessel, but on the heavenly treasure which it bringeth, nor on the simpleness of the casket, but on the precious pearl which is contained in it, nor upon the meanness of the ambassador, but upon the glorious royalty of the prince who sent him: and on his ambassage which is the glad tidings of the gospel, the word of salvation and life; which is able to save our souls and then his feet will seem beautiful and none shall be better welcome, then shall we not contemn or neglect their ministry but receive joyfully, reverently, and attentively the word preached by them, remembering what our Savior Christ hath said, Luk. 10:16. He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Thirdly let us stir up ourselves to reverent attention by the consideration of those inestimable benefits which are derived unto us by the hearing of the word, as that it is the lively seed whereby we are begotten unto God, the food of our souls whereby we are nourished unto everlasting life, that spiritual physic whereby we are purged from our corruptions, that light which guideth us in the ways of holiness and righteousness, in a word that it is the chief means to work in us all God's graces in this life, and to assure us of everlasting happiness in the life to come. And if these and such like meditations come to our remembrance, they will serve to stir us up from our drowsy dullness and to hear God's word with alacrity and cheerfulness,

fastening our eyes on God's ministers according to the example of Christ's hearers. Luke 4:20, and even hanging upon them (like the child on the mothers breast) to suck our souls nourishment, as the people hanged on our Savior. Luke 19:48.

Fourthly we must hear the word as if we were nevermore to hear it, for who can tell whither he shall live till the next sabbath? Or though he do, yet how knoweth he whether he shall have his senses, understanding, and memory, seeing he will not use them to God's glory and his own good? Or though he have, yet may the word of God be taken from him and such a famine be of this heavenly food that he may wander from sea to sea, and from North to East seeking it and shall not find it, and therefore whilst the Lord speaketh unto us, today let us hearken and not harden our hearts, for he hath not promised us tomorrow that we shall hear it, whilst we enjoy this heavenly light let us look upon it and be directed by it to do the works of holiness, for it may be it will shortly set and never rise again unto us, and then what will follow but eternal darkness?

Lastly let us be stirred up to attention by the consideration of God's judgments which he inflicteth on the contemners and neglectors of his word which he may justly every minute pour upon us whilst our minds are a wandering not regarding that which he saith unto us, he may suddenly strike us with frenzy and madness, or with death itself, and then how fearful and lamentable were our state if such a judgment should cease upon us. Let us remember what happened to drowsy Eutychus, and consider with ourselves that that which befalleth unto one may happen unto another.

And thus are we to stir up ourselves to the diligent and attentive hearing of God's word that so it may be fruitful in our hearts and effectual for our conversion and calling unto God; but when we have gone thus far we must

not here rest, for if our enemy Satan can no hinder the seed of God's word from falling into our hearts then he will labor to steal it away as soon as it is sowed that it may never take root nor bring forth any fruit, as appeareth by lamentable experience; for how many are there who receive the word of God with their approbation, and are somewhat affected with that which is spoken and yet soon after it vanisheth away; and nothing remaineth but their old corruptions? And whence doth this proceed but from the malice of Satan who when he findeth the seed of the word not thoroughly entered into the ground of the heart and therein covered like a ravenous bird devoureth it, or if it have a little rooting, yet he choketh it with the thorny cares of the world so as it never springeth up no not so much as into a blade of profession, or if it be so far grown up, yet he endeavoreth to keep it from ever thriving further, by causing the hot sun of persecution to arise and with the heat thereof to make it wither, and perish, though for a time it have made a flourishing show; as our Savior Christ hath taught us in the parable of the Sower. Matth. 13. And therefore it behooveth everyone of us to take no less pains after the hearing of the word to keep it from devouring and to preserve and nourish it, that it may take deep root and bring forth much fruit, then we did in the time of preparation, and in the time when we received it; for as the careful husbandman taketh great pains in stirring up his fallow grounds; and preparing it for the seed, as also in the seed time in sowing it in the ground thus prepared, and yet all this were to no purpose if he did not afterwards harrow it and cover it in the ground; so though we take great pains in breaking up and preparing the fallow grounds of our hearts, and also in receiving the seed of God's word yet if we be not as careful after all this to cover and hide this seed in the furrows of our hearts that it may take deep rooting it will never bring forth any fruit of true

godliness. Now the means to preserve and nourish this heavenly seed of God's word is first serious meditation; whereby we call to mind that which we have heard, in which it is very requisite that we examine the doctrines which were delivered according to the touchstone of God's word, and turn over the bible to those proofs which we remember alleged as most principal for the confirmation of the doctrines which were delivered: a notable example whereof we have in the noble men of Berea. Acts. 17:10,11. Who though with great readiness they received that doctrine which Paul had delivered yet when they came home they searched the scriptures to see if those things which they heard were consonant and agreeable with them or no.

Secondly, we must use holy and Christian conference one with another, about those matters which we have heard, for hereby it will come to pass that what one did not observe or hath forgotten, the other remembereth and repeateth, and so likewise the other helpeth out in another point where his neighbor faileth, till at last they recall all the material points to their remembrance, even as many meeting together at a feast do everyone cast in his shot till the reckoning be made, so many joining their heads together for the recalling of a sermon to mind, one repeateth a little and another as much more, till at last all be repeated. And secondly, this benefit redoundeth hereof that all which everyone remembereth by this repetition is more surely imprinted in his memory and is not afterwards easily forgotten.

Lastly, the best and surest way to imprint things in our memory never after to be blotted out, is upon all occasions to practice it in our lives and conversation, for as we only truly know that in Christianity that which we practice, so likewise that is only well remembered which is well practiced.

CHAP. XXVII. SATAN'S
TEMPTATIONS WHEREBY HE
PERSUADETH MEN TO DELAY THEIR
REPENTANCE ANSWERED.

And so much concerning the subtle temptations of Satan, whereby he laboreth to make the word of God fruitless and ineffectual for our conversion, wherewith if he cannot prevail being repelled by the means before spoken of, and if men by their hearing of the word have learned thus much knowledge that their conversion and turning to God is necessary to salvation; then he will in the next place labor to persuade them to defer their repentance for a time, till they have better opportunity and are more fit for this purpose. Let it be granted (will he say) that it is necessary that thou shouldest repent and turn unto God, yet thou mayest defer thy repentance until thine old age, or at least till the time of sickness, for then thou wilt be more fit to perform this duty, then in the flourishing prime of thy youth, when as the exercises of religion are so tedious and unpleasant, and the pleasures of the world so sweet and delightful; neither needest thou to fear any in convenience which will come hereby, for God is so gracious that whensoever thou returnest unto him he will receive thee to mercy, for he hath promised in his word, that whensoever a sinner repenteth him of his

sins he will blot all his wickedness out of his remembrance: And therefore thou mayest enjoy both the pleasures of this life and the life to come, thou mayest repent time enough hereafter and live a strict and religious life, when the heat of youth is past and old age draws on, which is far more fit for these exercises: for what folly is it so to dote upon the heavenly joys to come, as that thou shouldest deprive thyself of those worldly pleasures which are present seeing thou mayest enjoy both?

Against which temptation it behooveth every man most carefully to arm himself as being in itself most dangerous and pernicious to great multitudes, as may appear by too too lamentable experience; for when as Satan can no longer hoodwink their eyes with the veil of ignorance but that they plainly see, that it concerneth their eternal salvation to hearken unto the Lord calling them to repentance, then notwithstanding thus far he prevaieth with them that they are content to delay their conversion and turning unto God, either until the time of sickness, or till their old age. And therefore it shall not be amiss to set down briefly some weighty arguments, whereby every Christian may be moved to speedy repentance, and not to defer their conversion from day today, but to turn unto the Lord when he first calleth them.

The first motive to persuade us to the hastening of our conversion is God's commandment, whereby he enjoineth us speedily to turn unto him, that we may do him service all the days of our life, to which end he hath created and redeemed us and doth continual preserve us. Psal. 95:7,8. Today if you shall hear his voice harden not your hearts, so as he chargeth us not to resist his calling no not till tomorrow, for if today we will not hearken unto him, he hath not promised to call us again unless it be to judgment. So, Eccl. 12:1. Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth whiles the evil

days come not, nor the years approach, wherein thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them, that is their old age, as afterwards he expoundeth himself. And, Isa. 55:6. Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found, call ye upon him whilst he is near. Matth. 3:2. Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Act. 3:19. And our savior Christ doth enjoin us, first to seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. Matth. 6:33. If therefore we will not wittingly and willfully break God's commandment, let us offer unto him the service of our youth as well as the service of our old age, for he requireth this as well as the other, nay before the other, and this was signified under the types of the old law, where the Lord requireth that they should offer unto him the principal of the flock, and such beasts as were whole and sound young and without blemish. So Lev. 3:1, the Lord requireth that the sacrifice which they offered should be without blemish, and 22:20. Ye shall not offer anything that hath a blemish for that shall not be acceptable for you. And, Deut. 15:21, if there be any blemish therein as if it be lame or blind, or have any evil fault thou shalt not offer it unto the Lord thy God. And for transgressing this law the Lord reprehendeth the people by his Prophet. Mal. 1:8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick is it not evil? Offer it now to thy Prince; will he be content with thee or accept thy person saith the Lord of hosts. And ver. 14. Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing. Now did the Lord regard the beasts, and hath he made so many laws that he might have the best of them? Surely this is not God's main end, but he would thereby teach us to offer and dedicate unto his service even our best things as the prime of our youth and our flourishing age, for was the Lord greatly offended when as men reserved the best of the flock to themselves and offered the old, blind and

lame unto him; and will he be well pleased that we should dedicate our youth and the strength of body and soul unto Satan, and our own lusts and reserve for him only our old decrepit lame and withered age, when as our bodies are full of diseases and our minds of infirmities? Will any Prince accept of us if we spend the whole time of our youth and strength in the service of his enemies, and when we are sick, old, lame and blind, offer him our service, and will the Prince of Princes think ye be well pleased if he be thus used? If Satan and the world have all the pure wine will he be contented with the lees and dregs, if they have the ripe fruit, will God have that which is rotten and putrefied. If they have our health will he have our sickness? Surely it is not likely; for the Lord who hath created us redeemed us and doth preserve us, doth look to be served with our youth health and strength which he hath bestowed on us.

The second argument to move us to hasten our repentance and turning unto God is taken from the momentary shortness and the mutable uncertainty of our lives; in respect of the shortness of our lives they are compared to a pilgrimage, to the flower and grass of the field, to the wind, a cloud, smoke, vapor, to a dream, a tale told, a span shadow, and the passage of the weavers shuttle, yea it is called vanity itself. And therefore seeing our lives are so short surely they are all too little though they were wholly spent in God's service; but seeing we have spent a great part of this short time even our whole life before our conversion after the lusts of the gentiles, let us think that enough yea far too much to be so ill bestowed, and from hence forward let us live (as much time as remaineth in the flesh) not after the lusts of men but after the will of God, as the apostle admonisheth us. 1 Pet. 4:2,3. But though our life were short yet if this short time were certain there were some more show of reason why we should defer our conversion; but

as it is short so is it most uncertain, for we have not assurance that we shall live one hour, we are tenants at will in these earthly tabernacles, neither do we know how soon our great landlord will turn us out of them; we are the Lord's stewards here on earth and we know not how soon our Lord and master will call us to a reckoning and therefore it behooveth us to have our accounts always perfect and the books of our consciences made up in readiness. We are uncertain when death will arrest us and carry us to judgment and therefore we should be prepared for it all times; when we go to bed we are so to lay us down as though we were never to rise till we rise to receive our last sentence, when we rise up in the morning we are so to spend that day as though it were the last of our lives, for how many have gone well to bed who have been dead before the morning? How many have risen (as they thought in perfect health) and yet have been attached by death before the evening? And therefore it behooveth everyone who hath any regard of the eternal salvation of his soul to turn speedily unto God, and while today they hear his voice not to harden their hearts. Men usually delay matters of least weight and in the first place dispatch business of greatest importance, and therefore unless we think the preserving of our bodies and souls from the eternal torments of hell fire and the assurance of everlasting happiness and blessedness in God's kingdom to be matters of less importance, then the obtaining of some vain pleasures, unconstant honors or base commodities, let us turn unto the Lord betimes by unfeigned repentance and according to our saviors advise. Matth. 6:33. Let us first seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and then worldly necessities shall be cast unto us as a vantage in this main bargain. If our houses were on fire we would seek first to preserve those things which are most dear and precious unto us good household stuff before lumber, Jewels

before stuff, and children before Jewels, but our lives are daily in a consumption *et dum crescimus vita, decrescit*, whilst we grow and increase, our lives decrease, and therefore in the first place let us seek to preserve our soul, which is, our chief Jewel and not suffer it to perish through impenitence, whilst we gain some earthly vanities. But most lamentable is the practice of most who live as though they were never to die, or as though they had taken of God a long lease of their lives which is to expire at a certain appointed time; and this makes them defer their repentance and to put the evil day far from them, till at last death attacheth them and carrieth them to judgment; and this appeareth by the scriptures and continual experience. Job speaking of carnal secure men saith, that they take the tabret and harp and rejoyce in the sound of the organs, they spend their days in wealth and suddenly they go down to the grave. Job 21:12,13. So Eccl. 9:12, man doth not know his time but as the fishes which are taken in an evil net and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the children of men snared in the evil time when it falleth upon them suddenly, when the evil servant shall say in his heart my master doth defer his coming and shall begin to smite his fellows and to eat and drink and to be drunken; that servants master will come in a day when he looketh not for him and in an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him off and give him his portion with the unbelievers, as our savior hath taught us. Luke 12:45,46. And we know what happened to the rich man who said unto his soul, soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, live at ease, eat drink and take thy pastime, even the same night God said unto him, O fool this night will they fetch thy soul from thee, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided. Luke 12:19,20.

Moreover how many may we observe in our own experience who have deferred their repentance from day to day thinking to repent either in their old age or in the time of their sickness, and have been prevented and cut off by God's judgment? Do we not see that many have been taken away with sudden and violent deaths, many deprived of the use of their senses, memory, and understanding, in the time of their sickness and have so died mad, frantic, and senseless, many who come to their old age and yet are further from repentance then in the time of their youth. And this cometh to pass by the just judgment of God for what can be more righteous then that the Lord should contemn them at the hour of death who have contemned him their whole life? That they should lose their memory and understanding in the time of sickness, who have continually abused them to the dishonor of God in the time of their health; that they should die impenitent who have lived in impenitence, that they should forget God when they are ready to go out of the world, who would never remember him whilst they were in the world; that God should withdraw his grace when they are sick, which being often offered they despised when they were in health. And this the Lord threateneth, Prov. 1:24. Because I have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out mine hand and none would regard. Ver. 25, but ye have despised all my counsel and would none of my correction. Ver. 26. I will also laugh at your destruction and mock when your fear cometh. Ver. 27, when your fear cometh like sudden desolation, and your destruction shall come like a whirlwind, &c. and ver. 28, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me. Ver. 29, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. So Zech. 7:11,12,13, the prophet saith, that because the people refused to hearken, pulled back their shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should

not hear, but made their hearts as an Adamant stone least they should hear the words of the lord, sent in his spirit by the ministry of the former prophets, therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts, whereof it came to pass that as he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and the Lord would not hear their cry. And therefore when the Lord calleth, let us answer Lord I come, let us not delay our conversion from day today, but seek the Lord whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near, let the wicked (now) forsake his ways, and the unrighteous his own imaginations and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he is very ready to forgive, as it is, Isa. 55:6,7. But if we contemn the ministry of his word, and when God calleth to refuse answer, if we harden our hearts against the means of our conversion, and quench the good motions of his spirit when he putteth them into our minds, surely it will come to pass, that as we neglect the Lord, so he will neglect us; and though he call us today yet he will not call again tomorrow, but will let us die in our sins without repentance. Let us remember the fearful example of Esau who contemning his blessing and birthright, afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing was rejected, for he found no place to repentance though he sought it with tears, as it is, Heb. 12:16,17. And of the 5 foolish virgins who neglecting the opportune time of providing oil for their lamps, afterwards went to buy when it was too late, for the bridegroom passed by and they were shut out of doors. Call to mind the fearful example of Pharaoh, who still hardening his heart against God's word sent unto him and confirmed by many miracles and wonders, at last was destroyed with his whole army. So Herod having hard John the Baptist willingly, and performed obedience to some things which he had learned, yet because he did not turn to the Lord with his whole heart nor repented of his incest, was

never after called again but left of God to his own hardness of heart; the like may be said of Pilate, Agrippa, Felix, Judas, Demas Julian the Apostate, who having not hearkened to the Lord's call, but quenched the good motions of his spirit, afterwards were given over of God to a reprobate sense to their everlasting ruin and destruction. So likewise when as the Lord gave the false prophetess Jezebel a time to repent, and she repented not, he threateneth his heavy judgments against her; in a word this is manifest in the examples of carnal secure men in these days, who having abused God's mercy and long suffering, and deferred their conversion from day today, at last they are taken away in God's heavy displeasure, and as they lived like beasts so commonly they die like beasts: and therefore as we love the salvation of our souls let us hearken when the Lord calleth, and not harden our hearts against the good motions of his spirit, for if we be like these men in our wicked practice there is no hope we should be unlike them in fearful punishments.

Thirdly, we are to consider that our conversion and turning unto godly, unfeigned, and true repentance: is the gift of God from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth, as it is, Jam. 1:17. And therefore we are to accept of this gift when he offereth it unto us; for God doth not promise his gifts and graces, with condition that we may receive them when we list, but when he offereth them, Psal. 95:7. Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, he doth not give us respite till tomorrow: now God calleth and inviteth us to come unto him, now he knocketh at the door of our hearts, desiring to enter that he may dwell in us by his holy spirit, and if we refuse to let him enter, how know we whether he will ever knock again? If he do not; what gainest thou, but the pleasures of sin for a season, and in the end eternal death? And what loosest thou, no less a thing then everlasting

life and an eternal weight of glory in God's kingdom? Well, yet Christ knocketh at the door of our hearts, and if we will open, he will be our guest and sup with us, bringing his cheer with him, even a heavenly banquet of all his spiritual graces, but if we rudely shut the doors against him, what hope can we have that he will come again when he findeth such rude and uncivil entertainment? And then what will follow but that either we shall never seek after him, and then our case will be most miserable, or with his spouse in the Canticles we shall long seek him but not find him without great difficulty, yea perhaps we may seek him as Esau sought his blessing with tears and never find him?

CHAP. XXVIII. OF THE FOURTH MOTIVE TAKEN FROM DIFFICULTY OF REPENTING, CAUSED BY DELAYS.

The fourth motive to persuade us to speedy repentance and turning unto God, is that the longer we defer it the harder we shall find it, for the difficulty thereof will be much increased by delay, and ourselves also who are unfit today will be more unfit tomorrow, the reasons hereof are many, first because by continual sinning we get a custom and habit of sinning, and if a custom which is but affected be hardly left, what shall we say of a custom which is confirmed by nature or what is nature strengthened by custom? Who knoweth not that the drunkard is more easily reclaimed from his drunkenness when he first falleth to this vice then when he hath long lived in it, that the swearer the longer he useth and inureth his tongue to swearing, the more hardly can he forbear it, and the covetous man as he increaseth in years increaseth also in covetousness, and the like may be said of all other vices. Neither need this seem strange unto us seeing it is a thing apparent in reason and in experience; for the longer the disease hath possessed the body the more hardly it is cured, and therefore that counsel is good, *Venienti occurrere morbo*, prevent the disease before it hath ceased on

thee or presently after it hath taken place remove it. The longer the sore is neglected the more it festereth and the greater difficulty there is to heal it, the longer the tree groweth the deeper root it taketh and the more hard it is to pull it up; the enemy is more easily kept from scaling the walls, then beaten back when he is entered into the midst of the city; and so it is with sins and vices, *facilius repelluntur quam expelluntur*, they are more easily kept from entrance then beaten out: as therefore you would condemn him of extreme folly who would not regard his sickness till it had overthrown nature and then think to cure it, or who would neglect to apply any salve to a grisly wound till it were festered and then think the better to heal it; or that should assay to pull up a young plant and being unable should defer it till it were grown to a great tree, thinking then more easily to pluck it up by the roots, or that would let the enemy quietly enter into the city with a purpose then to expel him with more facility and less loss; so alike nay much more foolish is he, who finding it now a hard matter to turn unto God and to forsake his sins deferreth it for many years together; till the corruption of nature have received double strength by long custom imagining that then he can very easily attain unto his purpose, let us therefore break of our sins by unfeigned repentance, and take heed of confirming our natural corruptions by long custom, for as one saith, *Dum consuetudini non resistitur fit necessitas*, whilst custom is not broken it becometh necessity, and as another, *Sicut non potest aliquis dediscere maternam linguam, sic vix longam peccati consuetudinem*, as a man cannot easily forget his mother tongue, so neither can he leave customable sin. So it is said Job 20:11, that the wicked man's bones are full of the sins of his youth and that they shall lie down with him in the dust; whereby it is implied that as diseases after they are entered into the marrow and bones are

incurable in so much as they go with men to their graves; so sins and vices which are the sicknesses of the soul having ceased and taken fast hold of a man by long and continual custom from his youth; will most hardly leave him in his age but will hang fast on till the day of his death. And hence it is that the Lord by his Prophet doth note it to be a thing impossible in respect of human power to leave those sins which are customably committed. Jer. 13:23. Can the black more change his skin; or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. And therefore if ever we mean to leave our sins and to turn unto God it is best to begin before the corruptions of nature be confirmed by custom.

Secondly while we live in our sins we continue in Satan's thralldom and he hath full possession of us; which possession the longer he holdeth the more hardly will he be cast out; for as those who have a long time quietly enjoyed their houses and lands though their title be but weak yet are more hardly dispossessed then if at their first entrance their right had been called into question, both because long custom hath in it the nature of a law, and the parties themselves will be more earnest in using all means to retain their possessions which they have long held, time having worn out all doubting of their right: so Satan is more hardly thrust out of his possession when he hath long kept it, because his long holding of us in his thralldom maketh him imagine that he hath right to hold us still, and he is most earnest in using all his strength and policy; to hold that which he hath already gotten and long kept in his possession. We know that when a soldier in fight hath taken another captive, at first he useth all means to break from him as having better opportunity when they are still in the field, then he can hope for after when he is carried away and clapt up in prison: and as he hath less means, so also he hath less desire to escape; after that by continuance of

time his captivity is made more familiar unto him; and we commonly see that a bird as soon as she is taken, fluttereth and striveth to get away, but after she hath been a while in the cage she is content to stay there still though the door be open; and so it is in our spiritual thralldom, at the first we have best means to escape and most desire also, for after we are inured to Satan's captivity we are content to remain his bondslaves still. And if we desire to escape he would more disdain that we should strive and oppose ourselves against him, after he hath long time had us at command, and ruled us at his beck, then when at the first we fell into this cruel slavery.

Thirdly the longer that sin hath dominion over us the more it increaseth in strength, and the more hardly it is subdued, for it is the nature of sin as soon as it is entertained to make way and room for more and those worse than itself as we may see in the example of David, for when he was overcome of idleness, it made way for adultery, and adultery for murder. So Herod entertained incest; and that opened a door in his heart to let in murder, and both these made open way for all hellish impiety; so Judas retaining still his covetousness was moved thereby to betray his master; and this sin brought him first to desperation, and then to hang himself; yea the Apostle Peter after that he joined himself in company with the wicked servants of the more wicked high Priest; at first was moved hereby to deny his master, and when he had gone thus far, then he denieth him again with an oath, and when he had thus far proceeded in the course of sin, he maketh no conscience of redoubling his oaths, cursing himself if he knew the man; so that the longer we let sin have dominion in us, the more it will increase itself in strength and number, till our hearts be full of sin and wickedness. As therefore those citizens were to be accounted most foolish, who when they saw an hundred enemies entered into the city, should defer the beating

of them out or killing of them, till they had opened the gate to let in ten thousand more better armed and more strongly provided, thinking then to have better opportunity, and more ability to give them the repulse, so alike foolish are those who finding it hard and difficult to subdue some few sins, to which they are now given, do defer it till the time to come, when as they are increased in huge multitudes imagining then to do it with more ease. Sin, it is the poison of the soul, as therefore poisons being drunk are presently to be cast up again, otherwise they disperse themselves in the veins and so going to the heart cause death; so this poison of sin if it be long kept in us, it will disperse itself over the whole body and soul, and seizing upon the heart, will plunge us into everlasting death and destruction. Sin it is an heavy burden and upon whomsoever it lieth it will press them down unto hell; as therefore the way to ease a man of his burden is not to add more unto it but to cast it off, so the way to ease us of the heavy burden of sin, is not to increase the weight by adding still more and more unto it but by casting it of speedily, for when by this continual addition our sins are grown to an unsupportable weight, they will sooner press us down then we shall cast them of.

Fourthly, the longer we live in sin the more unpleasant will virtue and godliness be unto us; and the more we are delighted in the fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, the more bitter it will be to mortify them, and to embrace any strict course of sanctification, seeing these are contrary the one to the other; he that hath long continued in darkness cannot endure the light of the sun; he that never tasted anything but sweet and pleasant meats, cannot abide to feed upon those which are sour and bitter; he that was born and bred in hot countries, is not able to brook those which are cold; and so those who have accustomed themselves to sin will hardly be ever brought to

embrace virtue and godliness, these being as contrary one to another, as light and darkness, sweet and sour, hot and cold, especially considering that sin is as delightful to the taste of a natural man, as drink when he is extremely thirsty, or meat when he is ready to pine for hunger.

Fifthly, the longer we live in our sins and defer our conversion unto God, the more are our understandings darkened, our wills perverted, our affections more corrupted, our hearts hardened, and our consciences seared, and all the powers and faculties of our bodies and souls are more and more disabled; for as the longer that sickness hath continued, the more it weakeneth the body and maketh it unfit for any work or action, so the longer sin which is the sickness of the soul hath ceased on us, the more unable we are to shake it off, and the weaker it maketh us to perform any good actions. When men at first fall into unusual sins, their consciences check them, and they fear least the Lord will pour upon them his heavy judgments, but when they have committed the same sins again and again, and yet are not punished, then like thieves who having escaped after one robbery committed, are ready to commit another, so they having not tasted of God's judgments threatened, think that they shall never be inflicted on them, and therefore are ready to sin again; until by long custom in sinning their hearts are hardened and their consciences seared as it were with a hot iron, so as now without any check or remorse, yea with all pleasure and delight they cannot commit those sins, which in former times they would have trembled, to have entertained into their secrets thoughts.

Sixthly, the longer we defer our repentance the more ineffectual will the means be of our conversion; for the word of God, will either soften our hearts like wax, or harden them like clay, either it will be the savor of life unto life, or the savor of death to our deeper condemnation, as is, 2 Cor.

2:16. If it once go out of God's mouth it shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he will, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sendeth it, (whether it be for the conversion or hardening of those who hear it) as it is, Isa. 55:11, we know if a salve be applied unto a wound either it healeth it, or else the sore overcoming the virtue thereof doth more fester and rankle, and so this spiritual salve, being applied unto our souls wounded with sin, doth either cure them, or else becoming ineffectual they wax worse and worse. When men sleep and are suddenly wakened with some strange and unusual sound, they presently start up and are amazed, but after a long time they have been acquainted with the noise they can sleep securely and not be much disquieted; so when men sleeping in carnal security are awaked with the threatening's of the law preached unto them, which like Canon shot thundereth in their ears, they are at first somewhat roused up and begin to look about them, but giving themselves to sleep again in their sins, after they have been many times awakened, at last this fearful sound nothing moves nor disquiets them neither will anything waken them out of this spiritual lethargy, but the voice of the Archangel commanding them to arise and to come unto judgment.

Seventhly, if we defer our conversion until our old age, it will then be more hard and difficult then in the time of youth, because old men are more indocible and unfit to learn, then they were in their youthful days, and therefore whosoever mean to attain unto learning, or to knowledge of any science, trade or occupation they do not defer it to their old days, but give themselves unto it in the time of their youth, when as their wits are most fresh, and their capacity most quick to receive instruction. Seeing then there is much knowledge necessarily required to the making of a true Christian (for without knowledge we can have no faith, and without faith there is no

salvation) therefore for the attaining hereunto it is very needful that we begin betimes and set ourselves to learn God's true religion in the time of our youth, when as we are most fit for this purpose. And this counsel the wise man gives us, Prov. 22:6. Teach a child in the trade of his way and when he is old he shall not depart from it. Secondly, as old men are more unfit to learn, so also they are more forgetful to remember that which is taught them, and therefore if they do not set their whole minds upon God's word, and continually call to mind that which hath been delivered unto them in the preaching thereof, meditating therein with the prophet David day and night, all they have learned, will easily slip out of their weak and decayed memories. Which thing is most hard for them to perform by reason of manifold distractions, which that age is subject unto, as the infirmities of the body, sickness, aches, and innumerable griefs, and also the manifold troubles and cares of mind, not only in respect of their own state, but also in the behalf of their children, young nephews and near friends, whose welfare is as dear unto them as their own: now if a single man hath cares now to distract him from God's service, how many are their distractions whose cares are doubled and redoubled: and therefore if we would make choice of the fittest time for our conversion we must not defer it till our old age, but turn unto God in our youth, when as our wits are most fit to receive, and our memories to retain instruction.

Lastly if we defer our conversion unto God till our old age, or till we lie on our death bed, we shall find it more difficult in that our enemy Satan who always goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us, doth then redouble his malicious diligence in working our destruction when as he seeth the time draw near wherein he must attain his purpose, or else forever fail of his desire, what, therefore will now our malicious powerful and most

subtle enemy leave unattempted? What violence will he not now offer? What policy will he not assay to draw us from God, to his kingdom of darkness? We know that when enemies besieging a city do hear that their siege is shortly to be raised by the approaching of mighty succors; or within a while will become vain and bootless, by reason that the city well be more strongly manned and better victualed, howe they will bend all their ordinance against the wall to make a breach, how furiously they will give the assault, and how desperately they will fight that they may not be disappointed of their hope and lose all their former labor; and shall we think that Satan who hath long besieged us, desiring nothing more than to sack our souls, and to spoil them of all God's graces and to lead them captive to hell and destruction, will use less political fury in assaulting us with all his engines of battery when he seeth the time approach when as now or never he is to accomplish his desire? But let us consider moreover how able we are to endure his assaults if we do not prepare ourselves before the time of sickness, arming ourselves with the whole armor of God; surely we are naked and lie open to all his violence, being destitute of the girdle of verity; the knowledge of God's truth, neither armed with the breastplate of righteousness, nor having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, whereby we might be enabled cheerfully to march in the afflicted way which is full of the thorns and briars of tribulation and afflictions, wherein we must travail if we will go to God's kingdom; neither yet having the shield of faith whereby we might quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, nor the helmet of salvation, nor yet any skill to use the sword of the spirit, the word of God: either for the defending of ourselves; or the offending of our enemy. And whereas we may hope that God will at that time supply all our wants and give unto us all his spiritual armor whereby

we may be defended and Satan repulsed, we are to know that God useth not to give his heavenly and spiritual graces at the hour of death to those, who have contemned them all their life, or if he do bestow them upon any it is ordinarily by means which he hath ordained for this purpose, as the hearing of the word, hearty prayer, holy conferences, and such like spiritual exercises: now let it be granted that we may have at such times of our mortal sicknesses, God's ministers and all other outward helps to further us, in performing of these duties (which yet notwithstanding no man can promise to himself) yet howe unfit is any man in this case for the effectual doing of these holy exercises, when as his body is full of pain, and his mind full of anguish, partly fearing God's judgments and eternal damnation, partly being grieved with the loss of all his delights, and because he is to part with his friends, partly being troubled and distracted with disposing of his worldly estate and setting all things in order; and when to all these incumbrances there is added Satan's dangerous temptations, who then most violently assaulteth, and most subtilty undermineth us that he may work our final destruction? And therefore seeing our conversion in the time of our sickness is so hard and difficult, (I had almost said desperate,) let us whilst the Lord giveth us the outward means of our conversion, and withal the use of our senses, understandings, and memories, (all which when we are grievously sick, are always exceedingly weakened, and sometime quite overthrown) let us (I say) unfeignedly turn unto the Lord by unfeigned repentance in the time of our health, and strength, and not by our delays, hazard and desperately endanger the eternal salvation of our souls for the enjoining of the transitory trifles and vain delights of this miserable world.

CHAP. XXIX. OF THE FIFTH MOTIVE WHICH IS THAT OUR DELAY WILL BRING MORE SORROW OR UTTER DESTRUCTION.

The fifth argument to persuade us to speedy repentance and turning unto God, is that by our delay either we prepare more matter for our own sorrow and grief, or else treasure up for ourselves a more fearful measure of wrath against the day of wrath; for if the best happen that we can hope for, or imagine, it is that we truly repent us of our sins without which, there is no forgiveness, and what is this repentance, but an hearty sorrow, and bitter grief, for our sins past, and an earnest desire and endeavour of forsaking them in time to come? And therefore seeing whatsoever pleasure we have taken in sinning we must after loose it in sorrowing for sin, seeing our laughing must end in weeping, and our honey be turned into gall, and wormwood, let us break off our sins betimes, by unfeigned repentance, and not heap up matter of more grief, let not our minds so much dote to taste of the honey which sin bringeth in the mouth, as that we forget the poison which it carrieth in the tail; let us not be so eager in drinking of this poison of sin, though it be sweet and pleasant to the taste, remembering that it is deadly in operation if it be not (as it were)

cast up again by unfeigned repentance; let not our gluttonous appetites cause us to surfeit on the pleasures of sin, seeing the present delight will not countervail the future pain, when as being sick in sin, and tormented in conscience, we shall vomit that with grief, which we have eaten with pleasure, finding more bitterness in the casting up, then sweetness when we swallowed it down. But this is the best which can befall us, for if we do not thus heartily sorrow for our sins, but still live in them with pleasure and delight, then do we nothing else but heap up judgment, and punishments, which shall one day be poured upon us in full measure, and fill up the vials of God's wrath, till being filled up to the brim, he will pour them out upon our one heads. And this the Apostle plainly showeth, Rom. 2:5. But thou (saith he) after thine hardness and heart that cannot repent, heapest unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God. 6. Who will reward every man according to his works. &c. And this is all the treasure which sinners, by deferring their repentance heap up unto themselves for the last days; as James speaketh, Jam. 5:3. The longer therefore we defer our repentance the more we increase the bills of accompts, of which we shall never be able to give a reckoning, at the great, and general audit, the more we heap up our sins, the more we heap up God's wrath; and increase the measure of our condemnation, and hellish torments every day, (as it were) piling up wood, in which we shall eternally be burned.

The sixth motive to persuade us to hasten our conversion unto God with all speed, is the consideration of the dangerousness of our estate before our conversion; for we are dead in our sins, the children of wrath and enemies unto God, who every minute lie open to his judgments and punishments. And this the Lord implieth in his speech to Cain, Gen. 4:7. If thou doest not

well (saith he) sin lieth at the door, that is the punishment due to thy sin, like a cruel wild beast still watcheth and waiteth for thee, so as thou canst nor stir any way but it is ready to cease upon and destroy thee. Now in what a fearful state are those who every minute live in this danger, of which if they be surprised what can remain unto them but everlasting death and destruction; For as the tree falleth so shall it lie, as it is, Eccl. 11:3, that is; as the day of death leaveth us, so shall the day of judgment find us, and therefore if we be taken away in our impenitency whilst we are dead in our sins, children of wrath, and enemies unto God, such shall we be presented before the tribunal seat of judgment in the presence of the great judge of heaven and earth.

The seventh motive may be drawn from the manifold benefits which will accompany our speedy conversion, for first virtue and goodness being sown in us in the time of youth, will take more deep root in us, so as it cannot easily be left or lost, for as the vessel doth longest retain the smell and taste of that liquor which was put into it whilst it was new and unseasoned, so they will longest retain virtue and goodness who have it planted in them in their youth, according to that, Prov. 22:6, teach a child in the trade of his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Secondly if we turn to God betimes the exercises of religion, and works of sanctification, will be far more pleasant and easy then if we defer them till our old age, for often use will bring us to a custom, and long custom will work in us an habit of virtue, which will be easy and familiar, if children from their youth be brought up in trades and occupations which are exceeding hard and difficult, they do attain to the skill and practice of them with exceeding dexterity and quickness, but if the learning of them be deferred till old age they can never attain unto them, or at least perform them slowly and with

great difficulty, and so if from our childhood we, accustom ourselves to the learning and practice of the works of holiness and righteousness, they will grow exceeding easy and pleasant, whereas being deferred they will be difficult and tedious. If the ox whilst he is young be accustomed to the yoke he draweth in it quietly and with no great pain, but if he run long in the pasture unbroken and untamed, when he is brought to the yoke he struggleth and striveth, and therewith galling his neck draweth with exceeding pain and irksomeness; and so if in our youth we accustom ourselves to bear the yoke of obedience, it will be easy and pleasant, but if we use delays we shall grow stubborn and stiff-necked like untamed oxen, and the bearing of Christ's yoke through our impatency, and the rebellion of our nature will gall and vex us. Thirdly, the sooner we turn unto God, the more joy, peace and comfort shall we have in the whole course of our lives, for what joy may be compared with the joy in the holy Ghost, what peace is like the peace with God; and the peace of conscience, when as we are sure that we are now friends, who before we were enemies and children of God and heirs of his everlasting kingdom of glory, who in time past were children of wrath and fire brands of hell? What comfort in the world can be imagined like unto the consolation of God's spirit, which is able to make all afflictions light; and even death itself sweet and pleasant unto us, but this joy, peace, and comfort do all accompany our true conversion unto God, and therefore who would defer it for one day, seeing it bringeth such inestimable benefits and such surpassing pleasures as none sufficiently understand them, but they who feel and enjoy them. Whereas on the other side if we defer our conversion, in the mean while we are continually subject to the checks and terrors of an evil conscience, in fear of God's judgments and eternal damnation: and though in outward show we may be

exceeding merry and pleasant, yet our mirth is full of sorrow, and our joy of bitterness, and of such laughter we may say, thou art mad, and of this joy what is that which thou doest? As the Wise man speaketh, Eccl. 2:2, for it is but *Sardonicus risus* laughter from the teeth outward, which is straight controlled with some inward pang or check of conscience. Fourthly, the sooner we turn unto the Lord; the longer time we shall spend in his service, which in truth is perfect liberty, now what can be more delightful unto any Christian heart, then to serve our creator from the days of our youth, and to show our thankfulness to God our redeemer for all the inestimable benefits which he hath bestowed upon us, by causing our lights to shine before men, and by glorifying his name in our godly and Christian lives? What can be more pleasing to a thankful mind then to take all occasions of expressing thankfulness to him unto whom we are so much bounden? Lastly, as by our speedy conversion unto God we live in sweet comfort and joyful peace, so also we securely expect death and give it entertainment when it cometh with cheerful countenance, for being converted unto God we are at peace with him and in his love and favor, we are assured that the curse of the law is nailed to Christ's cross, that he was condemned that we might be justified and put to death that we might live eternally, that he is gone before us into heaven to prepare us a place there, and now sitteth at the right hand of his father to give us joyful entertainment when we come unto him, that he hath taken away the sting of death which is sin, and hath made a sovereign medicine against this poison with his precious blood, and therefore being converted unto God we need not to fear death, nay rather we may wish with the Apostle to be speedily dissolved that we may be with Christ seeing that is best of all. As it is, Phil. 1:23, neither need we to fear the destruction of this earthly tabernacle, seeing we are assured that we have a building given

us of God, a house not made with hands but eternal in the heavens. As it is, 2 Cor. 5:1. Moreover we shall not need to fear either sudden death; or an evil death, for it cannot be sudden to them who are always prepared, *Nee potest male mori qui bene vixit*, neither can he die ill who hath lived well. On the other side those who defer their repentance and turning unto God, when death approacheth are filled with horror and fear when as they see that they are still subject to the curse of the law and every minute in danger of God's fearful judgments; when as the weight of sin presseth them, Satan and their own conscience accuseth them, death waiteth on them to bring them to everlasting death, hell, and destruction. And therefore seeing so many benefits accompany our speedy conversion both in life and death, and so many evils follow our delays: let us not be moved by Satan's temptations, the sweetness of sin, nor with the alluring vanities of this deceitful world to defer our repentance from day today, but let us now hearken whilst God, yet calleth us, and take the good and acceptable time when he offereth it unto us.

The eighth motive to persuade us to speedy conversion, is that our turning unto God being deferred to our old age, or till the time we lie sick on our deathbeds, is not so excellent in it one nature, nor so acceptable unto God, as if it were performed in the time of our youth; for what great matter is it if we leave our sins, when they, are ready to leave us, to renounce the world with the riches honors, and pleasures thereof, when they are ready to abandon us; to embrace mortification, when as our bodies are mortified with sickness, and brought to the gates of death; to give to the pore when we can keep our goods no longer, to forgive our enemies, when as we cannot offer them any further wrong, or violence, to commend our wives, and children, into the hands of God, when as we ourselves can no longer

defend and provide for them? To cease to swear and blaspheme God's name, when as soon after we shall cease to speak? Moreover how can we think that this will be acceptable unto God when as we do not come unto him before all the world forsakes us, nor crave his help till we are abandoned of all other succor, nor offer to come into his service before we are ready to go out of the world, and that rather for fear of punishment; and hope of reward, then for any love we bear to our Lord and master. But let it be granted (as in truth it cannot be denied) that whensoever we truly repent us of our sins and turn unto God he will receive us to mercy, should we take occasion hereof to defer our conversion and to continue in our sins? Should his love and mercy towards us move us to rebellion, and impiety, towards him, and because he is gracious and long suffering shall we therefore the more offend him, and as it were whet the edge of his wrath against us? Be it far from us. Nay rather if God be gracious and merciful, let us be ashamed to offend so gracious and merciful a God, and though we should be so hard hearted as not to fear his justice, and fearful judgments, yet even in common humanity let us blush for shame to offend him in consideration of his infinite love, and mercy. If we had a friend who by reason of the love he beareth us, would hardly be displeased, or moved to anger against us, would we make this use of his love and patience, still to provoke him with new injuries? Nay if there be any good nature and civility in us, would not his love towards us, move us to love him again, and would not this love work in us a care and fear not to displease him? Yes assuredly. O let not then the Lord's love, patience, and long suffering, who is our friend of friends, make us to take occasion of offending, and displeasing him, but rather let the consideration thereof be a forcible and strong motive to move us to repentance.

Lastly though the Lord be so gracious, and merciful, that he is ready to receive us into his love, and favor whensoever we unfeignedly repent, and truly turn unto him; yet forasmuch as he extendeth his mercy to those only, who are truly penitent; and seeing the repentance of the most is feigned, and hypocritical, which then only beginneth when death or some extreme danger approacheth, this should be a strong motive to persuade us to repent, and turn unto the Lord, when we are in our perfect health, strength, and prosperity that so we may have assurance that our conversion is sincere and unfeigned, and not forced or dissembled. We know that Pharaoh himself when he was vexed with God's fearful plagues, could say I have sinned, and promise amendment, And Saul, when God threatened to cut him off, and to take the kingdom from him, could acknowledge his wickedness, and pretend a desire to worship the Lord. And Jeroboam could show more contrition for the loss of his hand, then he ever shown for the loss of his soul. And wicked Ahab when he heard heavy judgments denounced against him, could outwardly humble himself, put on sackcloth, fast and go demurely. And who may not observe in his own experience, how many there are who in the time of their sickness, make goodly shows of repentance, promising golden mountains and vowing if they recover, that they will lead a new life, forsaking their sins, and endeavoring to serve the Lord in the duties of holiness, and righteousness, and yet the same men being restored to their health, with the dog return to their vomit, and with the sow to wallow again in the filthy puddle of sin, becoming as prophane, wicked, irreligious, and negligent in all duties of Christianity, as ever they were; which is a most undoubted sign, that there repentance was but feigned, and dissembled, and that they were moved thereunto not for any love of God, or hatred of sin, but for fear of God's judgments, and eternal

condemnation, and therefore as soon as the cause of their fear is a little removed, their repentance also ceaseth. Moreover we know that true repentance is the gift of God, and that we have it not at our own beck and call, but when he offereth and vouchsafeth it unto us, and therefore it is no marvel if they who have scorned this gracious gift all the whole course of their lives, should be denied it at the time of death, and left so to the hardness of their hearts, that though with Esau they seek repentance with tears, yet they shall never find it. And though with the five foolish virgins they desire to buy oil for their lamps, yet the time of grace being past they shall be shut out of doors and excluded from the marriage. Neither doth the Lord ordinarily beget faith, repentance and other sanctifying graces in any man, but by the use of the means which he hath ordained for this purpose; now the means ordained of God are not sickness or the infirmities of old age, but the ministry of his word, made effectual by the inward operation of his spirit for our conversion and sanctification; and therefore if the Lord hath oftentimes granted us this means, and they have not been effectual for our conversion if he have often called us in the preaching of the word and we have refused to come, what hope can we have that we should turn unto God, without this means in the time of sickness, who by the continual hearing of the word have not been converted in the time of our health, seeing not any come unto Christ but whom the father draweth, and the means whereby he draweth us unto him, is not sickness or the approaching of death ordinarily, but the ministry of his word; for when the sheep hear Christ's voice and thereby know him to be the true shepherd. Then (and not before) they follow him as it is, John. 10:27. So that though we were sick and certainly assured we should die tomorrow, yet for all this, we are never the nearer our conversion, faith, and repentance then we were before; as

appeareth in the example of the Epicures. 1 Cor. 15:32. Let us eat and drink (say they) for tomorrow we shall die a man would think they should rather have said, let us fast and pray for tomorrow we shall die; but this plainly showeth that we are never the nearer our conversion unto God, and true repentance though we are certain that death approacheth; it is only the work of God's spirit, which ordinarily worketh not by the means of sickness or fear of death, but by the ministry of the word which is God's own ordinance, instituted of God for the gathering together of the Saints, and for the edification of the body of Christ. And therefore whilst the Lord calleth us in the preaching of the word, let us hearken unto his voice, and turn unto him by unfeigned repentance, for if God's own ordinance is not effectual for our conversion, assuredly there is no hope that ever we will be converted by sickness or any other extraordinary means whatsoever. It is an admirable miracle wrought by the infinite wisdom and almighty power of God, that a poor sinner should be converted unto him by the preaching of the word, for hereby we who were dead in sin, are raised up to newness of life, we who were borne blind, are endued with sight, our hearts more hard then the Adamant are made flexible, and soft as wax to receive any impression, which the Lord will imprint in them, and we are moved to deny ourselves, and to cast away our own righteousness, and to rest and rely upon Christ Jesus alone for our justification and salvation, which is quite contrary to our natural disposition: but it were a miracle of miracles that all these things should be wrought in us by sickness, which the Lord hath not ordained for this purpose, when as the means appointed by God himself the ministry of his word, which is God's own ordinance could never work them in us. It may be indeed that God's hand lying heavy upon us in the time of sickness, and fearing worse judgments in the life to come, we may be moved hereby

to make a goodly show, and to vow great reformation if we might be restored to our health: It may be that with Pharaoh we may make a feigned confession of our sins, and promise to amend if this judgment may be removed, or that we may with Ahab outwardly humble ourselves before God, to the end we may escape those fearful punishments which are threatened in his word; but it is a thousand to one if we then truly repent who have lived our whole time in impenitency, or then turn unto God if we were not before that time effectually called and converted; for as we live so we commonly die, neither is it likely that having led our lives like wicked Balaam we should die the death of the righteous, that having always hitherto been thorns and thistles we should now bring forth sweet figs and pleasant grapes when we are ready to be cut down and to be cast into the fire, that having all our life sowed the seeds of wickedness we should at our death reap the fruit of godliness; And therefore (as the Apostle exhorteth) let us not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting, as it is, Gal. 6:7,8. Let us now turn unto God while he calleth us and granteth us the means of our conversion the ministry of his word; now is the acceptable time, now is the day of our salvation; and if we will now turn unto God and truly repent whilst we might continue in our sins, we may be assured our repentance is true and unfeigned, and not pressed out of us with sense of present pain, nor forced with fear of future punishment, and that turning to God we shall be received to grace and mercy, seeing we then offer to serve him, when we might have served Satan, the world and our own corrupt flesh.

CHAP. XXX. TWO LETS WHICH HINDER WORLDLINGS FROM SPEEDY REPENTANCE REMOVED.

And so much concerning these Motives, whereby we may be persuaded to speedy repentance, all which the worldly secure man wardeth and beareth of with a double fence, so as they can never beat him down with true humility nor pierce his heart with unfeigned sorrow for sin; the one is by alleging God's mercy manifestly declared unto us in the sweet promises of the Gospel; the other by objecting the example of the converted thief, who though he had spent his whole life in sin and wickedness, yet at the last hour was received to mercy.

For the first, hath not the Lord (will they say) protested in his word that he desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he turn from his way and live? Hath not our Savior told us that he came not to call the righteous; but sinners to repentance? And doth he not invite such unto him as labor under the heavy burden of sin promising that he will ease them? And hath not the Apostle Paul taught us, that God's will is that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth. Seeing therefore God is so merciful why should we doubt of our salvation? Why should we fear to defer our

repentance and follow our pleasures and delights for a time, seeing the Lord will receive us to mercy whensoever we turn unto him?

I answer first, that though all this were certain, true, and not to be doubted of, yet it is a most unthankful part and horrible ingratitude against our gracious God and loving father to take occasion of his mercy the more to offend him, as before I have shown. Secondly I answer, that as God hath shown his mercy in the gracious promises of the Gospel, so also he hath as plainly declared his justice in the severe threatening's of the law, and he is as true in the one as in the other: And therefore all the question is who shall taste of his mercy, and who of his justice, seeing that is promised to some, and this threatened against others; or rather in truth it is without all question, for the Lord hath plainly shown in his word that he will extend his mercy to all repentant sinners and to them only, and that he will declare his justice in pouring out his just judgments upon the wicked who live in their sins, and especially upon those who take occasion of God's mercy to continue in their unrepentancy, despising the riches of his bountifulness, his patience and long suffering; for hereby they heap unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and the declaration of the just judgment of God, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 2:4.5. Though then there be never so many sweet promises in the gospel, yet they who continue in their sins without repentance can reap no true comfort by them, because they are not made to them but to repentant sinners; and on the other side though there be never so many terrible threatening's denounced in the law, yet the penitent sinner need not to fear them, seeing they are threatened only against those who continue in their impenitency; though God be of infinite mercy let not the wicked man who liveth in his sins presume, seeing it is sufficiently declared in pardoning the sins of repentant sinners. Neither let him who is truly

penitent despair because God is of infinite justice, seeing it is sufficiently manifested in punishing the sins of those who continue in their unrepentancy; let not him who is turned unto God from his wicked ways fear God's justice, for it is fully satisfied in Christ and therefore it shall never attach him, neither let him who continueth in his sins without repentance hope in God's mercy for it doth not belong unto him, nor yet in the sweet promises of the Gospel which though they be never so general, yet are they always to be restrained to the condition of the covenant of grace, faith, and repentance. And this is manifest in the places before alleged which worldly men so much abuse to nourish in them carnal security; for whereas the Lord saith Ezek. 33:11. That he will not the death of a sinner, he addeth in the next words, but that he turn from his way and live, so that the Lord speaketh not of all sinners but of those who turn unto him from their wicked ways. So our savior Christ saith, Matth. 9:13, that he came not to call the righteous, that is those who are just and righteous in their own conceits, but sinners to repentance, so that whosoever are called unto Christ that in him they may have salvation are called also to repentance. And Matth. 11:28, our savior doth not call all sinners unto him without difference, but those only who are weary and heavy laden, that is who find their sins irksome and grievous unto them, and desire nothing more than to be freed of this unsupportable burden. And the Apostle Paul likewise, 1 Tim. 2:4, doth not say simply that God would have all men to be saved, but that he would also have them come to the knowledge of the truth, that is to the knowing, acknowledging, and believing of the principles of Christian religion concerning God, themselves, and the work of redemption wrought by Christ. Let therefore no carnal secure man take occasion to presume upon God's mercy in regard of the sweet and gracious promises of

the Gospel, for unless they turn unto God from their evil ways and truly repent them of their sins, unless they are weary and heavy laden, desiring nothing more than to be eased of their heavy burden; unless they come out of their blind ignorance and attain to the knowledge of the truth, the gracious promises of the Gospel do not appertain unto them.

Secondly, whereas they allege the example of the thief converted at the hour of death we are to know that this is but one particular act of God's mercy, and therefore we can make thereof no general rule, especially seeing to this one we may oppose many thousands of those who having deferred their repentance to the last hour, have been taken away in their sins and impenitency. It is true indeed that if with this thief we truly turn unto the Lord by unfeigned repentance, and show our faith by the like lively fruits he will pardon our sins and receive us to mercy according to his gracious promises, but this faith and repentance are not in our own power, but the free gifts of God which he very seldom bestoweth on those at the hour of death who have neglected and contemned them their whole lives: sometimes indeed he calleth and converteth some at the last hour to show the infinite riches of his mercy, but most commonly he leaveth those who have deferred their repentance to die in their impenitency that they may be examples of his justice. And to this purpose Augustine speaketh well; there is (saith he) mention made in the Scriptures of one whom the Lord received to mercy that none might despair, and but of one that none might presume. It is the manner of princes to send their gracious pardon sometimes to those who are led out to execution, but if any will willfully offend in hope hereof, or having offended will defer to sue for his pardon to the last hour, surely he is well worthy to be hanged, both for his offense; and also for his presumption, so the Lord mercifully pardoneth some few when death is

ready to cease upon them, and to transport them into the eternal torments of hell fire, to show the riches of his grace, but if any shall take occasion hereby the more to offend against his majesty, or having offended deferreth to sue for pardon by pouring out the tears of unfeigned repentance until his last hour, he is undoubtedly unworthy of any grace and mercy, and in all likelihood he shall be delivered up to suffer eternal torments. Moreover as this act of mercy in receiving this thief to grace was very extraordinary, so was it reserved as being most fit for the time of Christ's passion; for as great Princes at the time of their coronation pardon such notorious offenses, the like whereof they will hardly ever after remit, to the end that their clemency and mercy may appear to all, so our Savior Christ the glorious king of heaven and earth, being ready to lay down the form of a servant and to take upon him the crown of endless glory and majesty, gave his gracious pardon to this grievous offender, that his infinite mercy and goodness might be manifested unto all men, that so they might break of their sins by unfeigned repentance, and by a lively faith come unto him, looking and expecting for life and salvation only in this their savior and redeemer; and as cunning Surgeons having made a sovereign salve, do upon the next occasion make experiment thereof by curing some grisly and desperate wound, that so they may commend it to all who shall have need to use it, so the Lord having made a precious plaster and sovereign salve to cure all souls; who being wounded with sin, will apply it unto them by a lively faith, presently took occasion of curing there with this poor thief grievously wounded with sin, that all others in his state, seeing the virtue thereof, might more earnestly desire it and more carefully seek after, and apply it to their wounded souls. And therefore seeing the occasion of this cure was altogether extraordinary, the action is not like to be ordinary, the occasion being removed, and the

mercy of God and virtue of Christ's death and bloodshed being sufficiently manifested to all the world. Thirdly, we are to know that the estate of these men, is far unlike and much more desperate then the state of the converted thief; for he was in all likelihood never before this time called, and presently he hearkeneth unto the voice of Christ, and willingly entertaineth the good motions of his spirit, but these men being often called, have refused to come, and have quenched the good motions of God's spirit; he persisted in his sin ignorantly, having not heard the doctrine of the Gospel, whereby he might be invited to come unto Christ by a lively faith, and might turn unto God by unfeigned repentance, these have often heard these glad tidings, and have neglected and contemned them; he continued in his sins through ignorance, neither did he ungratefully resolve to serve the devil his whole life, reserving the time of his old age and sickness for the service of God, only for his own advantage, but these men having been often instructed in the law of God, and ways of godliness, notwithstanding wittingly and will fully persist in their sins, presuming upon repentance and hope of mercy at the last hour, intending then to turn unto God, not for any love they bear him, but for fear of hell torments and eternal damnation, lastly his repentance was most unfeigned and exceeding earnest, and his faith brightly shined presently after his conversion in singular fruits thereof. For he made a notable confession of his savior and redeemer, even when all his disciples for fear forsook him. He justifieth Christ when all men condemned him, and even his Apostles doubted of him. He prayeth fervently unto him, when the multitude mocked and reviled him, he humbly confesseth his own sins, and lovingly admonisheth his fellow of his wickedness, desiring earnestly that as they had been fellows, and copartners in sin, so they might be partakers in pardon, and in the benefit of

redemption wrought by Christ. Whereas most commonly their repentance is forced and dissembled for fear of punishment, rather than for hatred of sin, or love of God: as they usually make it manifest if they recover of their sickness. And therefore seeing there is such great dissimilitude; and difference in their purposes, lives, and courses, it is not probable that they will ever be like in their conversion, death, and salvation.

CHAP. XXXI. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
MOVING MEN TO REST IN A
COUNTERFEIT REPENTANCE,
ANSWERED.

And so much for the answering of those temptations whereby Satan laboreth to make us delay and defer our repentance from day today: with which, if he cannot prevail both because we see the necessity of repentance unto salvation, and also plainly perceive by the former reasons that delays are most dangerous, then he will labor in the next place to persuade us to content ourselves with a small measure of repentance, or rather in truth with a counterfeit mock-repentance, which is only in outward show and never pierceth the heart; making us believe that if when we see our sins, having our consciences convinced out of God's word we do in some general terms confess that we are all sinners, and desire God after a formal manner to have mercy upon us, if we can sometime strain from us a broken sigh and be content to leave some of our least pleasing sins, our repentance will be very acceptable to God, and sufficient for our salvation.

And with this temptation Satan deludeth, and destroyeth, innumerable men in these our days, and therefore it behooveth every man, to prepare himself for this encounter. And to this end we are to know that the mercy of

God, and merits of Christ, do not belong unto those who thus slubber over their repentance; neither doth Christ Jesus call unto him such as slightly sorrow for their sins, and think the burden of them light, and easy to be borne, but such as labor, and are heavy loaden, as appeareth, Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy loaden, and I will ease you. In which words our savior Christ plainly showeth whom he calleth to the participation of the work of redemption wrought by him, and what measure of repentance he requireth of them; for the first word, κοπιώντες, signifieth such as labor until they be weary, and the other word, πεφορτεσμένοι, signifieth such as are heavy laden with a burden unsupportable and therefore, being grievously pressed therewith, they desire nothing more, then to be case of it, for φορτος, from which this word is derived properly signifieth the burden of a ship, and is taken metaphorically for anything which is very troublesome and grievous. So that by joining these two together our savior evidently declareth whom he calleth, and inviteth unto him. Namely those only who known, acknowledge, and feel, that their sins are an intolerable heavy burden, and being exceedingly vexed with them, most earnestly desire to be eased, and released of them, and to this purpose flee unto Christ by a true and lively faith finding themselves destitute of all means whereby they may otherwise be eased and relieved.

If then we could have any assurance that we are in the number of those whom Christ calleth and inviteth unto him, we must have first a sight, and sense, of our sins, and a true and feeling knowledge of our miserable, and wretched estate, in which we are, by reason of them, and the punishment due unto them. Secondly we must be weary in bearing this heavy burden, as being most irksome and grievous unto us. Thirdly we must have an earnest

desire to be eased and freed from it. Lastly we must come unto Christ by a true and lively faith, to the end that he may ease and release us.

For the first We must come to the knowledge of our sins, before we can truly repent of them, for we cannot sorrow for them, until we see them; neither is it sufficient that we see, and know, that we are grievous and heinous sinners, unless we also feel the weight of this intolerable burden, pressing us down, and vexing, and grieving us even to the very heart; for wicked and profane men may see their sins, (for what can hide them from their eyes being so innumerable in multitude, and so grievous and heinous in respect of their quantity, and quality, but yet they feel not their weight, neither are troubled with them; nay it is a pastime to a fool to do wickedly, as it is, Prov. 10:23, and the abominable filthy sinner drinketh iniquity like water, as it is, Job. 15:16, and there are some so delighted with ungodliness, and all lewd profaneness that they even draw unto them iniquity with the cords of vanity, and sin as with cart-ropes, as the prophet speaketh, Isa. 5:18, and though they be laden with their sins as it were with an intolerable burden, yet they feel them not, neither are they anything vexed with their weight, and though the iniquity of sinners be so heavy that the earth cannot bear it but reeleth to and fro like a drunken man, and is removed like a tent, as it is, Isa. 24:20, though it make all the creatures groan and travail in pain together, as the Apostle showeth, Rom. 8:22, yea though it even wearieth God himself in suffering and bearing with it, as it is, Isa. 43:24, yet do they walk bolt upright, and with stretched out necks, never so much as stooping under this unsupportable burden, till at last it grow so heavy, that it overwhelmeth them, and presseth them down to the bottom of hell.

The reason here of is because they are wholly plunged yea drowned and dead in their sins, and therefore as those who being dived to the bottom of

some deep water, do not feel the weight of that which is above them, whereas if they were pulled out of the waters; they would be overwhelmed with the burden of one tun, so those who are deeply plunged into the gulf of sin and wickedness, do not feel the weight of this intolerable burden, but if once they come out of their sins by unfeigned repentance, the weight of some few of them would press them down unto the gates of hell, if they be not supported and freed from this burden by our savior Jesus Christ.

But such as these, are not called by our savior, neither will he ease them, though their burden be never so intolerable; but he inviteth those only who are heavy laden, and finding their burden irksome are weary of it and desire to be eased; he hearkeneth only unto those who from their hearts cry out with David, Psal. 38:4, mine iniquities are gone over my head, and as a weighty burden they are too heavy for me. 6. I am bowed and crooked very sore, I go mourning all the day. He respecteth only those who are of a broken heart and contrite spirit, for these only perform the condition of the covenant and consequently to them alone the promises contained in the covenant do appertain.

The condition of the covenant is faith and repentance, neither of which doth he perform who doth not see nor feel the burden of his sins; for we will never rest upon Christ for our salvation, unless we see that we have no means of our own to escape condemnation, we will never seek unto Christ to be our redeemer unless we perceive that we are the bondslaves of sin and Satan, we will never labor to obtain the riches of his righteousness, unless we discern our own nakedness and beggary, we will never come unto Christ to be washed and purged from the pollution of our sins and corruptions with his blood, unless we see our natural filthiness, we will never desire to be eased of the heavy burden of our sins, unless we feel the weight of them, we

will never entreat Christ to be our Physician, unless we find that our souls are sick in sin; we will never go unto him who is the author of life, unless we see that we are dead in our sins, in a word we will never entreat God's mercy, until we feel our own misery.

If therefore without this sense of sin we will never come unto Christ, then consequently without it we shall never be eased, for he freeth those only from condemnation who rely themselves wholly upon him for their salvation, he came to be their redeemer alone who feel their miserable captivity, and earnestly desire to be released, he will not enrich any but those who perceive their own beggary, and crave relief, he will not wash any with his precious blood; but those who see their pollution and filthiness, and come unto him entreating him to purge and cleanse them, he will not ease any but those who finding their sins to be a heavy burden, are weary and come unto him to be freed from them; he came into the world to be a physician, not to those who feel no infirmity, but to those who are sick and diseased; he came to give life to those alone who are dead in their sins and trespasses; neither will the Lord show mercy unto any, but unto those alone who perceive their estate to be most wretched and miserable.

For who can imagine that the Lord who is most infinite in wisdom, should unadvisedly bestow his benefits upon such, as finding no want of them, do not desire them; when they are without them, nor esteem them though they had them, and consequently will never be truly thankful for that which they neither want, desire, nor esteem; who can in reason conceive that he will offer himself to be a Savior, to such as do not think themselves lost and condemned, or to be their redeemer who will not acknowledge that they are in captivity, or that he will bestow the riches of his righteousness upon such proud beggars, as find no need thereof, being righteous enough themselves

in their own conceits, that he will vainly spend his precious blood in washing of those who think themselves clean already, and need no such purging, that he will in compassion ease those of the burden of their sins who were never troubled with bearing of them; that he will offer them any physic who will not acknowledge themselves sick; or to give life to those who will not confess that they are dead in sin; and who can imagine that the Lord will ever show to those his mercy, who will never show to the Lord their wretched misery.

Whosoever therefore have not a true sense and feeling of the heavy burden of their sins; they will never come unto Christ, neither can they ever have any assurance that he will ease them, and consequently they are destitute of a true faith which is the chief condition of the covenant of grace; but as they want faith, so also they can never attain unto true repentance. For so long as they have not the sense of their sins they are not grieved with them, neither do they desire to leave and forsake them, and as those who bearing a burden and are not vexed with the weight, they are not weary of bearing it, nor desirous to leave it; so those who being loaded with the unsupportable burden of their sins and have no sense of the weight they are not grieved with weariness nor desirous to be freed from it, and consequently they are destitute of true repentance which is nothing else but an hearty grief and a true sorrow for our sins past and an earnest desire and endeavor to leave and forsake them in the time to come.

So that whosoever have not a true sense and feeling of the unsupportable weight of sin, they are destitute of true faith and repentance, and therefore the promises of the gospel being made, only to the faithful and repentant sinners, do not appertain unto them. Which may more evidently appear if we consider some of the particulars; Isa. 61:1. It is said that our savior

Christ was sent to preach glad tidings unto the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to preach liberty to the captives, and to them that are bound, the opening of the prison. 2. To comfort all that mourn, and to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness. Matth. 9:13, our savior saith that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and the apostle witnesseth of him, that he came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. 1:15. If therefore we be not poor in spirit and broken hearted, if we be not miserable captives, heavy mourners, and wretched sinners, our savior Christ was not sent to preach the glad tidings of the gospel unto us, he will not give us liberty nor afford us any comfort, he came not to call us neither will he save us. So our Savior professeth, Matth. 18:11, that he came to save that which was lost, and to fetch home the wandering sheep. If therefore we be not lost in ourselves we shall never be found of Christ, if we do not confess with the Prophet Isaiah, that we have gone astray like wandering sheep, he will never seek us, nor carry us on his blessed shoulders to the sheepfold of eternal happiness. In a word as without the sense of sin, we can never attain unto faith and repentance, so without faith and repentance, we can never have any assurance of any of the promises of the Gospel.

And therefore it behooveth us as we tender our salvation, that we labor after the sight and sense of our sins, that with good Josiah our hearts melt within us, and even resolve themselves into the tears of unfeigned repentance; that we even rent our heart with true compunction, as the Prophet exhorteth. Joel. 2:13, and that with the Jews we have our hearts pricked within us, when we come to the sight of our sins, and all this not so much in regard of the punishment we have deserved, as that by our sins we have displeased our good God and gracious father, and have caused our

savior Christ who is the Lord of life, to be put to a shameful and painful death.

And that we may attain unto this sense and feeling of our sins, there are diverse means to be used effectual for this purpose; as first we are to have our recourse unto God by earnest and fervent prayer, desiring and entreating that he will anoint the blind eyes of our understandings, with the precious eye salve of his holy spirit, that we may see our own wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness and nakedness, and that he will soften our hard hearts, with the oil of his grace, and so beat these stony rocks, that out of them may flow plentiful streams of unfeigned repentance.

Secondly, we are oftentimes to set the law as a glass before us that so we may see our deformities, and to examine our lives thereby as it were by a rule or square, that so we may know both how often we have erred and transgressed it in the time past, and how unable we are to perform it for the time to come in that exact manner which God requireth. For as the deformities and spots in the face though they be great and many, cannot be discerned of those who have them, unless they look themselves in a glass, and though everyone else doth plainly see them, yet the party himself doth least of all perceive them: so though our spiritual deformities and filthy spots of sin, appear most ugly and odious in the eyes of God and men, so that everyone seemeth to point at them, yet we ourselves will never discern them, unless we set the looking glass of the law before us.

Thirdly, we are often and earnestly to meditate upon the justice and truth of God, in whose presence the heavens are not clean, and the Angels themselves are unable to abide the rigor of his justice, and how much more is man abominable and filthy, who drinketh iniquity like water. In whose sight out best righteousness is like a polluted cloth, and how much more

filthy then are our sins and wickedness, moreover as he is most just so as he cannot let sin go unpunished, so also he is most true, yea truth itself, neither can any of those threatening's fall to the ground unexecuted, which he hath denounced against those who live in their sins, and therefore there is no means to escape his fearful judgments, unless we turn from our sins and meet the Lord by unfeigned repentance.

Fourthly, let us continually remember that we must once appear before God's tribunal seat of judgment, there to render an accompt not only of our words and works but even of our secret thoughts, when as the Lord himself who searcheth the hearts and reigns shall be our judge who will not acquit the guilty, nor respect the person of man, neither will he be satisfied with fair pretenses and smooth excuses, nor corrupted with bribes and gifts. And therefore let us judge ourselves that we may not be judged of the Lord, and in bitterness of soul and remorse of conscience let us condemn ourselves to be miserable sinners, that the Lord may acquit us and make us taste of his mercy.

Lastly, let us seriously meditate on those fearful punishments, which are prepared for those who live and die in their sins; for they shall forever be separated from the presence of God, the joys of heaven, and the sweet company of the Saints and Angels, and be cast into eternal darkness, where they shall forever and ever be tormented in flames unquenchable, all which horrible punishments are due unto all, who continue not in all which is written in the book of the law to do them, and therefore how shall we escape who instead of continuing in obedience to all God's commandments, have continually broken them all and done the clean contrary, if we do not in the sense of the heavy burden of our sins, humble ourselves before God by unfeigned repentance, and come unto Christ by a true and lively faith,

that we may be eased of this intolerable weight, and adorned with his righteousness and obedience.

And so much concerning the first sign, whereby those may be discerned whom Christ calleth, namely the sight and sense of their sins. But it is not sufficient that we feel our sins like a heavy burden, pressing us down if we be content to bear it still, but it must seem irksome and grievous unto us, and make us exceeding weary of bearing it, we must with the Apostle Peter think it sufficient that we have spent the time past of our lives, after the lust of the Gentiles in abominable sins, and for the time to come we are to live after the will of God, dedicating ourselves wholly to his worship and service. Otherwise, though we have never so exquisite a sight and sense of our sins, yet if they seem unto us a sweet burden which we are content still to bear without any great weariness, nay with pleasure and delight, if we be like the rich miser who though his back should be almost broken with the weight of his own gold, yet would not think it any trouble, nay would esteem it for his chief felicity because his burden pleaseth him, so if we feeling that our sins are an huge and massy burden, are nevertheless not troubled nor weary of bearing them, but rather take our chief delight in being so loaded; because the burden is exceeding sweet and delightful to us, we may assure ourselves that we are not in the number of those whom Christ calleth, for he inviteth them only unto him? Who being heavy laden with the weight of their sins are weary of their burden, and sorrow and grieve, that they cannot shake it off, nor be freed from it. Crying out with the Apostle Paul, Rom. 7:24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.

The third sign, whereby we may know those whom Christ calleth, is that being vexed with the heavy burden of sin, they earnestly desire to be eased

and released of it; for as those who are over-pressed with a heavy burden, desire above all things to be freed from it, so those who feel the weight of sin pressing them down and are weary and tired in bearing of it, they most earnestly desire to be eased of this intolerable burden, and will never be at rest till their desire be accomplished.

This desire in the Scriptures is resembled to hunger and thirst; in which these two things concur, first a sense of our want, and secondly an appetite or earnest desire to be satisfied, and to have our want supplied; and so in these spiritual things, first we feel the want of God's graces and Christ's righteousness, and then we earnestly desire that we may be filled and satisfied with them. So that to hunger and thirst after the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, and to be weary and heavy laden are much alike, and both are blessed of the Lord; for as those who hunger, and thirst after righteousness, are blessed because they shall be satisfied, as it is, Matth. 5:6. So they are blessed who are weary and heavy laden, with the burden of their sins, for such Christ calleth unto him, and hath promised to ease them, that is, to give unto them the remission of their sins, and to release them of this burden, by taking it upon his own shoulders. And as our Savior calleth and inviteth unto him such as are weary and heavy laden. Matth. 11:28. So in diverse other places, he inviteth and calleth those, who hunger and thirst after his righteousness So, Isa. 55:1. Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and ye that have no silver come buy, and eat, come I say buy wine, and milk, without money. And, John 7:37. Jesus cried saying; If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Rev. 21:6. I will give to him who is a thirst, of the well of the water of life freely. And, 22:17. Let him that is a thirst come, and let whosoever will, take of the well of the water of life freely. A notable example of this thirsting we have in

David. Psal. 63:1. O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee. And, 42:1, as the hart brayeth for the rivers of water, so panteth my soul after thee O God. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God. And, Psal. 143:6, my soul thirsteth after thee, as the thirsty land. Which thirst whosoever feeleth, he may boldly assure himself, that he is in the number of those whom Christ calleth, and that he will satisfy him.

Whosoever therefore hungereth and thirsteth after the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, whosoever is weary and heavy laden, that is, who so hath a true sense, and feeling of his sins, and is vexed, and grieved, with the burden thereof, and with all his heart desireth to be eased of his load, though he think himself in a most miserable estate, yet if he come unto Christ, and with blind Bartemaeus cry out, O son of David have mercy on me, I may fitly say unto him, as it was say do unto this blind man: Be of good comfort, for Christ calleth thee.

The last thing required in those whom Christ calleth, is, that they come unto him. For to whom should we come for ease, but unto Christ himself, seeing there is neither saint nor Angel, that can ease us, for the weight of one sin would press them down into hell; whereas our Savior Christ is able to bear the burden of our sins, nay he hath already borne them, that we might be delivered from them. As it is, 1 Pet. 2:24, neither it is likely, that either saint or Angel, would so willingly help us as our Savior Christ Jesus, who so tenderly loved us that he came into the world, to lay down his own most precious life as a price for our redemption; and though they were willing, yet they have not the like ability unto him, who hath all power in heaven, and earth committed unto him, for working the work of our redemption. And therefore, seeing he wanteth neither love, nor power, let us go unto him, and him only. Otherwise we shall commit a double folly, that

is, we shall leave Christ, who is the fountain of living water, and dig unto ourselves broken cisterns, which will hold no water. For there is not salvation in any other, neither is there among men any other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, as it is, Acts 4:12. He is the way which leadeth unto everlasting happiness, he is the truth, to instruct us in all the counsels of God, he is the life to revive us, who were dead in our sins, yea the life of everlasting life, and the perfection of our heavenly happiness. John 14:6. He hath taken upon him our infirmities, and borne our pains, he was wounded for our offenses, and smitten for our iniquities, the pain of our punishment was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. Isa. 53:4.5:6. To whom therefore should we go in our sickness, but to this our heavenly physician? Whose help should we seek for the curing of our wounds, but the help of this our blessed surgeon who will easily cure them all, with the precious balm of his blood? Whether should we return after our long wandering, but unto the shepherd of our souls? To whom should we seek to be preserved from death, and damnation, but to him, who is the Lord of life, and salvation? And therefore leaving all other means of our own devising, let us repair unto him, and him alone, for he calleth and inviteth us, promising that he will ease us.

But how should we come unto Christ, and what is meant hereby? Surely we are not to understand a corporal or local coming unto him, for he is in heaven, and we are upon the earth, but our coming is spiritual not of the body but of the soul.

And this is twofold, the coming of repentance, and the coming of faith, the coming of repentance, is properly to God the father, the coming of faith, is to Christ Jesus, both which are mentioned, Act. 20:21, witnessing repentance towards God, and faith towards Jesus Christ. For repentance is

nothing, but a turning from our sins, and a returning to God, and faith causeth us to go out of ourselves, unto Christ, seeking salvation in him alone.

So that our coming to Christ, is to believe in him, for thus Christ himself expoundeth it, John 6:35. He that cometh unto me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst. So, chap. 7:37,38. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me as saith the scriptures, out of his belly shall flow rivers of the water of life. This then doth Christ only require of all penitent sinners, who are weary, and heavy laden, with the burden of their sins, that they believe in him, that is, that by a lively faith, they do apply unto themselves Christ Jesus, and all his benefits, and assure themselves that whatsoever he hath done in the work of mediation, and redemption, he did it for their sakes; namely, that he left the bosom of his father, and taking upon him our flesh, became the son of man, that he might make us the sons of God, and heirs of his everlasting kingdom, that he was conceived by the holy Ghost, to sanctify our conception, that he here suffered hunger, cold, weariness, and other miseries of this life, that he might make us partakers of all happiness in the life to come, that he performed perfect obedience to the law, that he might deck and adorn us with the rich robe of his righteousness, that notwithstanding, he was most just and innocent, yet he was condemned to death, before an earthly judge, that we who were wicked, and unjust, might be acquitted, and absolved, before the judgment seat of God, that he died upon the cross, to preserve us from everlasting death of hell, that he endured his fathers anger, that we might be reconciled unto him, that he bore the curse of the law, that he might cancel the handwriting of ordinances which made, against us, that he rose again and ascended into

heaven, that he might be the first fruits of them that slept, and by his entrance into heaven, might make way for us also, that he sitteth at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us, and to protect and defend us against all our enemies, that he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead, to the end he may give unto us, perfect redemption, and crown us with everlasting glory; And if we thus believe in Christ, and apply him with all his benefits unto us, we may assure ourselves that he will ease us of the heavy burden of our sins, cloth us, with the glorious array of his righteousness, and give unto us the eternal possession of those everlasting joys, which by his death and bloodshed he hath dearly purchased for us.

CHAP. XXXII. OF SATAN
TEMPTATIONS WHICH HE USETH
AGAINST THOSE WHICH ARE
CALLED, TO BRING THEM TO
DESPAIR.

And so much concerning those temptations of Satan, wherewith he assaulteth them who are not yet effectually called, to the end that he may keep them from turning unto God by unfeigned repentance, and coming unto Christ by a true and lively faith: now we are to speak of those temptations which he useth against those who are called. And first, when as he perceiveth that he can no longer blind them with ignorance, nor keep them still in carnal worldliness and presumptuous security, when as he seeth that they are resolved no longer to defer their repentance and coming unto Christ by a true faith, neither can be persuaded to content themselves, with such faith and repentance as are false and counterfeit; then, and not before he appeareth in his own likeness, and showeth himself a devil indeed; for then he accuseth them of their manifold and outrageous sins, where in they have long continued, then he telleth them of their sins past and present corruptions, whereby they are ready to fall into the like again, then he revealeth unto them their sins of ignorance, and calleth to their

remembrance those sins which they have committed against their knowledge and conscience, then will he aggravate their sins which in themselves are but too too heinous, and set before them the justice of God, the fearful threatening's and terrible curse of the law, the wrath of God and the intolerable and eternal torments of hell fire, which by their sins they have justly deserved; all which terrible sights being in one view represented to their already timorous thoughts, he taketh occasion of them all, to move them to distrust of God's mercies and Christ's merits, and so to plunge them into utter desperation. Wouldest thou now vile wretch (will he say) turn unto God hoping to be received to grace and mercy? Why assure thyself it is too late, for are not thy sins in number numberless, and in their quality and nature most heinous and outrageous; and hast thou not continued in this thy rebellion against God a long time, refusing to come unto him though he hath often called, and carelessly neglecting all the means of thy salvation, when thy God hath graciously offered them unto thee? Now therefore the acceptable time and day of salvation is past never again to be recalled, and though with Esau thou seekest repentance with tears yet shalt thou never find it. Moreover to the consideration of thy horrible rebellion add the remembrance of God's justice, which can in no wise suffer sin to go unpunished, the terrible curse of the law denounced by God who is truth itself, against those who continue not in all that is written in the book of the law to do it, the fearful torments of hell prepared for sinners amongst which number thou art one of the chief; and therefore do not flatter thyself with hope of mercy, but rather expect those fearful judgments and endless torments which are due unto thee for thy rebellious wickedness: and thus doth Satan labor to bring the poor Christian to deep desperation, and to fill his conscience with horror and fear, which if he can accomplish he resteth

not there, but like a cruel coward who can never be at quiet till he see the death of his enemy, so our malicious enemy is never satisfied till he see our death and utter destruction. And therefore when he hath grievously vexed the Christians consciences with fearful horror, and tormented him even with the flashings of hell fire, in the next place he will persuade him to seek some ease of his present torments by imbruing his hands in his own blood, and putting himself to some violent death: which is nothing else but (as the Proverb is) to leap out of the frying pan into the fire, and in seeking to ease his terrors of conscience to plunge himself into the torments of hell.

Against which temptations whosoever would be strengthened and enabled to withstand their force and violence, they must not rest in themselves, desiring in whole or in part to be justified by their legal righteousness, neither must they measure out unto themselves God's mercies according to their own merits and worthiness, they must not look only upon God's justice, and upon that exact obedience which the law requireth of them, nor yet upon those fearful punishments which by their sins they have justly deserved, for then Satan will easily attain unto his purpose, and speedily bring them to desperation and utter destruction. But they must go out of themselves and rejecting their own righteousness, as altogether imperfect and insufficient they are to rest and rely themselves upon the alone righteousness and obedience of Christ Jesus, as being in itself all sufficient both for our justification and salvation. And as they have one eye on God's justice to keep them from secure presumption, so they must have the other firmly fixed on his infinite mercy to preserve them from falling into desperation, as they have one eye on the law to humble them, and to bring them out of themselves to Christ, so they must have the other eye on the sweet and comfortable promises of the Gospel to comfort and raise them

up. Finally as on the one side they behold the curse of the law, and the eternal torments prepared for the wicked: so on the other side they must steadfastly look upon the righteousness, death, and obedience of Christ, and also upon those everlasting joys which by his precious bloodshed he hath purchased for them. And if thus being truly humbled and brought to unfeigned repentance they go out of themselves and reject their own righteousness, resting and relying upon the alone righteousness of Christ for their justification and salvation, they may most certainly assure themselves that they have in Christ satisfied God's justice, and are by his death reconciled unto him, that they are freed from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God, that their scarlet sins are made as white as wool, and all their imperfections perfected by Christ's righteousness and obedience, that they are acquitted from the sentence of condemnation, and delivered from the fearful torments of hell.

But forasmuch as those who labor under the burden of their sins, and are continually vexed and moved to desperation, by Satan's most subtle and violent temptations, are not so easily persuaded that their sins are forgiven them, and they reconciled unto God in Christ; therefore I will set down some arguments, whereby all those who truly repent, (that is sorrow for their sins past, and desire, and endeavor to forsake them in the time to come) and withal going out of themselves, do earnestly hunger after Christ and his righteousness, and rest and rely upon him for their salvation, may have full assurance that their sins are forgiven them, and that they are in Christ reconciled unto God, and received into his love and favor.

The first argument, to assure all of the pardon and forgiveness of their sins, who will come unto him, may be drawn from his mercy, which is one of his properties and attributes, so often attributed unto him in the

scriptures. Exod. 34:6,7. God thus describeth himself: The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, reserving mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Out of which place that famous and godly learned man H. Zanchius hath observed matter fit for our purpose, and therefore it shall not be amiss to set down his own words: For besides (saith he) that the essence of God is only one, and that eternal most simple most perfect, living, immortal, invisible, incorruptible, infinite, omnipotent, most wise; he is also wholly most good in whom nothing is wanting; a lover of men, most meek, most gentle, slow to anger, most ready to forgive injuries, most patient, most true, most righteous, most just, most faithful in performing his promises, finally he is nothing else then the sovereign goodness, and the chief clemency as he hath described, and lively deciphered himself. Exod. 34, and elsewhere. And therefore we must note, although anger be attributed unto God, yet notwithstanding it is in God nothing else but the chief goodness and justice, whereby he abhorreth evil and according to his just judgment doth at length punish it, if it be not amended by his long suffering and patience. This here hence manifestly appeareth, because speaking of revenge or taking punishment which is an effect of anger, he doth not say that he doth presently inflict punishment, or that he is so ready to inflict it as to show mercy, but he saith that he is slow to anger. Signifying by this manner of speech, that he is of his own nature always most ready, to show mercy, to grant pardon, to be beneficial; but not so ready to take punishment, but is forced here unto (as of himself unwilling) through our impenitence. Hereunto also appertaineth that ancient form of prayer; O Lord whose property is always to have mercy and forgive. Here hence also we read in Isaiah, chap. 28:21. The Lord shall stand as in mount Perazim, he shall be

angry as in the valley Gibeon. That he may do his work, his strange work, that he may effect his act, his strange act. (That is, he shall inflict the like punishments in his just anger upon his rebellious people, which he exercised upon his wicked enemies the Philistines in mount Perazim, when as he overthrew them, by his servant David, and upon the Amorites in the valley of Gibeon when as he smote them with stones from heaven.) Where the Prophet maketh a twofold kind of God's works, his proper and strange works. The proper work of God is to show mercy, and to spare or forgive; his strange work is to be angry and to punish. And therefore whereas he calleth that the proper work of God, and this his strange work; he plainly teacheth that mercy, goodness and long suffering are according to the nature of the deity, but that to be angry is diverse from God's nature, Yea which is more he maketh it not his work, that is to say, he is angry that afterwards he may bring his work to pass, that is, that he may have mercy and preserve; for whilst (saith the Apostle) we are judged of the Lord, we are chastened that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Cor. 11:32. And what do these things teach us, but that the nature of God is nothing else then goodness, mercy, love especially of men, patience, benignity, and most far and remote from all unjust severity, cruelty, tyranny, and pride. The which may minister unto every penitent sinner most sweet consolation; for when they see that God is angry by reason of their sins, and that he doth grievously afflict them, and even bring them as it were to the gates of hell, this must not make the to cast of all hope and to fall into utter desperation; but they must remember, that these are not the Lord's proper works but strange unto him, which he doth to this end, that he may bring to pass his own proper works which are agreeable to his nature, that is, that he may again show unto us the glorious beams of his loving countenance in more

full brightness, and bring us from death to life; from affliction to joy, from the gates of hell to the kingdom of heaven. According to that 1 Sam. 2:6, the Lord killeth, and maketh alive, he bringeth down unto hell, and bringeth up again. As therefore when we see carpenters pulling down a ruinous building our minds do not rest there, because we know that this they do is not their proper work, but we go further in our cogitation thinking of a new house which they will build in the place of the old, for as much as we know that it is not their proper work to race down but to build, or to race down that they may build; so when we see the Lord angry and inflicting corrections let us not rest here, but with the like foresight of mind, let us consider that he doth these his strange and improper works, that afterwards he may do those which are proper and natural, that is that he afflicteth that he may bring the more true comfort, that he bringeth us to the gates of hell, to the end he may raise us up to be partakers of the joys of heaven. But let us consider of some more testimonies of God's infinite mercies. As the Prophet David likewise saith, Psal. 103:8, that the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness. And Psal. 86:5. Thou Lord art good and merciful, and of great kindness unto all them that call upon thee. So, the prophet Joel 2:13, testifieth of the Lord, that he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. And the apostle saith that he is rich in mercy. Eph. 2:4, and 2 Cor. 1:3. He calleth him, the father of mercies, and God of all comfort.

Seeing then, mercy is one of God's attributes, therefore it is also of his essence, and being, for there is not in God's most perfect nature, any qualities or accidents, but whatsoever is in God, is God, so that God is mercy itself, and consequently, to show and exercise his mercy, is to show and exercise his own nature. Now we know that natural actions are not

troublesome, nor irksome, neither is the sun troubled with giving light, nor the fire with giving heat, nor the tree with yielding fruit, nor the beast with nourishing his young, nor man with receiving nourishment, and sleep, because it is their nature to be exercised in these actions, and therefore seeing mercy is of God's essence, it is not painful and troublesome to exercise it towards all repentant sinners, be their sins never so many, and heinous, no more than it is troublesome to exercise his justice, in punishing of those who are obstinate and rebellious, nay it is not only not troublesome and painful, but also pleasant and delightful for God to show mercy unto all those who truly turn unto him, and contrariwise it should be troublesome and irksome, (if I may so speak,) for God not to show and exercise his nature, and mercy, towards repentant sinners; for as the eye is delighted with seeing, and to be restrained there from is grievous unto it, as the ear is delighted with hearing, and is much molested if it be stopped, and as every part, and faculty of the body, and soul, are delighted in exercising their several actions, and functions, and are much vexed, and cumbered, if by any means they should be hindered; so is the Lord delighted, and well pleased, in showing, and exercising his own nature, and attributes, as his power, and providence, in governing the world, his justice, in punishing wicked, obstinate, and rebellious sinners, and his mercy in pardoning, and remitting the sins of those, who are of an humble spirit and broken heart, and are weary of this intolerable burden, desiring nothing more, then to be eased and freed from it. And not to thus exercise his nature, and attributes, would rather (that I may speak after the manner of men) be unto the Lord tedious and troublesome.

Of this pleasure and delight, which the Lord taketh in pardoning repentant sinners, the Prophet Micah speaketh, chap. 7:10,18, who (saith he) is a God

like unto thee; that taketh away iniquity, and passeth by transgression of the remnant of his heritage: he retaineth not his wrath forever, because mercy pleaseth him. So the prophet David, Psal. 147:11, saith that the Lord is delighted in them that fear him and attend upon his mercy; even as though he rejoiced much, to have an occasion offered, of exercising his mercy and goodness towards those, who earnestly desiring it, wait upon him, that they may be made partakers of it. For the object of God's mercy, about which it is exercised, is man's misery, and the action thereof, is to pity, and help him, out of his wretched and miserable estate; and therefore, if there were no misery, and wretchedness, and no sin to be forgiven, there would be wanting that external object, about which God's mercy should be exercised and manifested to all the world. And hence it is, that the Lord willingly permitted the fall of our first parents, to the end that he might make a way for the manifestation of his mercy, in pardoning repentant sinners, and his justice in punishing the contemners of his grace. And as the apostle saith, Rom. 11:32. God hath shut up all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all, that is to say, on all the elect, both Jews, and Gentiles.

Seeing therefore God delighteth himself in exercising and manifesting his mercy, to the praise of the glory of his grace, by pardoning and forgiving repentant sinners, let not any who are grievously laden, and groan for weariness under the heavy burden of their sins, fear to come unto the Lord, and to implore his mercy for the forgiveness of their sins, though never so grievous and manifold, neither let them doubt, least God will reject their suite, and refuse to receive them, into his grace, and favor, because of their great rebellions and unworthiness. For although there were not (as in truth there is not) anything to be respected in us, saving that we are the creatures of God, and work of his hands, yet the Lord will have compassion upon us,

even for his own sake because he is exceedingly delighted in showing mercy to all those who turn unto him. And this the Lord himself professeth, Isa. 43:25. I, even I, am he that putteth away thine iniquities for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. And therefore the prophet Daniel calling upon the Lord for mercy, in the behalf of himself and the people, disclaimeth their own righteousness, and all respect of their own merits and worthiness; saying, we do not present our supplications before thee for our own righteousness, but for thy great tender mercies: O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord consider and do it; defer not for thine own sake. Dan. 9:18,19.

But here Satan will be ready to object unto the afflicted conscience, laboring under the burden of sin, that God indeed is merciful, but yet he will never extend his mercy towards such heinous offenders, whose sins are in number numberless, and in quality and nature most grievous and outrageous. For answering of which temptation, we are to know that though our sins be never so innumerable and heinous, yet this should not discourage us from coming to God by unfeigned repentance, with assured hope of forgiveness, for though our sins be great, his mercies are infinite, and consequently though it were imagined that all the sins which were ever committed in the world were joined together, yet in comparison of God's mercy they are without all comparison less than a mote in the Sun to all the world. Neither is God like unto man, whose bounty and mercy are limited in some straight bounds which they will not pass, and therefore they are soon weary both in giving to those who want, and forgiving those that offend, but his bounty is endless and his mercies infinite, and therefore he can and will as easily forgive us the debt of ten thousand millions of pounds as one penny, and as soon pardon the sins of a wicked Manasseh as of a

righteous Abraham, if we come unto him by unfeigned repentance, and earnestly desire and implore his grace and mercy. And this our Savior Christ showeth in the parable of the poor Publican, whose heinous sins the Lord presently forgave upon his true conversion. And in the parable of the two debtors, where the lender our bountiful God as easily forgave the 500 pence as the fifty, that is innumerable great sins, as well as few and less. And the Apostle Paul teacheth us, that where sin hath abounded, there grace hath much more abounded. Rom. 5:20.

Seeing therefore God's mercy is infinite and without all limits, let not us restrain it, neither let us so aggravate our sins as that in the mean time we derogate from God's mercy. If a Prince should send his general pardon unto a number of offenders, without any exception or limitation, and one amongst the rest should say this pardon doth not appertain unto me, because I am so great an offender, and therefore I will still stand in doubt of my Princes mercy, and suspect his word, who would not accuse such an one both of folly in refusing his pardon, and of ungratefulness and diffidence in distrusting his gracious Prince, calling his great mercy and truth in his promise into question? Who would not think this offense greater than all the rest, but the Lord who is infinite in mercy, hath sent his general pardon to all repentant and believing sinners without all exception; why therefore should we make question of his mercy, because of our heinous sins, why should we unto our others sins add this which is more heinous then all the rest, in doubting and distrusting his word and promise, and in extenuating his infinite and endless mercies. For if we think our debt so great that God will never forgive it, what do we else but detract from God's rich bounty and liberality, if we suppose our sins may not be forgiven because of their

greatness, what do we else but imagine that they surpass God's infinite mercy, which is a most horrible blasphemy once to conceive.

The mercy of the Lord extendeth itself to the beasts of the field, and he graciously feedeth the Ravens and young Lions, which in their brutish manner implore his help; and shall he not extend his mercies to reasonable creatures that seek after them? Yea the Lord is good to all and his mercies are over all his works, as it is, Psal. 145:9, and will not the Lord be gracious to man, who is his most excellent workmanship created according to his own image, if he sue unto him for grace and desire to be partaker of his mercy? His goodness stretcheth itself unto his obstinate enemies, for he causeth his rain to fall and his Sun to shine both upon the evil and the good, on the just and unjust. Matth. 5:45. And shall it be restrained from his repentant servants? He multiplieth his mercies in temporal benefits upon the wicked and reprobate, and shall it be scant towards his elect, he is very gracious to malicious rebels, and will he deny grace to humble suers for mercy and repentant sinners. He shown his goodness and long suffering unto wicked Ahab upon his feigned and hypocritical humiliation, and will he not extend it towards those who being truly penitent unfeignedly turn unto him? Yes assuredly, for though he be good to all even senseless creatures, brute beasts, and rebellious sinners, yet he is in especial manner good to those who are of the household of faith.

But if we cannot behold God's mercies in their own glorious brightness, let us look upon them in some small resemblance and little counterfeit, if we cannot comprehend them in their own infinite nature, yet let us view them in a small model. Even man himself who hath but a spark of this mighty flame, and a small drop of this bottomless Ocean spareth his son when he offendeth, pardoneth his servant when he desireth forgiveness, yea

is oftentimes reconciled to his enemy who hath many ways wronged him, when he sueth for reconciliation, and confesseth his faults, shall therefore man who hath received a little spark from this ever burning flame of God's goodness, a small drop of this endless and bottomless Ocean, and but a little model of this infinite greatness, whose greatest mercy compared with God's, is but savage and barbarous cruelty; shall he I say be ready to spare his Son, forgive his servant, and be reconciled unto his enemy, and shall not God spare, forgive, and be reconciled unto those who turn from their sins by unfeigned repentance, and earnestly sue for grace; shall we see, and acknowledge, the mercies of man, and shall we doubt of the mercies of God which is the plentiful fountain, from which like a whirling stream they flow; shall we confess, that a drop of water is moist, and affirm that the ocean is dry, shall we be sharp-sighted in seeing the light of a small spark, and be stark blind, in beholding the glorious beams of the sun. Nay let us know, acknowledge, and assure our selves, that as much as the whole globe of the earth, exceedeth in quantity the least mote in the sun, as much as the whole ocean exceedeth the smallest drop of water, yea, as much as the infinite creator, exceedeth the finite creature, between which, there can be imagined no degrees of comparison, so much doth the mercy, and bounty of God, exceed the bounty and mercy of mortal man. And therefore if upon repentance for our fault and earnest desire of reconciliation, we hope of mercy and wonted kindness, from our friend or neighbor, let us not make any question, nor once doubt of the Lord's love and favor towards us, though our sins be never so grievous, so we truly repent and unfeignedly turn unto him.

But here the afflicted conscience will be ready to say, that though there be no doubt of God's mercy, but that it is in itself most infinite, yet I doubt,

least I shall never be partaker thereof because of my manifold imperfections, and great unworthiness. To which I answer, that this distrusting of God's mercies, in respect of our unworthiness, proceedeth not from true humility, but from our natural pride, for if we had denied ourselves, and were nothing in our own eyes, if we had wholly removed our own righteousness, and did wholly, and only, rest on our savior Jesus Christ for our salvation, we would never hope the more in regard of our own worthiness, nor yet doubt in respect of our unworthiness. But it is our secret and inbred pride of heart, which makes us to doubt of God's mercy, unless we bring him a bride and deserve it at his hands, and to desire to make the Lord beholding unto us rather than we would be any whit beholding unto him. Which is nothing else but to disgrace God's mercies, that we may grace our own merits; and by laboring that we may be something in ourselves, we will not allow that God should be all in all and have the whole praise of our salvation. But we are to root out of our hearts this spiritual pride, and to plant therein true humility, and then we may assure ourselves though our sins be great, yet the mercies of God are far greater, though we be most beggarly in merits, yet we shall be made rich by Christ Jesus righteousness; for the poorer we are in desert, the richer God's mercy will appear in accepting us to his grace and favor; and where sin hath abounded, there grace will abound much more.

Seeing therefore God's mercies are infinite, and are not any whit restrained by our unworthiness, let us seek unto the Lord by unfeigned repentance, and assure ourselves of his love and favor in Jesus Christ; Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous his own imaginations, and return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he is very ready to forgive, as the Prophet exhorteth us. Isa. 55:7.

CHAP. XXXIII. OF THE SECOND ARGUMENT GROUNDED UPON GOD'S JUSTICE.

The second argument to assure those of the forgiveness of their sins, who unfeignedly repent and rely wholly upon Jesus Christ for their salvation, by a lively faith may be drawn from God's justice, for their sins are fully and sufficiently punished in Christ Jesus, and therefore it will not stand with the justice of God, to punish them again in any of those who have applied unto them the merits and sufferings of Christ by a lively faith; and as the Lord cannot in justice let sin go unpunished, and therefore hath punished the sins of all men either in Christ Jesus, or will thoroughly punish them in the parties themselves, so the same justice will not admit that the same sins should be twice punished, once in our Savior; and again in the faithful. Now that our savior Christ hath sufficiently suffered for all the sins of the faithful; it is evident by many places of the Scriptures. Isa. 53:4. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was broken for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. 2 Cor. 5:21, he hath made him to be sin for us which knew no sin, that we

should be made the righteousness of God in him. So the apostle, Heb. 9:26, saith that our savior Christ hath appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, 1 Pet. 2:24, saith that his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being delivered from sin should live in righteousness. Seeing then our sins were laid upon Christ and severely punished in him, God in his justice will not inflict anymore punishments upon the faithful but will pardon and forgive them, which pardon and forgiveness is a work of his justice as well as of his mercy, and therefore it is said, Rom. 3:25, that God hath set forth our Savior Christ to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness by the forgiveness of sins that are passed through the patience of God. 26, to show at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and a justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus, So it is said, 1 John 1:9, that, If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So that God's righteousness is declared in the forgiveness of sins, and he showeth his justice in justifying those who are of the faith of Jesus, and in pardoning all their offenses. And therefore if we will believe in our Savior Christ and bring forth the fruits of our faith in unfeigned repentance, we need not servilely to fear God's justice, nay we may be assured that because he is just, he will in Christ pardon and forgive our sins, and never inflict any punishment, which by them in ourselves we have justly deserved.

But that the equity hereof may be more manifest, we are to consider that our sins in the scriptures are called debts; for the Lord in our creation lent unto us the rich talents of his graces, to be employed for the setting forth of his glory, all which we wastefully misspent and brought ourselves into such extreme beggary, that we were altogether unable to pay to God the least part

of that which we owed, nor to render account unto our Lord and master how in any good fort we had bestowed his rich treasures; and therefore in his justice he sent his sergeant death to arrest us, and to cast us in the prison of utter darkness, there to remain in the custody of Satan our most malicious jailor, till we had fully discharged our debt and made full satisfaction to his justice; which when we were altogether unable to perform, it pleased our savior Christ in his infinite love towards us, to become our surety, and to take upon him the answering of our debt, which he fully discharged in as exact a manner and measure as the justice of God required, for whereas we are bound to perform perfect obedience to the law, he performed it for us; where as we for our disobedience were subject to the sentence of condemnation, the curse of the law, and death of body and soul, he was condemned for us, and bore the curse of the law, and died in our stead an ignominious death, whereas we deserved the anger of God, and to be kept prisoners in the grave under the dominion of death, he endured his fathers wrathful displeasure, and himself was for a time held captive of death in the grave, that so he might reconcile us to his father and set us at liberty. In a word whatsoever we owed Christ discharged, whatsoever we deserved he suffered, if not in the self-same punishments, (for he could not suffer the eternal torments of hell) yet in proportion, the dignity of his person giving value unto his temporary punishments, and making them of more value and worth then if all the world should have suffered the eternal torments of hell. Seeing therefore our Savior Christ hath fully discharged our debt and made full satisfaction to his fathers justice, God cannot in equity exact of us a second payment, no more than the creditors may justly require that his debt should be twice paid, once of the surety, and again of the principal. Neither now hath God's justice anything to show against us, for the law which was

the hand writing of ordinances which made against us, and as it were a bond whereby we were obliged and bound to God the father either to perform obedience, or to undergo the penalty; even everlasting death and condemnation, is now cancelled taken away; and fastened to the cross of Christ, as the Apostle affirmeth. Col. 2:14. So that now the Lord cannot in his justice put us in suite nor recover any debt of us, seeing our savior Christ our good and all sufficient surety hath undertaken the matter in our behalf discharged our debt to the utmost farthing, cancelled the handwriting or bond in which we were obliged, and by the law acquitted us of all payments which God's justice by virtue of the law might require of us. And therefore if we turn unto God by unfeigned repentance, and lay hold upon our savior Christ and his merits by a lively faith, we have our *quietus est* and general acquittance, which God himself hath pronounced from heaven in the presence of many witnesses, saying, This is my well-beloved son in whom I am well pleased, that is in whom I am delighted, and restfully satisfied, and well contented. Matth. 3:17.

CHAP. XXXIII. OF THE THIRD ARGUMENT GROUNDED UPON GOD'S TRUTH.

The third argument, whereby all those who repent and believe may be assured of the pardon and remission of their sins, is grounded upon God's truth; for the Lord is most true yea truth itself, and all his promises in Christ are yea, and amen. He is a faithful and true witness. And whatsoever he hath spoken shall be accomplished; so that though the heavens decay and wax old like a garment, though the sun loose his light, and the moon be turned into blood, though the earth tremble and quake, and the foundations of the mountains be moved and shake, yea though heaven and earth and all things therein contained perish and pass away, yet shall not one jot or title of his word fall to the ground unaccomplished. And therefore whatsoever the Lord hath promised in his word that he will most undoubtedly perform, for he is Jehovah, who having his essence and being in and from himself alone, giveth being unto all things else, especially to his word and promises. But he hath promised to all believers and repentant sinners, that he will in Christ Jesus pardon all their sins, and will receive them into his grace and favor, and therefore if we believe and rest upon our Savior Christ alone for

our salvation, truly repenting us of all our sins, we may assure ourselves that though our sins be never so many and grievous, yet the Lord will receive us to mercy, and pardon and forgive them.

But that the poor soul wounded with sin and groaning for weariness under this unsupportable burden, may have some ground whereupon to rest, when it is ready to faint, and some spiritual weapons whereby it may defend itself, and beat back the violence of Satan's temptations, I will make choice of some amongst many of the comfortable promises of the gospel, made unto all repentant sinners. First therefore let us consider, that when the Lord like a mighty monarch would set out his own style as it were in fair text letters, to be read of all his subjects, he thus proclaimeth it, *Exod. 34:6*. The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth. *7*. Reserving mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sinners. Where we may observe that the greatest part of his style consisteth of his mercy, graciousness, long suffering, goodness and readiness to forgive the iniquities of repentant sinners; as therefore we cannot offer a greater disgrace to a mighty prince, then to deny or call into question any part of his titles or regal style, so we cannot more dishonor the prince of princes, and sovereign king of heaven and earth, then by doubting of or denying any of these his titles which in his own style he hath attributed unto himself, seeing then he professeth and proclaimeth himself to be a gracious, merciful long suffering God, who is always ready to forgive repentant sinners when they implore his mercy, let us not offer God that disgrace to rob him of any part of his glorious titles, nor deprive our souls of that true comfort which the Lord by them in his infinite goodness hath granted unto us.

Moreover this is one main part of the covenant of grace, which the Lord professeth that he will make with his church and people, namely that he will forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more. Jer. 31:34, the counterpane of which covenant we have, Heb. 10:16,17, and therefore if we on our part perform the condition of this covenant between God and us, that is, if we truly and unfeignedly repent us of our sins, and rest and rely on Jesus Christ for our salvation by a lively faith, we may be assured that God on his part will not go one jot from his word, nor break the covenant which he hath made with us. For he hath not only made this his covenant with us by word of mouth, but he hath also committed it to writing, and not contenting himself herewith that there might be no place left to doubting, he hath confirmed and ratified his hand writing by adding thereunto his seals which are the Sacraments; as first the seal of Baptism, whereby he assureth us that being outwardly received into the body of the Church, and inwardly engrafted into the body of Christ, we have all our sins and filthy corruptions washed away with his precious blood, as the outward filth of the body is washed and purged by the washing of water. The virtue of which spiritual washing is not limited and restrained to the time past or present, as though it washed away only our original corruption, as some have foolishly imagined, but extendeth itself to the whole course of our lives; So that if falling into many and grievous sins we unfeignedly repent us of them, and apply Christ Jesus and his merits unto us by a true and lively faith, we may be assured of the pardon and forgiveness of them all, for this was promised sealed, and confirmed unto us in our Baptism. Secondly, the Lord hath further confirmed this his covenant by the Sacrament of his Supper, for he hath therefore instituted and ordained it, that thereby we should be put in mind of our savior Christ's death and sufferings, to the end that we may

gather more and more assurance, that our Savior gave his blessed body to be crucified and shed his most precious blood, that he might take away the curse of the law, and nail it unto his cross, free us from his fathers anger by bearing it himself, and by his death deliver us from everlasting death, and by his bloodshed wash away all our sins and corruptions. And hence it is that the Apostle calleth the wine in the Lord's supper, the New Testament in Christ's blood, because thereby the New Testament is sealed and confirmed unto us. And therefore whensoever we receive the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, the Lord doth thereby certainly assure us that our sins in Christ are pardoned and forgiven, and that he hath received us into his love and favor, yea the Lord hath not only ratified and confirmed his covenant with us, concerning the remission of our sins with his own hand writing and seals annexed, but also by his oath; For God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the stableness of his counsel, bound himself by an oath: that by two immutable things wherein it is impossible that God should lie, we might have strong consolation; as the Apostle speaketh, Heb. 6:17,18. And therefore unless we would conceive of God that he is untrue of his word, a covenant breaker, yea a perjured person (which were most horrible blasphemy once to imagine) we may undoubtedly assure ourselves that he will pardon and forgive us all our sins, be they in number never so innumerable nor so heinous in their nature and quality, if we will turn unto him by unfeigned repentance, and lay hold upon Christ Jesus our savior, by a true and lively faith.

But let us more particularly consider of some of the special promises of God, contained in the covenant of grace, that so we may gather unto ourselves more full consolation and firm assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of our sins. The Prophet David who had in himself often

experience of God's mercy telleth us, Psal. 32:10, that whosoever trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him. The Prophet Isaiah exhorteth the wicked to forsake his ways, and the unrighteous his own imaginations, and to return unto the Lord, assuring them that he will have mercy upon them, for he is very ready to forgive. Isaiah. 55:7. The Lord himself also doth make this gracious promise Ezek. 18:21. But (saith he) if the wicked will return from all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live and not die. 22. All his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be mentioned unto him, but in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. 23. Have I any desire that the wicked should die saith the Lord God? Or shall he not live if he return from his ways? Ver. 32. For I desire not the death of him that dieth saith the Lord God; cause therefore one another to return and live ye, and chap. 33, ver. 11. As I live saith the Lord I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. So, Mal. 3:17, the Lord professeth that he will spare his people and children, as a man spareth his own Son that serveth him. Now we know that a loving father is ready to forgive, and to receive into his grace and favor his repentant Son, though he hath very often offended him: and so surely the Lord who is infinitely rich in mercy, will much more forgive his children when they turn unto him; nay he is not only ready to receive them into his grace and favor, but it filleth him (as I may say) with exceeding joy and delight, when his repentant children forsake their sins and evil ways, and turn unto him by unfeigned repentance, as it appeareth most evidently in the parable of the prodigal Son, of the strayed sheep, and the lost groat. Moreover our Savior Christ had his name Jesus given him of God by the minister of an Angel, because he saveth his people from their sins: as appeareth Matth. 1:21, and he

therefore came into the world, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. As it is, Matt. 9:13, and he inviteth and calleth unto him all those who are weary and heavy laden with the burden of their sins, promising that he will ease them. Matt 11:28, yea so certain it is that they shall have remission of their sins and everlasting happiness who truly repent and believe, that our savior Christ saith they have it already as though they were in present possession. John. 5:24. Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but hath passed from death to life. So, chap. 6:47, and chap. 11:26, whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. The apostle Peter also plainly affirmeth that God would have no man to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance. Seeing therefore the Lord hath made so many gracious promises in the Gospel to all repentant and believing sinners, let us unfeignedly turn unto the Lord, and apply Christ and his merits unto us by a true and lively faith, and then we may assure ourselves that he will pardon and forgive us all our sins, and receive us graciously into his love and favor.

But against this which hath been alleged, Satan will be ready to object to the afflicted conscience, that these promises were made to the prophets, apostles and holy men of God, but not to such heinous and rebellious sinners who have most justly deserved that God should pour out upon them the vials of his wrath, and those fearful punishments threatened in the law, because of the innumerable number of their sins and the outrageousness of their wickedness; and therefore such have nothing to do with the sweet promises of the Gospel, but are to apply unto themselves the terrible threatening's denounced in the law against such grievous sinners.

For the answering of which temptation, we are to know that the Lord's promises made in the Gospel, are general, indefinite and universal, excluding none, who turn from their sins by unfeigned repentance, and believe in Christ Jesus, resting on him alone for their salvation. Neither is there any limitation or exception of this or that sin, for be they never so grievous and manifold, yet if we perform the condition of faith and repentance, the Lord will make good his promises unto us.

For the first, namely that the promises of the gospel are indefinite, and generally made to all who repent and believe it, shall manifestly appear if we consider the particulars. Isa. 55:1, the Lord calleth all unto him indefinitely, saying, Ho everyone who thirsteth come to the waters, and ye that have no silver come, buy and eat; Come I say buy wine and milk without silver and without money; so that though we have no worthiness and righteousness of our own, yet if we thirst after the mercy of God and righteousness of Christ, and come unto God by unfeigned repentance, and unto our savior by a lively faith, our thirst shall be satisfied and all our wants supplied. So, Ezek. 33:11, the Lord solemnly sweareth that he will not the death of a sinner, but that they turn from their wicked ways and live; where he speaketh not of this or that sinner, but of all without exception who turn unto him. Our savior Christ likewise maketh this indefinite promise, Mark 16:16, that whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved. And, John 3:14, he saith, that as Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lift up, 15. that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. So that as all who were stung of the fiery serpent were healed if they looked upon the brazen serpent, neither was there any exception or distinction between those who were deeply, or but a little pierced with the sting, for if they were stung they died,

if they used not the remedy ordained of God, though their wound were but small and shallow, but if they looked up to the brazen serpent according to God ordinance, they were cured though their wound were never so deadly and desperate, so those who look not upon Christ Jesus hanging on the cross with the eye of faith, are sure to fall into everlasting death and damnation, be their sins never so few, and on the other side, they who lay hold upon Christ and believe in him, are sure to be saved though their sins be never so many and grievous. So, in the 16th ver. it is said, that God so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And ver. 36. He that believeth in the son hath everlasting life. &c. So that here is no exception of sins, for the promises are made indefinitely to all that believe. In like manner our Savior hath promised John 6:37. That whosoever come unto him he will not cast them away. And ver. 40, he assureth us that it is the will of his father who sent him, that every man who believeth in him should have everlasting life. And the Apostle Peter, Acts 10:43, saith that unto our Savior Christ give all the prophets witness, that through his name all that believe in him shall have remission of sins. And the Apostle John likewise saith, 1 John. 2:1, that if any man sin we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world, that is for whosoever repent and believe of every kingdom, country, and nation. So that by all these places it is clear and evident that none are excluded from being partakers of God's merciful promises, but those who exclude themselves through their infidelity and unrepentancy.

Neither is there any sins so innumerable in multitude and so heinous and grievous, which will debar us from receiving the benefit of God's mercy and

Christ's merits so we repent and believe, as may appear also by plain testimony, Isa. 1:18, the Lord thus speaketh to the Jews whom he had described to be rebellious and most outrageously wicked. Come now (saith the Lord) and let us reason together, though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made white as snow: though they were red as scarlet, they shall be as wool. The Apostle Paul likewise witnesseth. Tit. 2:14, that our savior Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; And the Apostle John saith, that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and if we acknowledge our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So that here is no mention made of any sins which are excepted, or which exclude us from God's mercy and Christ's merits, so that we repent and believe; neither are the promises of the Gospel limited or restrained in respect of the number or grievousness of our sins, so we perform the condition of faith and repentance, for whosoever is heartily sorry for his sins past, and purposeth for the time to come to leave and forsake them, whosoever doth believe God's promises and resteth upon Christ Jesus alone, for his salvation by a true and lively faith, he may be certainly assured, that the Lord hath pardoned and forgiven all his sins, and received him into his grace and favor, though his sins be never so many and heinous; and on the other side whosoever continueth in his unrepentancy and infidelity, shall be condemned though his other sins be never so few and small; neither will all our other sins debar us of God's mercy, unless they be joined with unrepentancy and unbelief, for observe the condition of the promises, faith and repentance, and all the promises of the Gospel belong unto thee though thou were the greatest sinner that ever lived. For whereas it may be objected that the sin against the holy Ghost is unpardonable, we are to know it is not so much in regard of the heinousness

of the sin, as that because it is always severed and disjoined from faith and repentance, God denying these his graces to those who upon desperate malice have made a general Apostasy, and have persecuted the known truth. So that if it were possible for them to repent and believe, it were possible also that they should be saved.

Seeing therefore the promises of the Gospel are general excluding none, let not any man who is laden with the burden of his sins, exclude himself through his want of repentance and infidelity, for though their other sins are grievous, yet this is more heinous and damnable then all the rest. For whereas the Lord saith, that he will extend his mercy unto all who come unto him; if we reply, no he will not extend it unto me because I am a grievous sinner, what do we else but contradict the Lord, and give truth itself the lie; not giving credit to his word and promises. And therefore let us take heed that we do not so aggravate our sins as that in the mean time we extenuate and derogate from God's infallible truth.

CHAP. XXXV. OF OTHER ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE PERSONS IN THE TRINITY.

And these are the arguments which are drawn from the nature of God, whereby we may be assured of the remission of our sins; there may also other arguments be drawn from every person of the Trinity. First God the father hath created us of nothing, even according to his own image, and when we had defaced this his image in us, and made ourselves slaves to Satan, he so tenderly loved us his poor miserable creatures, that he spared not his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, but sent him into the world to take our nature upon him, that therein he might suffer all misery and affliction, and lastly the cursed and bitter death of the cross, that so he might satisfy his justice for our sins and perfect the work of our redemption. And this the Evangelist witnesseth, John 3:16. All which love the Lord shown unto us even for his own names sake, when we neither deserved it nor yet desired it, for we were bondslaves unto Satan, and well contented to live in his bondage, we were children of wrath and dead in our sins, yea we were enemies unto God and all goodness. And therefore if our merciful God so loved us whilst we were in love with our sins, at league with his enemy

Satan, and at enmity with him, that he sent his dearly beloved and only begotten Son to die for us, that by his death and bloodshed he might redeem and save us out of this miserable estate, how much more will he now receive us to mercy and pardon, and forgive our sins if we seek and sue for grace? If he loved us so dearly when we hated him, and sought all means of reconciliation when we were professed enemies against him, how much more will he receive us into his favor, when as we earnestly desire to be reconciled? If he so loved us that he sent his Son to die for our sins, how much more will he remit those sins for which he hath satisfied, when as with hearty sorrow we do bewail them, and earnestly desire to be freed from them? If he hath given his Son to mankind to this end, that he should save and redeem repentant sinners, why should any doubt of their redemption and salvation if they turn unto him by unfeigned repentance, and lay hold on Christ by a lively faith? And if he have given us his chief Jewel, his only begotten and best beloved Son and that when we were his enemies, what will he deny us when in Christ we are reconciled unto him and become his friends? And thus the Apostle reasoneth, Rom. 5:8. God (saith he) setteth out his love towards us seeing that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us. 9. Much more than being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.

Secondly we may draw most firm arguments to strengthen our assurance of the remission of our sins from the second person in trinity our Savior Jesus Christ; for first he is our Savior and redeemer, who therefore came into the world that he might save and redeem us out of the captivity of our spiritual enemies, sin, death, and the devil, and that he might satisfy his

fathers justice, obtain the remission of our sins, and reconcile us unto him. Though then our sins be many and grievous, this should not hinder us from coming to Christ by a true faith, and firm assurance, that in him we shall have the remission of our sins, and be received into God's love and favor, nay rather this should be a forcible argument to move us, to seek his help, when we find ourselves in a desperate case, destitute of all means whereby we may attain unto salvation, seeing our Savior Christ came into the world to save such as were lost in themselves, and enthralled in the miserable bondage of sin and Satan. And this is evident by the scriptures, Matth. 9:13, our Savior professeth that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And, Luke 19:10. The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. 1 Tim. 1:15. This is a true saying and by all means worthy to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The apostle also affirmeth that our Savior Christ hath quickened us who were dead in our sins and trespasses. Eph. 2:1,5. And our savior Christ, Matth. 11:28, doth not only call unto him small sinners, but those who are heavy laden with an intolerable weight or sin, promising that he will ease them.

Seeing therefore he came into the world to save and redeem grievous and heinous sinners, and to give life unto those who were even stark dead in their sins, seeing also he calleth and inviteth such unto him as are heavily laden with an intolerable weight of wickedness, and promiseth to ease them; let us not excuse ourselves from coming because our sins are heinous and grievous, but therefore let us the rather go unto Christ because we had need of his help. If a man being loaded with a weighty burden, should refuse the help of a friend, both able and willing to ease him because his burden is very heavy, who would not laugh at such ridiculous folly, for

therefore he should more earnestly desire, and more thankfully accept of his friends offered courtesy, because himself is tired, pressed down, and altogether unable to bear this intolerable weight: but such and greater folly do they commit, who being pinched and oppressed with the heavy burden of their sins, do through their infidelity refuse the help of Christ, offering himself to release and ease them under this pretense, because their burden is over heavy; for because to them it is intolerable, therefore they should rather go unto Christ and earnestly desire to be eased and released, seeing he is not only able, for his power is omnipotent, but also most willing, for he hath most graciously promised and freely offered his help.

Moreover we need not to doubt of the sufficiency of the price which our Savior hath paid for our redemption, for it is of infinite value and of more virtue and power to justify and save, then all the sins of the world to condemn and destroy; so that though we were the greatest sinners that ever lived, yea though the weight of all sin which ever in the world hath been committed did lie upon us, yet the merits of Christ and the price which he paid for our redemption do far exceed them, and if we come unto him by a lively faith resting upon him alone for our salvation, he will surely ease us of this intolerable burden. And therefore though the grievousness of our sins should increase our repentance, yet they should not diminish our faith and assurance of pardon and forgiveness, for though our debt were never so great, our surety Christ Jesus hath paid it to the uttermost farthing, though our sins are never so many and grievous our Savior hath borne them all upon the cross in his own body and fully satisfying God's justice for them, hath freed and delivered us from this heavy burden. Though we were never so deeply enthralled in the bondage of our spiritual enemies, yet our almighty redeemer hath freed us out of captivity and hath paid a sufficient

price for our ransom; and though we had no right or interest in the kingdom of heaven, yet our savior hath dearly purchased it for us by his precious death and bloodshed, and therefore seeing in Christ we have fully satisfied God's justice, and fully merited the pardon of our sins, seeing in him we have not only paid our debt, but also given a sufficient price for the purchasing of eternal happiness, we need not to make any doubt of the pardon of our sins, and of possessing of our heavenly inheritance, for the Lord cannot in justice hold that from us which of right appertaineth unto us; nay we may assure ourselves that though he could yet he would not; for who can imagine that the Lord who of his bounteous liberality giveth unto us more then we can deserve or desire, will keep from us that which of right appertaineth to us? That he who for his own names sake without any respect of our works or worthiness freely multiplieth his benefits upon us, should withhold our rightful inheritance in his heavenly kingdom from us, which our savior Christ hath purchased for us by his precious death and bloodshed? And therefore seeing we have undoubted right to the pardon of our sins because Christ Jesus hath satisfied for them, and just title to our heavenly inheritance which our Savior hath purchased for us with so dear and all-sufficient a price, let us in the name of Christ go boldly unto the throne of grace, desiring a general acquittance of that debt which is already paid, nay let us not fear to approach the throne of God's severe justice, and to claim our heavenly inheritance which Christ hath so dearly purchased.

Furthermore we are to consider that our savior and redeemer is so gracious and bountiful, so rich in mercy, and so full of all power virtue and perfection, that our sins should not discourage us from coming unto him, for the more miserable wretched and sinful we are, the more fit subjects we are, whereupon he may exercise and show the infinite riches of bounty,

mercy, virtue and all sufficiency. If we were but a little soiled with sin, it were not so great a matter to make us clean but when we are most filthily defiled, and our pollution is ingrained in us as it were with a scarlet die; when our unclean corruption sticks as fast to our souls, as the Ethiopian blackness to their skins, then is the virtue of the excellent laver of Christ's blood sufficiently manifested, when as he purgeth us and maketh us clean, washing away all our filthy corruptions, and making our scarlet sins as white as snow. Our savior Christ is our spiritual physician who can as easily cure desperate diseases even the remediless consumption, the dead apoplexy and the filthy leprosy of the soul, as some small malady, or little faintness? Neither is he only able but also as willing to undertake such desperate cures as the least infirmities, because his skill will be the more manifest and his praise the more extolled, for the more desperate the disease is, the more it argueth his cunning who helpeth it, and the more commendations he shall receive who effecteth such a cure. And therefore though our diseases are most dangerous and desperate, yet let us resort to this our heavenly physician, for the more desperate the cure is, the more fit occasion shall he have of showing his never failing skill, and of advancing his immortal praise. He is our heavenly surgeon, even the good Samaritan which poureth the sovereign oil of his grace, and the precious balm of his blood into our wounded souls, and therefore the more grisly our wounds are, the more praise and glory he getteth in curing them, the more is the virtue of the sovereign salve of his blood manifested to all the world by healing of them.

Though therefore our souls are most filthy and polluted, yet if we come to Christ he will surely wash and purge us, for to this purpose he suffered his precious water and blood to issue out of his side, that thereby as with a

living and clear stream issuing from a most pure fountain, he might cleanse us from all our sins, and wash away all our filthy corruptions, though we are most desperately sick, let us come unto our spiritual physician, for he can cure the most remediless diseases as perfectly and as speedily, as the most small infirmity and faint weakness: though our souls are wounded even to the death, with the deep piercing and deadly empoisoning sting of sin, yet let us seek help of this our heavenly surgeon, who with the precious balm of his blood, can as easily heal the most dangerous wounds, as small scratches or little cuts. Neither is he more able then willing, for hereby his virtue and power, his love of his bounty, is the more manifested to his endless and immortal praise.

But if we think our souls so filthy that he cannot purge them, what do we else but derogate from the virtue of his blood, if we will not go to this heavenly Physician to crave his help, because our sickness is grievous and dangerous, what do we else but call his skill into question? If we will not show our wounds because they are grisly, what do we else but notably detract from the cunning of this our spiritual surgeon, and doubt of the virtue and efficacy of the precious balm of his blood: Whereas on the other side if we see our polluted filthiness, and yet go unto Christ that we may be washed and cleansed, we acknowledge the virtue and excellency of the spiritual laver of his blood? If we plainly discern that our sickness is desperate and yet go to our souls Physician not doubting of recovery, we thereby extol our Physicians skill, if our wounds be in themselves grisly and incurable, and yet we resort to our heavenly Surgeon to be healed of them, we cannot more commend his all sufficient cunning. And therefore seeing it is in these our extremities to our Savior Christ most honorable and acceptable, and to ourselves most profitable and full of comfort, if we come

unto Christ not doubting of his help, let us not pretend excuses either because we are unfit, unworthy, or in a desperate state, for by thus aggravating our own remediless misery we extenuate and call into question God's mercy and Christ's all-sufficiency, we spoil him of his honor and glory, and our own souls of all joy and consolation.

Secondly, we may gather firm assurance of the pardon of our sins from the offices of Christ, for first he is our prophet who hath revealed unto us all the will and counsel of his father, he hath declared unto us the mystery of our redemption and the means of our salvation, how we may attain unto the remission of our sins, and how we may come out of that miserable and wretched estate, in which we are by nature, and attain unto eternal happiness, he it is who by the bright beams of his word doth illuminate our understandings, and by the operation of his holy spirit doth cause the seals of ignorance to fall from our eyes, Giving knowledge of salvation to his people by remission of sins. He is that glorious and bright shining day star, which from a high hath visited us, to give light unto them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. If therefore we will walk in the way which he showeth us, and use those means which he revealeth unto us in his Gospel, namely turn unto God by unfeigned repentance, and believe in him by a lively faith, we shall not need to fear our sins though never so grievous and manifold, for this our heavenly Prophet hath truly revealed unto us a plain way how we may come out of our sins and be reconciled unto God, how we may be adorned with the glorious robe of his righteousness and be made partakers of all his merits; how we may become of the children of wrath and firebrands of hell, the children of God, and heirs of heaven. And therefore let us walk in this

way and assure ourselves that we shall come to the journey end of our desires, for truth itself is our guide so that we need not to doubt of the way.

Secondly our savior Christ is our high priest, who hath offered up unto his father an all-sufficient sacrifice and full satisfaction for our sins, whereby God's justice is fully satisfied and his wrath appeased, who also sitting at the right hand of his father, continually maketh intercession for us. The sacrifice which this our high priest offered was himself, as the apostle testifieth, Heb. 9:26, even his body to be crucified, and his blood to be shed for the putting away of our sins? The which oblation was offered on the altar of his deity which sanctified the sacrifice, and gave unto it such sufficiency and value, that it was a perfect price and full satisfaction for the sins of all the faithful, as the apostle witnesseth. 1 John. 2:2. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Seeing therefore this our high priest hath given himself for us, even his body to be crucified, and his blood to be shed to this end, that it might be a propitiatory sacrifice and full satisfaction for our sins, and seeing he was once offered to take away the sins of many, as the Apostle speaketh, Heb. 9:28, we need not doubt of the remission of our sins if we come unto him by a lively faith, for to this end he hath shed his blood, that he thereby might offer unto God a full satisfaction for our sins and purge away all our wickedness, and therefore if he should not attain unto his end, that is if he should not satisfy God's justice and appease his wrath, by purging and taking away all our sins, his precious blood should be shed in vain.

Moreover he is our mediator and intercessor, who continually sitteth at the right hand of his father making intercession for us, by showing and pleading his own merits righteousness and obedience whereby he pacifieth his fathers displeasure, and worketh us into his love and favor. And this the

apostle witnesseth. Rom. 8:34. It is Christ which is dead yea or rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and maketh request for us. So also Heb. 9:24, it is said that our high priest Jesus Christ is entered into heaven, to appear in the sight of God for us. And the Apostle John saith, 1 John. 2:1. If any man sin we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the just, and he is the propitiation for our sins. Neither need we to doubt of his effectual dealing for us, for if he loved us so dearly that he spared not to give his precious life for us, there is no question but he will be exceeding earnest in making request for us, neither will he be sparing in words who hath not spared his dearest blood. And therefore seeing our high priest doth continually make intercession for us, we need not to doubt but that he will obtain his suite, and procure the pardon of our sins, and his fathers love and favor. Especially considering that he entreateth nothing which he hath not deserved and by his death purchased for us, and consequently when like an advocate he pleadeth his full payment of our debt, and allegeth his all sufficient merits and sufferings, God cannot in his justice but grant his most lawful request; considering also that he maketh his suite not to a stranger or some common friend who will either prevent his suite with a strange and stern countenance, or deny it with some vain excuse, but unto his most gracious and dearly loving father who willingly hearkeneth unto, and readily granteth all his requests. And this our Savior himself testifieth, John. 11:41, father (saith he) I thank thee because thou hast heard me. 42. But I know thou hearest me always &c. And therefore considering Christ's merit in deserving, and God's mercy in granting, Christ's importunity in asking, and his fathers facility in yielding; seeing he that entreateth for us loved us so entirely that he died for us, and will undoubtedly be most earnest in soliciting our suite, and he who is entreated

so heartily affecteth us that he spared not to give unto us his only begotten and dearly beloved son, that by his death he might purchase for us everlasting life, let us shake of all doubting and go boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. As the Apostle exhorteth us, Heb. 4:16. For our good high priest is able perfectly to save them who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, as it is, Heb. 7:25.

Thirdly as our Savior Christ is our prophet and priest so likewise he is our king, and this also may assure us of the pardon and remission of our sins if we will come unto him, for he who is our advocate is also our sovereign, he that is our mediator is our judge, he that entreateth for us, hath power in his hands both to obtain and grant his own suite, he that gave his life a ransom for our sins hath all power in heaven and earth committed unto him, so as he is able to remit all our sins and to blot out all our iniquities, for (now) the father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son. As himself testifieth John. 5:22, and even when he was upon the earth he exercised this authority, as appeareth Matth. 9:2, whereas he saith to the sick of the palsy. Son be of good comfort thy sins are forgiven thee. For which being challenged he defendeth his regal privileges, affirming ver. 6, that the son of man hath authority even on earth to forgive sins. Now what can be more comfortable unto any soul wounded with sin then the consideration of this undoubted truth. For seeing our Savior who so tenderly loved us, that he spared not to give his own most precious blood for the price of our redemption and now he hath all-sufficient power in his own hands to save and deliver us out of the hands of all our enemies, who can imagine that he will suffer us to be lost whom he hath so dearly bought? Seeing he gave his life to purchase for us the remission of our sins, who can

doubt that having thus dearly purchased it he will not bestow it and so suffer his blood to be spilled in vain, seeing he was content for our sakes to endure all misery, mocking's, reviling's, whipping, crucifying death itself, and the anger of his father more bitter then death, to this end that by all these his sufferings, he might procure the remission of our sins and everlasting life, and that when we were rebellious traitors who did flee away from him; who can make any question, but that now he will bestow these inestimable benefits which he hath of purpose bought for us, they being in his own power and custody, if like humble servants and penitent children we turn unto him and implore his grace? If a malefactor had a dear friend who loved him so entirely, that he would not spare to give his whole substance to procure his pardon, would this miserable offender fear death or condemnation, if he were assured that now his pardon were in his friends hand, and that the matter were by his Prince referred to him, as unto a supreme judge absolutely to determine what he will? But our Savior hath not given goods or gold, or any corruptible thing, but even his own most precious body to be crucified, and his blood to be shed, that by this inestimable price he might purchase our pardon of God our sovereign king, now he hath the law in his own hands, and is appointed of God for our supreme Judge to acquit us at his own pleasure, who therefore can make any doubt of grace and pardon, seeing his judge is his Savior who hath loved him so dearly, that to this end he hath shed his precious blood, that he might procure for him the remission of his sins and everlasting happiness, and therefore if he would not stick to buy it at so high a rate, how much more having bought it only for this purpose will he now bestow it if we seek unto him, and earnestly desire to be partakers of his grace and mercy.

Moreover as this our most gracious king and loving Savior hath sufficient power to pardon all our sins, and in respect of his inestimable love, is most certainly willing to blot out all our wickedness, if we repent and come unto him, so also he hath bound himself hereunto by most free and faithful promises. Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will ease you. John 3:36. He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life. And John 6:37. He hath assuredly promised, that whosoever cometh unto him he will not cast away. These and many such like gracious promises he hath made, of the performance whereof we need not to doubt, especially considering that he gave continual experience in his practice here on earth, of his love, goodness, mercy and truth, for whoever came unto him with any lawful suite and received a repulse? Whoever entreated his help, and was abandoned? Whoever asked anything of him which was profitable for him to receive and did not obtain his suite? Whatsoever sick came unto him received their health, whatsoever lame desired his help received their limbs, whatsoever blind resorted unto him received their sight, whatsoever sinner implored the forgiveness of his sins received full remission and pardon. Yea so gracious merciful and loving was this our king and redeemer, that he prevented his poor miserable subjects with his grace, and sought all occasions of extending his love and mercy towards them, giving unto them more then they desired; the sick of the palsy coming unto him not only was cured of his disease, but also received the remission of his sins. Matth. 9. Zacchaeus desired but to see his face, and he offereth unto him his company and therewith eternal salvation. Luke. 19. The woman of Samaria requested but elemental water, and he offereth unto her the water of life. John. 4. The people followed him to be fed by miracle with corporal food, and Christ offereth unto them the bread of life. John. 6.

The poor blind man desired that he might be by Christ restored to his bodily sight, and Christ also illuminates the eyes of his soul, so that as with his bodily eyes he discerned him to be a man so by the eye of faith he knew him to be his redeemer and Savior. By all which it clearly appeareth that there was never any more ready to ask then Christ to give, nay such was his goodness and love, that he was always more ready to grant then they to entreat, and to grant more than they ever desired. Now we must not think that our Savior is altered in nature, or that (as it is, usual amongst men) honors have changed manners, for he is God immutable in goodness, and without change or shadow of change, as it is, Jam. 1:17, and therefore we may assure ourselves if we turn from our sins by true repentance, and come unto him by a lively faith, we shall be received to grace and mercy, and receive the pardon of our sins be they never so heinous and innumerable.

Lastly, the union and communion which is between Christ and all the faithful, may give unto them full assurance of the pardon and remission of all their sins; for first they are coupled unto him in spiritual matrimony, and he becometh the Bridegroom, they the spouse, he the husband, they the wife, now we know that in law there will no action of debt lie against the wife whilst the husband liveth, because she is under covert barn, and therefore her husband who hath taken upon him to maintain and defend her, must answer and follow all her suites, and his goods are liable for the paying of her debts. And thus it is also between Christ the husband and the Church his spouse being married unto her, he hath taken her under his charge and protection, and hath undertaken to answer all suites and to satisfy all her debts, nay he hath discharged them already, and therefore we need not to fear any action which Satan, the Law or God's justice may lay against us, for our husband Jesus Christ hath taken upon him to follow all

our suites, and to satisfy all our debts, so that if either the Law, God's justice, or our enemy Satan do commence any suits against us, we are not now to take upon us the answering of them in our own persons, but we are to send them to our husband Jesus Christ, who hath taken our causes in hand and will give unto them a sufficient answer.

Secondly the faithful are united unto Christ in a more near union, for he is their head and they his members, as appeareth Eph. 5:23,30, he is the true vine and we the branches, as himself speaketh, John 15:1, he is the fruitful Olive tree, we the sciences which are grafted into him, as it is, Rom. 11, he is the foundation, we the building, as the apostle affirmeth, Eph. 2:20,21, by reason of which near union, it cometh to pass that those things which appertain unto Christ belong unto us, and ours unto him, for as the head deriveth sense and motion unto the members; and as the Olive tree and vine do communicate their virtue, farness, and sap unto their branches and sciences, by which they live and bring forth fruit, and as the foundation doth sustain and uphold all the building; so doth our Savior Christ our head, root, and foundation communicate unto us his members and branches, the virtue of his merits and the juice and sap of his precious blood, whereby we are quickened and revived who were dead in trespasses, our sins washed away and purged and we made fruitful in all righteousness and holiness, as in that his imputed righteousness whereby we are justified before God, and that inherent righteousness begun in us by his holy spirit, whereby we are justified before men. And as he hath bestowed and communicated unto us his righteousness, death and obedience, so hath he taken upon him from us all our sins original and actual, of commission and omission, and in his own person hath suffered all that punishment, which we by them had deserved, so as now he having taken upon him our sins, and endued us with his

righteousness, merit, and obedience, we need not to fear the exact rigor of God's justice, for by him and in him we are without sin, pure and undefiled, and perfectly righteous in God's sight. Neither shall we need to fear the violence of all our spiritual enemies, for our head Jesus Christ is God almighty, and therefore none shall be able to pluck us out of his hands against his will, and we are as dear unto him as the members of his body, and therefore look how loath any careful head would be to have any of the members pulled from it by force and violence, so loath and unwilling will our Savior and head be, to have any of his members plucked from him. And therefore seeing he wanteth neither will nor power to defend us, we need not fear the raging malice and cunning violence of any of our spiritual enemies, sin, the Devil, the world and the flesh, for our head is all-sufficient, and also most willing to save and defend us, from all their force and malice.

And so much concerning the reasons drawn from the second person, whereby every repenting and believing sinner may be assured of the pardon and remission of all his sins. Now we are to speak of those which may be drawn from the third person the holy spirit. First therefore we are to know that though our sins be manifold, and our corruptions exceeding filthy, yet this holy spirit will sanctify and purge us from all our pollution; so that though in times past we were most heinous sinners, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, railers, extortioners, yet now we are washed, now we are sanctified now we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. As the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 6:11, he is that heavenly fire which consumeth and purgeth us from all the dross of our corruptions, he is that divine water which washeth away all our filthy pollution, it is he

who doth regenerate and beget us a new who were dead in our sins, and whosoever are thus regenerated shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

Secondly, we may hereby be assured of the remission of our sins, in that the spirit of God joineth with us in our suite and together with us, maketh request unto God in our behalf, and whereas we are ignorant and know not how to pray as we ought, the Spirit itself helpeth our infirmities and maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed. But God who searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the meaning of the spirit: for he maketh request for the Saints according to the will of God. As the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 8:26,27, who therefore can doubt of obtaining his suite, even the remission of his sins and reconciliation with God, seeing his suite is framed and indicted by God's spirit, and consequently is most wise, just, and as the Apostle saith according to the will of God? Yea it is solicited and followed with great earnestness by the same spirit; and therefore our suite being wise, just, and framed by the spirit according to the will of God, and by the same spirit in most earnest manner, solicited and furthered, there is no question but we shall obtain it.

CHAP. XXXVI. OTHER REASONS TO PERSUADE THE WEAK CHRISTIAN OF THE REMISSION OF HIS SINS.

And these are the reasons which may be drawn from every of the persons of the Trinity, to assure us of the remission of our sins; to which we may add diverse others. First, the believing of the remission of our sins in an article of our Creed, which we do daily confess and profess, which is not left unto our choice to believe or not to believe, but as we confess it with the mouth, so we are bound to believe it with the heart, if we would be reckoned in the number of Christians. Why then should we doubt of that which we are bound to perform; and if we do not we grievously sin through infidelity, which is more dangerous and damnable then all our other sins whatsoever? And therefore though there were no other reason to move us, though our heinous and manifold sins should make it seem unto us never so incredible, yet let us set aside all impediments and break through the violence of all objections, and believe in obedience to God's commandments, and because it is our duty, the performance whereof is very acceptable unto God, and the neglect whereof is a sin most dangerous and damnable. Which that we may perform, let us carefully observe the

condition of the covenant of grace, that is, let us rest and rely upon Christ Jesus alone for our salvation by a lively faith, and turn unto God by unfeigned repentance, and then there is no place left to doubting of that which in duty we are bound to believe.

Secondly the afflicted soul laboring under sin may receive no small assurance by the testimony of God's faithful ministers; for the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed unto them, and they have power given them of God here on earth to bind and loose; not as though they could by their own authority and in their own name give pardon of sins to whom they list (as the papists teach and practice, for this is proper and peculiar unto God alone, as even the Pharisees well knew whereof it was, that seeing our Savior Christ take upon him to forgive sins whom they imagined to be a mere man, they affirmed that he blasphemed. For who (say they can forgive sin but God only) but they have authority given them of God upon due examination and trial of their faith by the fruits thereof unfeigned repentance, certainly to declare and pronounce unto them that their sins are forgiven. Whosoever therefore have this testimony of God's faithful ministers who are well acquainted with their estates given unto them, they may assure themselves that it is undoubtedly true and most certain; for who is it that dare oppose himself and contradict the testimony of God's spirit in the mouth of so many his faithful ambassadors? Who dare be so presumptuous as to take upon him the discerning of his state better than the ministers of God, who being appointed of God to this function are endued with a great measure of his spirit, whereby they are enabled to discern and judge of men's estates better then they themselves? For he that is spiritual discerneth all things, and is made acquainted with the mind of Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor 2:15,16. And therefore if diverse of God's faithful

ministers with one consent pronounce unto any penitent sinner the remission of their sins, and assure them after the examination of their estate that they are in the love and favor of God, it should be unto them ten thousand times more forcible an argument to persuade them and to confirm their faith in the assurance of God's love, then the contrary testimony of Satan or their timorous unbelieving flesh to move them to doubting thereof, if our bodies be sick we commit ourselves to the skill and care of the physician, and good reason, because we know he is better able to discern of our estate then we ourselves, and believing his judgment to be good we suffer him to apply such remedies as he thinketh most fit; why then should we not commit the discerning of our estate to the physician of the soul no less careful, and in this respect much more skillful? For the others rules in some patients may fail him, but the grounds whereupon the spiritual physician buildeth, are most infallible being the undoubted truth of God. Why should we not rather believe their often approved judgment then our own timorous phantasies, or Satan's testimony who is our malicious enemy?

Thirdly the afflicted soul may gather assurance of the remission of sins from the contrary testimony of the devil. For when there is any suggestion cast into our minds which is repugnant to the word of God and the testimony of God's spirit in the hearts of the faithful, we may assure ourselves that it is the speech of Satan or of our corrupt flesh the messenger of Satan both which come to one end; but those motives and suggestions, that God will not receive us to mercy, that our sins are unpardonable, that we are reprobates and castaways, that now it is too late to turn unto God, proceed not from God's spirit, for they are quite contrary to that which the scriptures teach us, namely that the mercies of God are infinite, and he always ready to receive us to grace when we turn unto him; that if we will

earnestly repent and in the mediation of Christ sue for mercy, he will make our scarlet sins as white as snow, that it is never too late to turn unto God, for if we repent he hath promised to remit our sins, and to receive us into his favor. Neither are we to imagine that the testimony of God's spirit in our consciences is contrary to the testimony of the same spirit in the holy scriptures, and therefore seeing these suggestions are flatly repugnant to the word of God and testimony of the spirit, we are to assure ourselves that they are the temptations of Satan, either immediately suggested by himself or mediately by his messenger our corrupt flesh.

Seeing then these suggestions come from Satan who is our malicious enemy, and a liar from the beginning yea the father of lies we are not to believe them, nay rather we may gather certain assurance that the contrary is true; for he speaketh only lies, or if at any time he speak the truth it is to this end that he may deceive us. For example he telleth the secure carnal man that he is in the state of grace, and highly in God's favor, but unto the humbled sinner he saith, that he is a reprobate and shall most certainly be damned; unto the worldly secure man he saith that God is most merciful, then the which nothing can be more true, but doth not speak this in his conscience, because he would have him to taste thereof but to lull him a sleep with this sweet siren song to his eternal perdition. On the other side when he hath to deal with the bruised heart and contrite spirit, he telleth him of nothing but of God's exact justice, to the end that he may plunge him into utter desperation: In a word whatsoever he speaketh in the conscience of man, it is either false in itself or if true in *thesi*, yet false in *hypothesi*, if true in the general, yet false in the particular application. As what can be more true than that God is just? And what more false then that he will exercise his justice in punishing repentant and humbled sinners? What can be more true

than that God is most merciful? And what more false then that he will show this his mercy is saving those who live and die in their sins without repentance? And yet it is most usual with Satan to affirm both the one and the other, lying in both because he doth misapply them. And therefore seeing Satan doth never speak the truth or else doth falsely apply it in respect of our estate, let us acquaint ourselves with his false language; and so by hearing his lies we may be the better assured of the truth; for example, when he telleth us that our sins are unpardonable, that it is now too late to turn unto the Lord, that we are reprobates and damned wretches, we knowing that our malicious enemy by his lies doth continually seek our destruction, are contrariwise to assure ourselves that God's mercy and Christ's merits far exceed our sins, that now is the acceptable time and day of salvation, if we will turn unto God and hearing his voice not harden our hearts, that we are in the state of salvation, the vessels of mercy, and beloved children of God.

Lastly those who are heavy laden with the burden of their sins, may gather unto themselves assurance of the forgiveness of them, by the consideration of God's mercy extended unto other repentant sinners; for there was never any from the beginning of the world to this day, were their sins never so heinous or innumerable who have not been received to mercy, and pardoned of our gracious God whensoever they did unfeignedly turn unto him. And this may appear whether we consider whole cities or nations, or else particular men. Of the first we have a notable example in the Israelites which lived in the time of the judges, who though they did many times negligently forget the great mercies and inestimable benefits of God shown to their forefathers, of which also themselves had been partakers, though they forsook the Lord not once or twice but very often, even then

when he most bound them unto him with multiplying upon them the benefits of peace and plenty, and though they let the rains loose unto all wickedness, yea (which was most abominable and odious in the sight of God,) though they worshiped and served Baal and Aseroth and other idols of the cursed nations, for which horrible idolatry God had cast out the nations before them; yet whensoever they turned unto the Lord he pardoned their sins, receiving them into his former love and favor, and delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies.

So likewise in the time of the prophet Isaiah, to what a notorious height of wickedness were the same people grown as the Lord by his prophet doth decipher and describe them in the first chapter of that prophecy. In the 2nd ver. he calleth heaven and earth to witness their horrible rebellion, in the 3rd ver. he showeth that their unthankfulness for all his mercies, far exceeded the ingratitude of brute beasts, in the 4th ver. he exclaimeth out against them calling them a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of the wicked corrupt children who had forsaken the Lord, and provoked the holy one of Israel to anger. In the 5th and 6th verses he showeth their hardness of heart and obstinacy in their rebellion which was so great that though the Lord sent afflictions and chastisements upon them, yet they were no whit reformed but waxed worse and worse, and that this was not the case of some few but of all the whole body of the people, for the whole head was sick and the whole heart was heavy. And that from the soul of the foot to the crown of the head there was nothing sound therein, but wounds, and swellings, and sores full of corruption, the cure whereof they utterly neglected. In the 10th ver. he matcheth the sins of both prince and people, with those crying sins and outrageous wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah which brought down from heaven fire and brimstone to consume them. In

the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, vers. he complaineth of their filthy hypocrisy in God's outward worship joined with the utter neglect of true godliness and his spiritual service, which caused the Lord to detest all their sacrifices, sabbaths, and new moons. So that there could not be imagined greater wickedness in any people, respecting those notable means which the Lord continually granted unto them above all other nations for their own conversion; and therefore who would not have thought their state to be most desperate, who would not have looked daily that the Lord should have consumed them with fire and brimstone, or have caused the earth to have swallowed them up alive as it did Corah and his associates? But behold the infinite mercies of our gracious God, even when they wallowed in this filthy sink of all impiety the Lord calleth them to repentance, and when as they had forsaken him and fled from him, desiring nothing less than to make or meddle with him, the Lord calleth unto them, and he in whose power it was every minute utterly to destroy them, first of all desireth a parley, he who might well abhor to vouchsafe them his presence, earnestly desireth conference with them, saying. ver. 18. Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made as white as snow; though they were red like scarlet, they shall be as wool.

In like manner in the time of our savior Christ the same Jews most wickedly rebelled against the Lord; for when the Lord in his rich mercy sent the promised Messias, to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, they would not receive him, nay they continually afflicted and persecuted him, they mocked and reviled him, they hailed him before the judgment seat, and caused him to be condemned who came to justify and acquit them; they buffeted and whipped him, and preferred a wicked murderer before

him, who preferred their salvation before his own life, lastly in most ignominious sort they crucified and killed him. After all which outrageous wickedness offered against the Lord of life, they continued in their hardness of heart and impenitency, never acknowledging their fault not desiring pardon, nay rather as they had persecuted the head our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so when they could offer no more wrong unto him in his own person, they were ready to satisfy and glut their malicious rage in persecuting his poor members. Now what more hellish impiety was ever committed? What more outrageous sin was ever heard of; who would ever have imagined that there was any hope of pardon for such rebellious bloody wretches? But O the infinite and bottomless depth of God's mercy, whilst their wickedness was fresh in memory, and their hands still imbrued in the guiltless blood of this innocent Lamb: when as they continued in their course, and ran headlong forward in their wickedness without any sense of sin or desire of pardon; the Lord sent his apostles unto them to bring them to repentance, and to assure them that their sins were pardoned. Seeing therefore these obtained the remission of their sins, who needs to doubt of pardon who earnestly desires it? For did the Lord graciously offer forgiveness to such rebellious wretches, and will he not grant it to less offenders if they desire it? Did he offer them mercy before they sought it, and will he deny mercy unto any who earnestly seek and sue for it? Doth he seek to draw men to repentance and to turn unto him; and will he not receive them when they do repent? Was he so exceeding merciful in times past, and shall we now think his arm shortened or his mercy abated? Nay assuredly he is immutable ever like himself one and the same most gracious, most merciful, and full of all goodness and compassion, towards all them that come unto him. And therefore if we turn from our sins by

unfeigned repentance, we may assure ourselves though they be never so many and grievous they shall be pardoned, and we received into God's love and favor.

To these examples of whole multitudes, we may add the examples of particular sinners, who have been received to mercy and obtained pardon, though their sins have been many and grievous, as Matthew, Zacchaeus, Levi, who were sinful Publicans that got their livings by pilling and polling, oppression and extortion, men so notoriously wicked, that Publicans and sinners are joined together, as though they were sinners by profession, and therefore as Synonima or diverse words of one signification they interpret one another. And yet such was the riches of God's mercy, that even these professed sinners were converted, and received remission of all their outrageous wickedness. The like may be said of Mary Magdalene who though she had been a woman of lewd behavior and loose life, though she were possessed of many devils, and commonly noted for an infamous and notorious sinner, yet upon her true repentance obtained the remission of her sins: and whilst she washed the feet of our savior Christ with her tears, he purged and cleansed her body and soul from the filthy leprosy of sin with his own most precious blood, whilst she wiped them with the hairs of her head, he beautified and adorned her with the rich robe of his righteousness. Yea she was received into a high degree of favor with our savior Christ, so as she had in some things the preeminence before his chief Apostles, for after Christ's rising again he first vouchsafed her his presence, and used her as his messenger to certify the rest of his resurrection. So likewise the Apostle Paul before his calling was not only no lover but a bitter and fierce persecutor of the truth, and of all the professors thereof, imprisoning, stoning, and cruelly murdering the Saints of God; but behold and admire the

wonderful mercy of God, even whilst his imbrued hands, were yet red with the blood of God's faithful children, and whilst his heart was so full of burning rage, that he breathed out still threatening's and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, it pleased God wonderfully to convert him, to assure him of the remission of all these his horrible sins, and to make him of a bloody persecutor, a most excellent preacher of his Gospel, and of a ravenous devouring wolf, a most vigilant and painful shepherd. To these we might add the example of the thief, who though he had spent his whole life wickedly and profanely, yet was converted at the hour of death and receiving the pardon of his sins, was presently assured of everlasting happiness. But I shall not need to heap up many particulars, only I cannot pass that notable example of Manasseh one of the most outrageous sinners and profanest wretch that ever lived, as the holy Ghost hath described him in the 21st chap, of the 2nd book of the Kings. For there he affirmeth of him that he was a most horrible idolater, a most malicious enemy and cruel persecutor of God's truth, a defiler of God's holy temple, a sacrificer of his own children unto idols, that is devils, a notable witch, and wicked sorcerer, a bloody murderer of exceeding many the dear Saints and true Prophets of the Lord, one who did not run headlong alone into all hellish impiety, but also led the people under his government out of the way to do more wickedly then did the Heathen people whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel, and in a word wrought more abominations and outrageous wickedness then the cursed Amorites and Canaanites, of whom notwithstanding the land surfeited and spewed them out for their crying sins. And yet this Manasseh, this wretch, more like a devil incarnate then a Saint of God, repenting him of his sins from the bottom of his heart, was received (I cannot speak it without ravishing wonder of God's bottomless

and never sufficiently admired mercy) was received I say, to grace, and obtained the pardon of all his horrible sins and most abominable wickedness. Now all these examples are written for our learning, and are recorded by the holy Ghost, to the end that we may continually laud and praise the Lord for his endless and infinite mercies, and gather unto ourselves assurance, that though our sins were as grievous and heinous as any of theirs before named, yet if with them we turn from our sins by unfeigned repentance, and go unto Christ by a lively faith, we shall also with them receive the pardon of our sins, and be entertained into God's love and favor.

And thus have I set down most infallible reasons, upon which as upon immovable firm grounds, the afflicted conscience may lay the foundation of sound comfort; now if any abuse the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and gather out of this heavenly doctrine this devilish use, that because God's mercies abound therefore they will abound in their sins without repentance, and still more and more provoke the wrath of the Lord against them, to these I answer with the Apostle that their damnation is just, in that they abuse God's mercy, as an occasion to sin, which should serve as a forcible argument to lead them to repentance, neither let such flatter themselves with vain hope of God's mercy, for despising the riches of his bountifulness, patience, and long suffering, and continuing in their hardness of heart and unrepentancy, they treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God. As the apostle plainly speaketh, Rom. 2:4,5. Neither let them foolishly bolster up themselves in their sins, by putting under their elbows, the sweet soft pillows of God's merciful promises, for as there is none so special which do exclude the most heinous sinner that repenteth and believeth, so is there

none so general which do extend themselves to those who continue in their unrepentancy and unbelief; and therefore though there be no sin so grievous, which being repented of and forsaken will condemn us if we rest and rely upon our Savior Christ for our salvation by a lively faith; so there is no sin so small and venial which will not plunge us into the bottom of hell, if we live therein without repentance and do not desire to leave and forsake it. And therefore so long as we live in our sins, and do not seriously turn unto the Lord by unfeigned repentance, let us not in vain arrogate and misapply unto ourselves the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the sweet promises of the Gospel, for unto such appertain the fearful threatening's of the law as being still the children of wrath, dead in their sins, and subject to God's heavy wrath and displeasure.

CHAP. XXXVII. HOW WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE BE EFFECTUALLY CALLED OR NO.

And so much concerning those reasons whereby the humbled and repentant sinner may gather unto himself certain assurance of the pardon and remission of his sins: of all which consolations Satan earnestly endeavoreth to spoil the afflicted soul, by suggesting into his mind diverse subtle and dangerous temptations. As first, that all these gracious promises and sweet consolations of the gospel do only belong unto those who are called, neither to all in this number, for many are called but few are chosen, but unto those alone whose calling is effectual, that is to say, who are separated from the world, given unto Christ and Christ unto them, and who are engrafted into him, and become lively members of his body: but thou, will he say to the humbled sinner art not thus effectually called, and therefore do not flatter thyself with the hope of God's promises, for though in themselves they are most certain, yet they belong not unto thee, but unto those alone whose calling is effectual.

Against which temptation if we would strengthen our selves, we must examine our calling whether it be effectual or no; and that both by

considering the means whereby all are effectually called, and also the partes of effectual calling, making application of both unto our own particular. For the first, we may thus reason against our spiritual enemy, whosoever can find the means of effectual calling, power fully working in himself, and converting him unto God he is effectually called, but I have and do find these means thus working in me, and therefore I do not flatter myself with vain hope, but am certainly assured that I am effectually called and converted.

The means whereby we are effectually called, are first the saving and fruitful hearing of God's word, by the ministry whereof the Lord calleth and inviteth us to come unto him by unfeigned repentance, and to our savior Christ by a lively faith even when we are dead in our sins, without any desire to will or ability to perform anything that is good, whilst we are the bondslaves of Satan and mere worldlings, not desiring nor once thinking upon the means of our salvation. And this is done first by the preaching of the law, by which is revealed unto us our innumerable heinous sins, and the fearful punishments due unto them: as that we by our continual transgression are subject to the curse of the law, unable to perform obedience unto any of the commandments or to make satisfaction to God's justice for the least of our sins, and so consequently that we are obnoxious to God's wrath, subject to those horrible torments provided for the wicked, and therefore in respect of ourselves, our own righteousness, satisfaction, or any other means of our own whatsoever in a most damnable and desperate estate. Secondly, after the Law hath thus shown unto us our sins and the punishments due unto them, the Lord by the ministry of the gospel doth reveal unto us a plain way by which we may come out of this miserable estate, and attain unto everlasting salvation, namely by believing and

applying unto ourselves Christ Jesus and all his benefits. Thirdly with this outward ministry of the word the Lord joineth the inward cooperation of his holy spirit, whereby he openeth our deaf ears, and maketh us attentively to hear, and as with a precious eye-salve enlightens the blind eyes of our understandings, enabling us to conceive and understand those things which are delivered unto us, both out of the law, and out of the Gospel.

The second means of our effectual calling is the softening of our hard hearts, when as the Lord taketh away our stony hearts, and giveth us hearts of flesh, as he promiseth, Ezek. 11:19. And breaketh up these fallow grounds fit in themselves to bring forth no fruit but weeds and thistles, that so they may be prepared to receive the seed of his word, and be made fruitful in all grace. And thus our stubborn and rebellious hearts are softened when as we particularly apply unto ourselves the doctrine of the law, whereby first we come to the knowing and acknowledging of our sins, original and actual. Secondly our hearts are pricked, and our consciences wounded by apprehending and applying to our guilty souls the curse of the law, the anger of God, and those fearful punishments prepared for the wicked. Thirdly seeing this our misery, and finding no means of our own how we may come out of this wretched estate, we are brought to despair of our own strength, righteousness and satisfaction, finding them of no virtue for our justification. By all which, being thoroughly humbled and cast down in ourselves, the Lord by the preaching of the gospel doth reveal unto us a way how we may escape out of this miserable estate, by applying unto ourselves Christ Jesus, and all his merits and obedience by a true and lively faith; after which the humbled sinner seeing his own wants and misery by the law, and perceiving that our savior Christ is so rich in merits, that he can easily supply all his defects, and so gracious and powerful that he can and

will free him out of his wretchedness, he doth plainly discern that he standeth exceedingly in need of Christ Jesus and his righteousness. After which sense of his own wants there is begot in him an earnest and hungering desire to be made partaker of Jesus Christ his righteousness, merits, obedience, and of all those inestimable benefits which are purchased by them. And lastly he is moved to appeal from the sentence of the law, to the throne of grace, pleading not his own righteousness or satisfaction, but Christ's merits and obedience.

The third and last means of our effectual calling is a true and lively faith, whereby we apprehend Christ Jesus and all his benefits given and applied unto us by God's spirit, resting upon him alone for our justification and salvation.

And these are the means of our effectual calling, which whosoever hath found powerfully working in themselves for their conversion after the manner before spoken of, they may most certainly assure themselves that they are effectually called, and are already partakers of Jesus Christ and all his benefits. If therefore the Lord whilst we did lie frozen in the dregs of our sins, without all desire of grace or means to escape our sins, without all desire of grace or means to escape out of our misery, hath vouchsafed unto us the ministry of his holy word, if by the law he hath revealed our sins unto us and the punishments due unto them, and if by the gospel he hath shown us the way how we may come out of this misery; if by the inward cooperation of his holy spirit he hath opened our deaf cares, and with this precious eye-salve hath anointed the blind eyes of our understandings so that we have attentively heard, and in some measure understood those principles of our Christian religion, which have in the ministry of the word been delivered unto us; if our hearts have been softened and pierced, and

our consciences wounded with the sight and sense of our sins; if despairing in our own strength, righteousness and all other means of our own, we have gone out of ourselves, and rested and relied upon Christ Jesus alone for our justification and salvation, then are we without all doubt effectually called and are in the number of God's church and people to whom the promises of grace do appertain.

Secondly, we may come to the knowledge of our effectual calling, by considering the several parts thereof. The first is our selection and separation out of the corrupt mass of mankind, whereby it cometh to pass that though we be in the world, yet we are not of the world, and therefore we neither love it, nor the world us; and this our Savior showeth, John. 15:19. If (saith he) he were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. And the apostle John affirmeth, that if any man love the world the love of the father is not in him. 1 John. 2:15, and the apostle James telleth us that the amity of the world is enmity with God, and therefore whosoever will be a friend of the world maketh himself the enemy of God. If therefore our love and affections be weaned in some good measure from the world, and fixed on spiritual and heavenly things, if we cease to be citizens of the world, and begin to have our conversation in in heaven from whence we look for a savior even the Lord Jesus Christ; and if the world begin to hate and scorn us, then may we be assured that we are severed from the world, and entertained into God's church and family.

But here the tempter will object, that by this it plainly appeareth that we are not yet effectually called nor separated from the world, because we still love the world affecting and desiring the vain pleasures, honors, and riches thereof, yea and also love those who are mere worldlings, and on the other

side the world also loveth us, giving us good countenance and performing other duties unto us. For the answering of which suggestion we must distinguish between ourselves and our selves; for whilst we continue in this life we are partly flesh and partly spirit, and as there is great enmity between the spirit and the world, so is there great amity between the world and the flesh. So far forth therefore as we are still carnal and corrupt flesh the world loveth us, but as much as is spiritual and regenerate so much the world hateth and abhorreth. Moreover we may generally be considered as men, or more specially as we are Christian men; in the first respect, the world that is wicked worldlings may love us for some natural partes or mere moral virtues, or else in common humanity as members of the same civil or political body: but as we are Christians who have given our names unto God and devoted ourselves to his worship and service, the world hateth us and our profession, religion, and all the fruits and exercises of sanctification and holiness, so that though in other natural, worldly, and mere civil respects it loveth us, yet in regard of our regeneration and the fruits thereof it cannot endure us, and our company and conversation is exceeding tedious, irksome and unpleasant. So on the other side whereas Satan objecteth that we love the world that is carnal worldly men, we may answer that even as we are regenerate, it is lawful to love them in the same respects which they love us, namely as they are men and the excellent creatures of God, as they are endued with excellent natural gifts or moral virtues, as they are of the same civil body or kindred, or as they have been used of God as his instruments for the bestowing of any his benefits upon us: in which respects loving them, we may notwithstanding with a true zeal hate and abhor their vices, their carnal worldliness, profane irreligion, and wicked conversation. Neither will religion make us to lay aside all humanity and

transform us into some brutish, or rather devilish Timon who was a hater of men. For even our savior Christ himself who was wholly exempted from sin, notwithstanding loved the worldly young man for some good things he saw in him though he were not religious, yea though he were so carnal that he preferred his vain and uncertain riches before the salvation of his soul, as appeareth Mar. 10:21,22. So also he used all humanity and civil conversation even amongst the Publicans and sinners, that he might have the better opportunity of converting all those who belonged to God's election. And therefore we need not fear to follow Christ's example so it be with the same holy affection. For we also must endeavor to gain those unto Christ who are without, and by our holy conversation give them occasion of glorifying God in the day of their visitation as the apostle exhorteth us, 1 Pet. 2:12, which we can never do by hatred, rough severity, and sinical inhumanity, but with loving courtesy, upright behavior, gentle admonitions and charitable reprehensions. But if through our corruption we give Satan occasion further to object, that under these pretenses we set our hearts too much upon the world loving worldlings more than those who are of the household of faith and more delighting in their vain conversation for outward respects than in the company of the faithful if not always yet oftentimes, we are to answer that though these be sins in us, and notable signs of our great corruption, yet are they no strong arguments that we are not yet effectually called, or truly severed from the world, for as much as we are not wholly separated from the world, but only so much of us as is spiritual and regenerate; so that it is no marvel if the flesh and unregenerate part still love the world, because it is still worldly; but if in the inner man we hate this love, and strive to bridle yea to mortify it, if we are truly sorry and displeased with ourselves for this as for other sins and labor to reform

it, we may be assured that the spirit of God is in us, which hath severed us from the world, and joined us to the body of Jesus Christ.

The like also may be answered concerning the love of worldly things, honors, riches and pleasures; we may love them as they are the blessings of God, and desire them so far forth as they are temporal benefits, and furtherance's or at least no hindrances in the works of holiness and righteousness, we may so love them as that in the meantime our love be subordinate to the love of God, our brethren and spiritual things. But if our love pass these limits it is corrupt and carnal, yet no undoubted argument to prove that we are not effectually called, if we are displeased with it and labor against it, and though oftentimes we are overcome therewith through the violence of our carnal affections and the corruptions of the flesh, yet if we hate this sin in the inner man, if we entertain it through violence, and not with affection and delight, if it dwell in us but do not reign in us, if but sometimes it get the upper hand and do not continually overrule us, it is no more we that do it but sin that dwelleth in us, that is the old man and corrupt flesh, which whilst we live in this life will bear some sway in us.

Lastly when as Satan assaulteth the poor Christian with his temptations, persuading him that he is not yet called nor separated from the wicked world, because it loveth him, he may well suspect his argument of falsehood, for Satan doth not hate those whom the world loveth; but by his continual assaulting of the weak Christian, and his daily laboring to bring him through the violence of his temptations to utter destruction, it manifestly appeareth that Satan like a mortal enemy deadly hateth him; and therefore it is not likely that he is beloved of the world though it may for a time fawn upon him, that by pretending love and friendship it may work him the greater mischief.

The second part of our effectual calling is the mutual donation of God the father, whereby he hath given Christ Jesus unto us to be our savior and redeemer, and us unto Christ to be saved and redeemed, by which also we may prove that we are effectually called. For this gift is mutual and reciprocal, and therefore the one doth clearly prove the other, so that if we can have any assurance that Christ is given unto us, then may we also be assured that we are given unto Christ, and contrariwise if we have any assurance that we are given unto Christ, then may we be also assured that Christ is given unto us, and consequently that we are effectually called for this mutual donation is one part thereof. Now we may be assured that Christ is given unto us if we believe in him resting upon him alone for our justification and salvation, as appeareth, John. 3:16. So God loved the world that he hath given his only begotten son that as many as believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life, and so also we may be assured that we are given unto Christ, if we hear his voice and follow him, as himself speaketh, John. 10:27, and submit ourselves to be led and governed by his spirit, for as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God, and whosoever are sons are heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ, as it is, Rom. 8:14,16.

But here Satan will object that those who are given unto Christ have kept his word, as himself also affirmeth John. 17:6. How therefore will he say, canst thou be assured that thou art one of those who are given unto him, seeing thou keepest it not but continually transgressest his commandments? To which we must answer that the word of Christ is his gospel, wherein he promiseth everlasting life to all that believe in him, and bring forth the fruits of their faith in unfeigned repentance, as it appeareth, John. 5:38, where he thus speaketh to the unbelieving Jews: And his word (saith he)

have ye not abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not; whereby it is manifest if Christ's reasoning be of sound consequence, that those have his word abiding in them who believe in him, whom God hath sent even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So that we keep the word of our Savior when we believe in him, resting and relying upon him alone for our salvation, and truly repent us of our sins, sorrowing and grieving that by them we have offended and displeased our loving God and merciful father, hating our sins because they are sins, purposing and laboring to forsake them, and endeavoring according to the measure of strength and grace received, to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life. And therefore if we can find in ourselves this faith and this repentance, we may undoubtedly be assured notwithstanding our manifold falls and great corruptions that we have kept the word of Christ, and therefore are given unto him of the father; and consequently that we are effectually called and shall be eternally glorified. For it is the will of the father that whosoever believeth in his son Jesus Christ should have everlasting life, as our Savior testifieth, John. 6:40. As for our corruptions they shall be washed away with the blood of Christ, and our imperfections shall be covered with the rich robe of his perfect righteousness, so that in him we shall appear perfect before God's judgment seat, and there be accepted as just and righteous.

The third part of our effectual calling is our union and communion with Christ, whereby he becometh our head and we his members, of which whosoever can be assured, they need not to make any question of their effectual calling; but all those who are endued with faith are united unto Christ, for it is a property thereof to apply unto ourselves Christ and all his benefits, it is the hand of the soul whereby we lay hold upon Christ, it is the mouth of the soul whereby we spiritually feed upon him, and he that eateth

his flesh, and drinketh his blood dwelleth in Christ and Christ in him, as himself speaketh, John. 6:56. So also whosoever are endued with God's spirit and have submitted themselves to be led and governed thereby, they are engrafted in the body of Christ, for the spirit is the bond of this union, and therefore if we can discern the spirit of God in us by any of the fruits thereof, we may be assured that we are the members of Christ, and consequently effectually called. Lastly we may be assured that we are engrafted in the body of Christ by our works of sanctification, either appertaining to God's service or Christian righteousness towards our neighbor, for it is impossible that we should bring forth any ripe grapes of godliness if we were not ingrafted in the true vine Jesus Christ, as himself affirmeth, John. 15:4. Abide in me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me: 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruits for without me ye can do nothing. And therefore if we make conscience of our ways, and exercise ourselves in some measure, in those good works which the Lord hath commanded in obedience to his will, and to this end that his name may be glorified, we may assure ourselves that we are engrafted into the true vine Christ Jesus, for of ourselves we are altogether unfruitful and could do nothing.

But here Satan will object that this argument maketh against ourselves, for we thereby make it manifest that we are not engrafted into Christ, because our fruits of holiness and righteousness are commonly exceeding small, and sometimes none at all, whereas the lively branches of this vine are exceeding fruitful, and abundant in good works. To which we are to answer, that all the branches of the vine do not bring forth fruits in like abundance, but some more and some less, and yet notwithstanding this doth not prove

that these are not true branches as well as the other although they receive less sap and lively juice from the root and stock, and so also it is in this mystical vine; if the branches be not altogether barren and fruitless, though their fruits be not in so great abundance, yet if it be right and of the same nature with the other, they may assure themselves that they also are lively branches of the true vine Jesus Christ; neither is the quantity and number of our fruits so much in this regard to be respected; for if according to the quantity of sap and good juice which we receive from our root we bring forth fruit, that is, if according to that measure of grace and gifts of God's holy spirit, which our savior Christ hath bestowed upon us, we spend our lives in God's service which himself hath commanded to the end that we may glorify his holy name, we may assure ourselves that we are true branches of this vine, which our Savior will purge and prune that we may bring forth more fruits, as he hath promised. John. 15:2, moreover whereas Satan objecteth, that we are not branches of this vine, because at sometimes we can show no fruits; we are to answer that as the earthly vine hath not always grapes, no not so much as leaves upon it, and yet notwithstanding it liveth, receiving nourishment from the root, and bringeth forth fruit in due time and season, so the branches of this mystical vine are some time without the fruits of good works, yea, have not so much to be seen upon them as the fair green leaves of an outward profession, as it is most usual when as they are thoroughly nipped with the cold winter of temptations, and have all their beauty blasted and blown away with the boisterous blasts of Satan's fierce encounters; and yet at the same time they receive the sap, juice, and virtue of God's spirit from their root Jesus Christ, by which they seeming dead do live and receive nourishment; until at God's good pleasure the comfortable beams of his love and favor do shine upon them, with

which their frozen hearts being thoroughly warmed, do again bring forth not only the leaves of profession, but also the ripe fruits of godliness and righteousness, and therefore though presently in such cases we have no fruits to show yet let not Satan persuade us that we are not true branches of this vine? For if we can call to mind, that ever in former times we have brought forth any right and kindly fruits of sanctification and true godliness, we are true branches of the vine Christ which he will lop and prune and again make fruitful; for out of him we could never have brought forth such fruits, and those who are once engrafted into him can never possibly be plucked away by Satan, the world, or all the powers of hell, though (as I said) they may for a time be nipped and shrewdly weather beaten.

CHAP. XXXVIII. SATAN'S
TEMPTATIONS OBJECTING TO THE
WEAK CHRISTIAN UNREPENTANCY
AND HARDNESS OF HEART
ANSWERED.

And so much for answering that general temptation of Satan, whereby he laboreth to rob and deprive the poor humbled sinner of all the hope and comfort which he might reap in applying unto himself the gracious promises and sweet comforts contained in the gospel, by persuading him that he is not effectually called. Wherewith if he cannot prevail he descendeth from the general to the particulars, and having as it were a far off discharged his shot of dangerous temptations without inflicting desired hurt and destruction, he approacheth nearer, and fighteth against the poor Christian with handy blows, that thereby he may beat him down into deep desperation. Let it be granted will be say that thou are called, yet it followeth not hereof that thou art elected and shalt be saved; for Christ Jesus himself hath said that many are called but few are chosen and why mayest not thou be in the greater number; neither is the calling thou speakest of sufficient to make a Christian, unless it be accompanied with unfeigned repentance and a lively faith. And the promises of the gospel

wherein thou vainly hopest are not made unto all those who are called, but unto those who are endued with a true justifying faith, which is always joined with the fruit thereof, unfeigned repentance. But if thou examine thyself aright, thou shalt find that both these are wanting in thee, for to begin first with repentance which is most sensible and to be discerned with greatest ease if thou search thine heart without any affectionate partiality or vain conceit, thou shalt find that thou are altogether destitute thereof. For is not thy heart so obstinately hard, and so stubbornly rebellious, that thou canst not bewail thy sins with any unfeigned sorrow, nor scarce with much straining force one tear, whereas for any worldly loss, or temporary affliction which indeed toucheth thee with true grief, thou canst without any difficulty weep more bitterly than the apostle Peter, and shed as many tears as Marie Magdalene. Besides whereas those who repent turn from their sins with a true and irreconcilable hatred of them, and spend the rest of their life that remaineth in the service of God, whereas they have their hard stony hearts mollified and turned into hearts of flesh, which are flexible unto holy obedience and full of alacrity and cheerfulness in performing service to God, thou through thy hardness and heart that cannot repent livest still in thy sins, and spendest a great part of thy time in vanity and worldly delights, thy heart as hard as the Adamant is ready sooner to break then to bow to God's will, and when thou forcest thyself hereunto, thou canst not but discern the blindness of thy understanding in spiritual things, which is so sharp and eagle sighted in matters concerning the world, thy spirits so dull and blockish, and thine affections so glutted and tired in performing service unto God which are so full of life, and alacrity in following worldly vanities. And therefore it is impossible that thou shouldest have any true

repentance, for how can repentance and hardness of heart, a heart of flesh and an heart of stone be at once in thee.

Against which temptation of Satan if we would arm ourselves, it behooveth us to be very careful that we do not run into two dangerous extremes; the one whereof is securely to flatter ourselves with an opinion of our good estate when as in truth it is most dangerous and damnable, the other that we do not too much suffer ourselves to be dejected and cast down, though we have not as yet attained to so great perfection as our heart desireth. And to this purpose we are to know that hardness of heart is of two sorts, the first is of them who being most hard hearted, notwithstanding do not feel nor perceive it; the other of those who feeling their hardness of heart are grieved therewith, and desire to have it mollified, softened, and even resolved into tears of unfeigned repentance. The first sort is damnable or at least most dangerous, for it lulleth us asleep in carnal security, it taketh away all sense of sin, and consequently all sorrow whereby we should bewail it; it seareth and brawneth the conscience, covering it as it were on all sides with a thick hard skin, which will never or most hardly be pierced, either by God's justice and threatening's to cause us to fear lest we incur his wrathful displeasure, or by his mercies and gracious promises to move us to love him, and to bring forth the fruits of our love in acceptable obedience, it repelleth all the good motions of God's spirit and filleth the soul with such drowsy dullness and blockish deadness, that it is altogether unfit to perform any service unto God, and most apt to entertain any of Satan's temptations. And this insensible hardness of heart which is the spiritual lethargy of the soul is of two kinds; the first is joined with willful obstinacy and affected rebellion, whereby men advisedly and contemptuously withstand the outward ministry of the word, and the inward

motions of God's spirit, with all other means which might move and muite them to serious repentance; an example whereof we have in Pharaoh who hardened his heart against the Lord, opposing himself against his ambassage delivered unto him by Moses, and confirmed by so many miracles, and also obstinately and with an high hand of rebellion checked, and quenched the good motions of God's spirit, whereby he was sometimes moved to confess his sin, and to acknowledge the Lord righteous. As also in Saul who against his conscience persecuted David because the Lord loved and had made choice of him to succeed in his place, and howsoever sometimes by occasion of some notable fruit of David's innocence he was moved to condemn himself and to justify him, yet presently he hardened his heart again and raged against him with wonted malice. And thus likewise were those Israelites hardened and frozen stiff in the dregs of their sins, of whom the Prophet Isaiah speaketh, Isa. 28:15 Ye have said (saith he) we have made a covenant with death and with hell we are at agreement: though a scourge run over and pass through, it shall not come at us: for we have made falsehood our refuge and under vanity are we hid. And those also of whom the Prophet Zechariah complaineth, Zech. 7:11, who (obstinately) refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears that they should not hear, yea, and made their hearts as an Adamant stone, least they should hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts sent in his spirit by the ministry of the Prophets. And so also many of the Scribes and Pharisees hardened their hearts against our Savior Christ obstinately contemning the gracious and powerful words, which proceeded out of his mouth, and quenched the good motions of God's spirit, occasioned by his wonderful miracles and admirable works which none could perform, but he who was the very true and only begotten son of God. Now we are to know

that this hardness of heart is most damnable, and whosoever are possessed therewith they can never escape God's fearful judgments and everlasting condemnation in the life to come.

The other kind of insensible hardness of heart proceedeth from careless recklessness and carnal worldliness, when as men having their understandings blinded do not perceive their filthy corruptions, profane wickedness, and extreme misery, nor feel the burden of their sins though they be grown to an intolerable weight, but flatter themselves with a vain opinion of their good estate in themselves, without any other help, as though they needed not the means appointed of God for their conversion which others use. And therefore they neglect the ministry of the word, as knowing and practicing enough already, or if they hear it they remove far from them the threatening's of the law denounced against impenitent sinners as not appertaining to them, and check all the good motions of God's spirit which are commonly joined with the public ministry of the word, and the private admonitions of godly men, or with the example of God's judgment on others, or with the sense of their own afflictions; and so return to their old profaneness and lie wallowing in the dregs of their sins without any remorse or hatred of evil, or any true love of that which is good. Until at length their hearts are so hardened and their consciences so seared with customable sinning, and by often repelling and beating back the means of their conversion the outward ministry of the word, and the inward motions of God's spirit, that they proceed from careless senselessness, and negligent security, to willful profaneness and obstinate rebellion. And this hardness of heart is most commonly incident unto worldlings and is nothing else but carnal security, whereby they rest contented with their miserable and wretched estate, neither loving that which is good, nor hating that

which is evil, nor using any means to better themselves, because they either think they are good enough or at least never enter into consideration of their estate, nor come to the sense and feeling of their evil corruptions, in which they are wholly plunged and overwhelmed. Yea sometimes and in some measure this befalleth the dear children of God through their careless negligence, and want of the due examination of themselves (as may appear in the example of David, who many months together lived in his sin of adultery and murder, without any serious and sound repentance, till it pleased the Lord to rouse him out of this spiritual lethargy by the ministry of the Prophet Nathan) but yet the Lord doth not finally leave them, but by the preaching of the word, godly admonitions and reprehensions, and also with the inward motions and secrete operation of his holy spirit he pulleth them out of this wretched estate, giving unto them a sight and feeling of their sins, and mollifying their hard hearts, working in them an hatred and detestation of their sins, and an earnest desire to be unburdened of them. But howsoever this may befall the children of God, yet this can be no encouragement unto any to continue still in this wretched case, for howsoever they may be indeed the children of God, yet assuredly they can never have any true assurance in their consciences that they are his children and in his favor, till their hearts be mollified and resolved, into the tears of unfeigned repentance at least in some measure. And therefore let everyone beware of carnal security and of hardening their hearts through careless negligence, and by committing sins against their knowledge and conscience, let them beware of resisting the ministry of the word, and of quenching the good motions of God's spirit, for though the conscience at the first be most tender and the heart so soft, that every sin will prick and pierce it, and every gentle admonition will make it relent, yet in continuance of

time through customable sinning, and resisting the means of our conversion and salvation, the conscience is so seared that it becometh senseless though it be oppressed and surcharged with a heavy mass of outrageous wickedness, and the heart groweth to such Adamantive hardness, that the thundering Canon threatening's of the law, and of God's fearful and imminent judgments cannot batter or bruise it, nor make any breach whereby true repentance may enter. In which respect the conscience is not unfitly compared to the eye, which of all other partes of man's body is most tender and impatient of the lightest touch, so that the smallest mote vexeth it, and the least prick causeth incredible torment: but if once it be affected with a disease called of Oculists, *scirrhosis oculi*, which over-covereth it, with a hard fleshy skin, it becometh of all other partes most insensible, so the conscience of man is most tender of all other partes, and at the first small sins vex and torment it, but if through custom in sinning it be overspread with a Callum or thick skin, it becometh insensible and nothing will wound it.

CHAP. XXXIX. OF THAT HARDNESS OF HEART WHICH IS JOINED WITH SENSE AND FEELING THEREOF.

The second sort of hardness of heart, is that which is joined with sense and feeling, when as we see and with sorrow feel our dullness and blockishness in God's service, our obdurate inflexibleness to holy obedience, our hardness of heart, which at the hearing either of the terrible threatening's of the law, or sweet promises of the Gospel, cannot relent nor resolve itself into the tears of unfeigned repentance; and this hardness of heart is commonly incident unto God's dear children being at the same time in the state of grace, and is a part of that inbred corruption and fleshly old man which before our calling wholly possesseth and overruled us, and after also beareth some sway in us even when we are regenerate till with all our other corruptions we lay this aside also by death. And this appeareth in the example of the Prophet David, who desireth the Lord to create in him a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within him. Psal. 51:10, in which words he implieth that his hardness of heart was so great, and the corruption thereof so abominable that it was even past mending, and therefore he doth not pray the Lord to purge and reform his old heart, but to create a new one,

and to take quite away his stony heart, and to bestow upon him a heart of flesh, as though his heart were like a building exceeding ruinous which could no longer be repaired, unless it were razed down even to the foundation and all new built up again. So whereas he prayeth the Lord to renew his spirit in him, he giveth us to understand that he hath lost the feeling of the spirit of adoption crying in his heart Abba father, and that there was in him such an intermission and surcease of the actions and fruits thereof that it seemed utterly quenched and departed from him. So else where he prayeth unto the Lord to quick him according to his loving kindness, that he might keep the testimonies of his mouth. Whereby he intimateth his drowsiness and deadness in God's service. The Prophet Isaiah likewise in the behalf of himself, and the people complaineth thus: Isaiah 63:17. O Lord why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear. By all which it appeareth that even the dear children of God do oftentimes see and feel to their great grief their hardness of heart, which is joined with exceeding dullness and drowsiness in God's service. Yea in truth this kind of hardness of heart is incident unto them alone. For whilst men are worldly and carnal though their hearts are most hard and obdurate yet they do not discern it, neither are they any whit displeased with their estate, but fondly flatter themselves imagining that they are in exceeding good case and very devout in God's service which indeed (as they perform it) is merely formal, customable rather than conscionable, in show and external but not in spirit and truth; but when the Lord by the ministry of his word made effectual by the inward operation of his holy spirit, doth pull of the thick skin of carnal security from of their hearts and causeth the seals of ignorance to fall from their eyes, then and not before do they plainly discern and sensibly feel that huge mass of inbred corruption,

their dullness and drowsiness in God's service, their hardness of heart and impenitency, and now they are much vexed and grieved with them, which in former times never troubled them. And therefore let not such be dismayed nor debar their souls of that consolation which of right belongeth to them, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this their corruption, hardness of heart, dullness and deadness in God's service but the good spirit of God, which hath begun already to work in them, showing them their corruptions and moving them to an unfeigned dislike of them, and therefore they may assure themselves, that he who hath begun this good work in them, will also bring it in his good time to perfection: Only (as the Psalmist exhorteth,) Let them tarry the Lord's leisure, wait upon and trust in him and he shall comfort their hearts.

Now this sensible or discerned hardness of heart is also of two sorts: the first is of them who carefully use all good means and endeavor with all diligence to better their estate which they see to be most miserable and to mollify their hard hearts, and to attain unto hearty and unfeigned repentance. Which who so doth he may assure himself that he is the child of God and in his love and favor; for earnestly to desire repentance, and carefully to use the means whereby we may attain thereunto, to be displeased with our hardness of heart and to labor that it may be mollified, to be sorry that we can be no more sorry and to be displeased with ourselves because we can no more be displeased with our sins, is very acceptable in the sight of God though we see but a little progress in godliness, and but a small increase of repentance which we desire in great measure, for the Lord esteemeth the will for the deed, and the affection for the action, and we may assure ourselves that if on our part we be not wanting in the use of the

means, the Lord will not be wanting on his part to supply our wants, and to satisfy all our Godly desires.

Of this hardness of heart which very often befalleth the dearest of God's children we have many examples. The prophet David thus complaineth, Psal. 77:2. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, my sore ran and ceased not in the night, my soul refused comfort. 3. I did think upon God and as troubled, I prayed and my spirit was full of anguish. 4. Thou keepest mine eyes waking; I was astonied and could not speak. So the church complaineth thus, Cant. 3:1. In my bed I sought him by night whom my soul loved. I sought him but I found him not. And chap. 5, ver. 6. I opened to my well-beloved but my well-beloved was gone and past: mine heart was gone when he did speak I sought him but I could not find him, I called him but he answered me not. Whereby it is manifest that even the dear saints of God are often times destitute of all comfort and void of all feeling of God's favor, and of the powerful working of the graces of God's spirit which they have received, though they use the means appointed of God for the stirring up and increasing of grace in them, which cometh to pass by reason of their hardness of heart, and drowsy dullness of spirit in these spiritual exercises.

And hence it is that many of God's children do grievously afflict their souls because they see these their corruptions and imperfections, and hereby often times are moved to think that they are destitute of faith, and of all saving graces of God's sanctifying spirit, because though they use the means ordained of God for the begetting and increasing of grace in them, yet they cannot perceive any fruit that cometh thereby, nor feel in their souls any true comfort or joy in these spiritual exercises. For example some complain that though they continually hear the word yet they feel no increase of any grace, no more knowledge, no more faith, no more zeal of

God's glory, no more mortification of their old corruptions, nor any reformation at all of their former sinful lives, and therefore they think that they hear the word of God without any profit, nay that the more they hear it the more wicked and rebellious they are; and that for this cause it were much better not to hear the word at all, for as much as it will but aggravate their sins and increase their condemnation, for he that knoweth his masters will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.

But let not such poor mourning souls deprive themselves of that true comfort which of right belongeth to them: and to this end let them know first that this is a usual complaint of those children of God which profit most in hearing of the word though in truth they do therein deceive themselves; for in complaining that they profit not, they show they profit. For whereas men naturally blinded with self-love and carnal security never discern any such want and corruption in themselves, and therefore though they profit nothing by hearing the word of God yet it never troubles them, nay they imagine that it is sufficient to present their bodies into God's assemblies and to hear God's word with their outward ears, though they understand it not nor retain it in memory, nor bring forth any fruits thereof; these humbled souls by the hearing of the word are freed from this self-love and carnal security, and have the blind eyes of their understandings opened so as they see their faults and corruptions, and have their hard hearts softened so as they are grieved and displeased with them, and their wills also are in some good measure sanctified, so that they earnestly desire to be freed from their corruptions, and to hear the word of God with more profit, whereby it appeareth that though they cannot profit so much as they desire yet they have made a good progress, and the Lord in his good time will perfect that good work which he hath begun in them; and the same spirit of

God which hath wrought in them this desire of profiting by hearing the word, will also accomplish it, and so open their dull ears and soften their hard hearts that they shall profit and reap manifold fruits of the seed of the word which is sowed in the furrows of their hearts. In the mean while the Lord may in his heavenly wisdom feed them for a time with a sparing hand to the end that he may truly humble them under the sight and sense of their corruptions, and that he may hereby so sharpen their appetites that they may with more hungering desire, and earnest endeavor feed upon the heavenly manna of his word; but as this should increase their diligence, so it should not decrease their hope and comfort, for most assuredly when the Lord hath a while whetted their stomach, and by pulling back his hand moved them more earnestly to desire, and more highly to esteem this precious food of their souls, he will fully satisfy their hungering desire, nourish them in all spiritual graces, and make them who are but babes strong men in Christ. In the meantime let them not faint, but wait upon the Lord, be strong and trust in him and he will surely comfort their hearts as the psalmist speaketh, Psal. 27:16.

Secondly whereas they complain that they do not after the hearing of the word, perceive in themselves any increase of knowledge, faith or any saving grace, they are to know that howsoever no man ought to rest contented in this estate but are to labor more and more, not only to have but also to discern an increase of grace in them, and a progress in all virtue and godliness, for otherwise though they may be the children of god who for a time live in such a case yet they cannot attain unto the assurance thereof nor feel the comfort of it in their own consciences, nevertheless there is no reason why they should despair or be utterly discouraged, for though they find no fruits of their hearing, yet if in obedience to God's commandment,

they will with care and diligence continue still hearers of the word, they shall undoubtedly in the end attain unto their desire and discern in themselves a great increase of grace and godliness. We know that the seed doth not presently bring forth fruit when it is cast into the ground, but first it seemeth to rot and perish and then it sprouteth up in a green blade, and then it beareth an ear and a great increase and much fruit; and so it fareth oftentimes in hearing the word of God, for at first it seemeth quite lost and perished being sown in some grounds, and yet afterwards it bringeth forth not only a fair green blade of an outward profession, but also a great increase of the ripe fruits of true godliness. So also the sick patient taking sovereign physic is not presently cured, nay instead of feeling any ease thereby he is made much more sick in his own sense and feeling, and yet after the physic hath a while wrought with him and purged him of some superfluous and hurtful humors he findeth some amendment, and so by little and little he is restored to his former health; and so it is also with the spiritual sick patient, he doth not always presently find ease and quiet peace of conscience, nay many times he is tormented and vexed after he hath received the spiritual physic of the soul the word of God, more than ever in former times, but yet notwithstanding in process of time when this physic hath effectually wrought with him, it purgeth him from his filthy corruptions and strengtheneth him in all grace and godliness. And therefore though we feel presently no profitable fruits of hearing let not this discourage us from hearing, nay rather let it serve as a sharp spur to prick us forward to more diligence, and let us join therewith hearty prayer, desiring the Lord to water the seed of his word sown in our hearts with the dew of his holy spirit, and then undoubtedly the Lord in the end will hear us, and to our exceeding comfort show unto us the plentiful fruits of all our labors.

Thirdly whereas they complain that the more they hear the greater are their sins and rebellion against God, in this they much deceive themselves; for the word of God doth not make them more sinful, but whereas heretofore they lived in carnal security and hardness of heart, having their understandings darkened and their consciences seared so as they could neither see nor feel their sins though they were manifold and grievous, now the word of God made effectual by the inward operation of his holy spirit like a glorious light having dispelled the dark foggy mists of ignorance, and illuminated the eyes of their understandings with the knowledge of God's law, they better discern their sins and miserable estate then in former times. And this the Apostle Paul showeth unto us in his own example, Rom. 7:9. For (saith he) I was once alive without the law, but when the commandment came sin revived 10., but I died: and the same commandment which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto me unto death. And ver. 13, was that then which was good made death unto me? God forbid: but sin that it might appear, sin wrought death in me by that which is good, that sin might be out of measure sinful by the commandment. So that the preaching of the law doth not make us more sinful but revealeth those sins unto us which before we discerned not. As therefore the sun shining upon some filthy place doth not make it so filthy, but only doth make it manifest which was not seen in the dark, and as the wholesome physic is not the cause of those corruptions which it purgeth out, but by expelling them out of the body showeth them unto us, so the heavenly light and sovereign physic of God's word doth not work in us our filthy corruptions, and hurtful humors of sin but it revealeth them unto us whereas before times by reason of our ignorance and blindness they were secret and hidden.

When therefore out of the former premises this conclusion is inferred either by Satan who continually like a malicious enemy seeketh our destruction, or by our own corrupt flesh (which is impatient of any rough handling, and therefore would rather have us sick still then endure any pain in being cured) that it were better for us to surcease the hearing of God's word as serving to no other end but to increase our condemnation, let us in any case resist such motions as being most dangerous temptations which being entertained will bring us to utter ruin and endless destruction; for if we deprive ourselves of this heavenly light the devil will easily lead us hoodwink unto all fin and wickedness, if we long abstain from this comfortable food of our souls they will be hunger-starved, and all the graces of God's spirit will wax faint and die in us, if we disarm ourselves of this sword of the spirit, Satan without any resistance will overcome us and take us captives, forcing us as his miserable slaves to commit all those works of darkness in which he will employ us. And therefore as we tender the salvation of our own souls, let us not be discouraged from hearing the word of God by any suggestions whatsoever, no not though we seem unto ourselves every time we come into the Church to go a step towards hell; for whilst we use God's ordinance which is appointed as the means for our conversion and salvation, there is some good hope, but when we utterly neglect it our state is most desperate.

CHAP. XL. CONSOLATIONS FOR SUCH AS BEWAIL THEIR HARDNESS OF HEART AND WANTS IN PRAYER.

Others complain that they are so overwhelmed with their hardness of heart, and drowsy dullness of spirit that either they cannot pray at all, or if they do it is barrenly without all form or fashion; or if they have the eloquence of the tongue and good set forms of prayer yet they perform it coldly and drowsily, without all earnestness and fervency of spirit, having their minds carried away with wandering thoughts, so that their prayers are but mere lip-labor, and therefore it were better not to pray at all, because they cannot perform this duty in any good manner or measure as God requireth.

And this is a temptation wherewith even the dearest children of God are much vexed and troubled, and therefore it shall not be amiss to answer the several branches of this complaint. First therefore, where as they complain that they cannot pray at all, this is to be understood either generally of all times, or specially at sometimes. If they say they can never pray, it is very likely that either they forget or much deceive themselves, for few or none who are altogether destitute of the spirit of supplication have any

understanding to discern their want, or any grace to bewail it, but content themselves with their lip-labor as though they had performed acceptable service unto God. And it is a work of one and the same spirit to make us see our infirmities with hatred and dislike of them, and to move us earnestly to desire of God that we may be freed from them, which earnest desire is hearty prayer. But if they further affirm that they are most sure they do never pray unto God, I answer that though this in itself be a most dangerous case, for it is a sign of a worker of iniquity, not to call upon God as the Psalmist speaketh, Psal. 53:4, yet they have no cause to despair, for the same spirit which hath revealed unto them this their sin and infirmity, and hath wrought in them a dislike thereof, will also remove it and supply their want in God's good time, if they will labor for this good gift, and not quench the good motions of the spirit when God offereth them unto them.

But if they cannot deny that sometimes they have had the grace given them of God to call earnestly upon his name, howsoever in this present time they are altogether disfurnished thereof, then let them know that their case in this respect is common withal the dear children of God, for hearty prayer is not in our own power, neither doth it attend upon our own will, but it is the gift of God which at sometimes in plentiful measure he bestoweth upon his children, and at other times he pulleth back his liberal hand; to the end that by the want thereof, we may learn to ascribe the glory and praise of our hearty prayers unto God, who worketh in us the will and the deed and is in truth the only true author of them which praise, otherwise in pride of heart we would arrogate unto ourselves, as being a natural faculty and in our own power; and also to the end we may more highly esteem it, and with more joy and diligence use it when we have it bestowed on us, least through our negligence and slothfulness we move the Lord to take it from us.

Seeing therefore this hearty calling upon God's name is a gift of God, and a work of his holy spirit in us which at sometimes heretofore we have discerned in ourselves, let us not altogether be discouraged though at sometimes we want it; for the gifts of God are without repentance, and though at sometimes they are withdrawn from our sense and feeling, yet shall they never be taken from us; and if at any time we have had assurance that the spirit of God hath dwelled in us, by this work thereof effectual prayer, we may assure ourselves that it hath not forsaken us, but will again help our infirmities, and whereas we cannot tell how to pray as we ought, the spirit itself will make request for us with sighs, which cannot be expressed.

Secondly, whereas they complain that they cannot pray in any good form, but oftentimes fill God's ears with impatient cries and uncomfortable roaring's instead of prayers, they are to know that this is often incident unto the children of God, especially when his hand is heavy upon them, either in some outward affliction of body, or some inward anguish of mind. For example the Prophet David confesseth that when God's hand was heavy upon him day and night his prayers were but roaring's. Psal. 32:3. So Hezekiah faith, that when he should have prayed he chattered like a Crane or a Swallow, and mourned as a Dove, Isa. 38:14. And the poor Publican oppressed with the heavy burden of his sins instead of a long and eloquent speech uttereth these few words; O God be merciful unto me a sinner, and yet our Savior Christ testifieth of him that he received the remission of his sins and went home justified. Luk. 18:13,14. Neither in truth doth the Lord regard the eloquence of the tongue, but the earnestness of the heart, he respecteth not our well couched words and smooth uttered style, but the fervency of the spirit, and our humble and hearty desires, which are

acceptably heard of him though our tongues be silent. The sacrifices of God are not eloquent words but a contrite spirit, a contrite and broken heart will not the Lord despise, as it is, Psal. 51:17. The prayers indicted by God's spirit which also are according to the will of God, consist not in the words of the mouth, but in the sighs of the heart which cannot be expressed, as the Apostle teacheth us, Rom. 8:26. And therefore if we offer unto God an humble and contrite spirit, if we can sigh and groan earnestly, desiring those things we want according to his holy will, though we cannot express our minds in any good order or in a continued form of speech, yet if we can from our hearts roar with David, chatter with Hezekiah and utter this abrupt speech with the poor publican, O God be merciful unto me a sinner, the Lord will hear us and that as speedily as though we could pray unto him with the eloquence of men and angels. For to what end principally serve words, but that we may by them express our minds to men who otherwise could not understand them; but the Lord who searcheth the hearts understandeth our sighs which cannot be expressed, as it is, Rom. 8:26,27, and he knows our thoughts long before we think them, as the psalmist speaketh, Psal. 139:2. He is a spirit yea an all-seeing spirit, and therefore our prayers unto him are the desires of the heart, neither doth our words serve to persuade him, but to stir up our own dull spirits, and to keep us from disorderly wandering thoughts. So that if we can with Moses lift up our hearts unto God with earnest desires, this will be a strong cry in the ears of the Lord, and he will surely hear it. If we can unfeignedly say with the prophet David. Psal. 38:9. Lord I pour my whole desire before thee, and my sighing is not hid from thee, we may be assured he will hear us and grant our request, for he heareth the desire of the poor, he prepareth their heart and bendeth his ear unto them. As it is, Psal. 10:17, yea he doth not only

hear them and in some sort incline to their request, but he will fulfill the desire of them that fear him, he will hear their cry and save them, as the same prophet speaketh, Psal. 145:19. We know that a kind loving father if he see his son exceeding sick will be very careful and tender over him, to provide all things necessary for him which may do him good, and though with a faltering tongue and imperfect speech he ask anything which is profitable for him to receive, yet how readily will he hearken unto him and grant his desire? Yea if his sickness so increase that he becometh speechless uttering nothing but deep groans, even this language moves him to no less care in using all means which may do him good. Shall then we daily observe such fruits of love in sinful man, and shall we doubt of finding less in the Lord, who is infinite in love, mercy, and goodness, far be it from us. Nay let us assure our selves, that though (our souls being sick in sin, and exceedingly dulled and beaten down with some grievous temptation) we cannot utter anything but imperfect speeches, yea though we are through the grievousness of our affliction and greatness of our corruption stricken dumb and can utter nothing but groans and sighs, yet if we desire to be freed out of this wretched case and to have the comfort of God's spirit, the Lord who searcheth the heart and understandeth our secret thoughts will hearken unto us and grant the desires of our heart, at least so far forth as it will stand with his own glory and our everlasting good.

Thirdly whereas others complain that their hearts are so hard and their spirits so dull, that they cannot utter unto God a prayer with any earnestness or fervency of spirit, but exceeding coldly and very weakly, and therefore they fear that God will never hear them; they are to remember that the Lord heareth us not nor granteth our requests for the worthiness and excellency of our prayers, but for his son Jesus Christ's sake who is our mediator and

intercessor in whose name we call upon God; and therefore though our prayers be full of infirmities and uttered with much weakness, yet calling upon the Lord in our saviors name he will surely hear us as our savior hath promised. John. 16:23. Verily, verily I say unto you whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name he will give it you. Moreover we are to know that we do not offer up our prayers immediately unto God the father, but by the mediation of Jesus Christ, who putting our prayers into the golden vials which are full of the precious odors of his merits, thereby perfumeth them and maketh them an offering of sweet smelling savor unto God; and by washing them in his own most precious blood he purgeth them from all their corruptions and perfecteth all their wants and imperfections, so as now though not in themselves yet in him they will be acceptable unto God and he will mercifully grant our petitions.

Fourthly whereas others complain that their minds are carried away with worldly distractions and wandering imaginations when they are making their prayers unto God; they are to know that this befalleth also even the dearest children of God, partly through their own corruption, and partly through the malice of Satan who laboreth most to interrupt us in those holy exercises which he knoweth most profitable and effectual for our salvation. Whereof it cometh to pass that though diverse hours together we can talk of worldly affairs and hear the speech of others without any distraction of mind, or thinking of anything but of the subject of our present speech, yet when we hear God speak unto us in the preaching of the word, or when we speak unto God in prayer and supplication, our minds wander hither and thither though we strive never so much to contain them, because through our natural corruption we are soon weary of these holy exercises, and Satan is still at hand to suggest into our minds wandering thoughts in which we

take most delight, but this should not discourage us from taking in hand these holy actions, but rather the consideration hereof should strongly move and provoke us to more earnestness care and diligence so as Satan may not prevail against us; and if notwithstanding sometimes nay often we receive a foil, let it be an occasion to move us to take the more pains and to make a double request unto God, not only that he will grant unto us those things which we desire, but also that for Christ's sake he will pardon our sins and infirmities in that we have begged them so coldly and negligently.

Lastly, whereas our spiritual enemy taketh occasion altogether to discourage us from undertaking these spiritual exercises because therein we bewray notable corruptions and cannot though we strive never so much perform them as we ought, let us in no case yield unto this temptation, but strongly arm ourselves against it; and to this end let us consider that if Satan can persuade us to desist from performing those duties altogether which we cannot perform as we ought, but with great weakness, corruption, and imperfection, we shall do nothing at all which God requireth of us, for example the Lord commandeth us to love him with all our hearts, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, which duty of love we perform with great weakness and exceeding coldly; but because we cannot do it as God requireth and as we ought, shall we not therefore do it at all? God forbid. So the Lord commandeth us to trust and to put our whole affiance in him, but we are ready to rest and rely upon the arm of flesh and inferior means, either in whole or at least in part, and when they fail us, our trust in God is very weak and mingled with much diffidence and doubting, but shall we therefore put no affiance in God at all, because we cannot do it so perfectly as God requireth? Be it far from us. So in the very like manner the Lord expressly chargeth and commandeth us to call upon his holy name, which

duty oftentimes we perform coldly and negligently, having our minds carried away with wandering thoughts and worldly imaginations, but shall Satan working upon our own corruption therefore persuade us altogether to desist from this holy exercise? No, in no case let us not yield to this temptation. For it is not left unto us at our own choice as a thing indifferent to pray or not to pray, but it is a notable part of God's worship and service, and a singular duty which the Lord expressly enjoineth us to perform, whereunto he hath adjoined most comfortable promises which depend not upon our worthiness, and the excellency of our prayers, but on his own free mercy and goodness, and the merits and intercession of our Savior Christ. So Psal. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, so will I deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. And Matth. 7:7. Ask and it shall be given you. And John. 16:23. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the father in my name he will give it you, 24., ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. And the Apostle Paul chargeth us. 1 Thess. 5:17, that we pray continually. Seeing therefore the Lord expressly requireth this duty at our hands; though our infirmities and corruptions be never so great, let us labor continually to perform it, assuring ourselves that if in obedience to his commandment we call upon him, and labor and strive against those corruptions, which show themselves unto us in this holy action, he that hath enjoined us this duty will also give unto us his holy spirit, if we will attend his leisure which will teach us how to pray according to God's will with sighs and groans, which cannot be expressed, whereas on the other side if our infirmities and corruptions wholly discourage us, from performing this duty we shall grievously sin against God in transgressing his commandment, and in robbing him of a chief part of his worship and service, and also we shall plunge ourselves into a most desperate estate,

adjoining ourselves unto the number of those wicked Atheists of whom the Psalmist speaketh, who call not upon God. Psal. 53:4.

And so much for answering those temptations which Satan and our corruption do suggest to discourage us from the service of God, which have their occasion and ground from our hardness of heart, and drowsy dullness, and deadness in performing these holy exercises. The other kind of sensible hardness of heart is severed from the use of these holy means; for sometimes it cometh to pass especially in the spiritual combat of temptation, that even God's dear children are so besotted and astonished, through the violence of the temptations of Satan, and huge weight of their own corruptions, that they cannot endeavor in no sort to use these means, whereby they might be comforted and relieved in this wretched estate, as the hearing of the word, calling upon God's name, meditating in the Scriptures, and holy conferences; yea these holy exercises seem for a time odious and loathsome unto them, until it please the Lord by his own good spirit to awaken and raise them up out of this spiritual trance, and to give unto them again the feeling of his grace and favor, and good motions and abilities to serve him, and reap comfort unto themselves, by these holy duties. In the meantime such are to support themselves from falling into utter desperation by calling to their remembrance their state and condition in times past, for if ever they have had any delight in the holy exercises of religion, prayer, hearing the word and godly conferences, if ever they could discern in themselves any faith by the true fruits of sanctification they may take comfort thereby, assuring themselves that they shall again be restored unto their former estate, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and those whom he hath once loved, he loveth unto the end. An example hereof we have in David, who being troubled and full of anguish

in his spirit, his soul refusing all comfort, and being so astonished that he could not speak, yet he considered the days of old, and the years of ancient time, he called to remembrance his former songs in the night, occasioned by the great benefits which the Lord had bestowed upon him, and so knowing that the Lord was unchangeable in his mercy and goodness, he relieved his poor soul, which was ready to faint under the heavy weight of present afflictions. And thus also Job being brought through the violence of those heavy crosses which the Lord laid upon him, even to the brink of desperation, so that he spared not to utter in the bitterness of his soul, fearful curses and most impatient speeches coming near unto blasphemy, oftentimes comforteth himself by calling to mind his former integrity and righteousness, whose example if the poor humbled souls will follow they may raise themselves with true comfort, when they are sunk down under their heavy burden of present corruptions.

CHAP. XLI. HOW THE WEAK CHRISTIAN MAY BE ASSURED THAT HIS REPENTANCE IS TRUE AND UNFEIGNED.

And so much for answering Satan's temptations drawn from hardness of heart, whereby he laboreth to persuade poor humbled sinners that they are utterly destitute of repentance; but if he fail of his purpose then he will endeavor to make them believe that though they have some show of repentance yet it is not such as God requireth: for either he will affirm that it is hypocritical and dissembled rather for fear of punishment than for hatred of sin or true love of God; or if it be true yet it is not sufficient as being in very small measure and in no proportion answerable to our heinous sins.

Against both which temptations it behooveth the humbled sinner to arm himself that he may repel them when they are suggested; and to this purpose that he may prove his repentance true and unfeigned, he is to take a true search of his own heart and conscience, and to examine his repentance according to some undoubted signs which may serve as touchstones to discover whether it be true and unfeigned, or dissembled and hypocritical. The first undoubted sign of unfeigned repentance is when we can observe in

ourselves the several degrees or partes thereof as they have been wrought in us by God's spirit, for from the enumeration of all the parts we may conclude that we have the whole. The first degree is that by the law we come to the knowledge, and acknowledgment that we are heinous and grievous sinners who have broken and transgressed all God's commandments. Secondly from this knowledge and acknowledgment of our sins proceedeth a true sense and feeling of them and the punishments due unto them, and an apprehension and applying to ourselves the anger of God, the curse of the law, and eternal condemnation due unto us for our sins. Thirdly from this sense of our miserable estate there ariseth in our consciences fear and horror of being overtaken and overwhelmed of those judgments of God, and fearful punishments which hang over our heads for our sins. Fourthly from this fear and anguish of mind proceedeth sorrow and bitter grief, because we have thus heinously sinned, and made ourselves obnoxious to all these evils; and also in the same respects a true hatred of sin which still hangeth upon us, and an earnest desire to be freed from it. Fifthly, this hatred of sin and desire to be freed from it, maketh us earnestly to seek and inquire after some means whereby we may attain unto our desires, that being freed from all those fearful evils which oppress our consciences with the weight of them, we may obtain God's love and favor and the assurance of our salvation. Sixthly, thus inquiring and searching we find by the preaching of the Gospel, that our gracious God hath sent his son into the world, to the end that he might save and deliver us out of this miserable estate if we believe in him, and also hath commanded us to believe. Which being made effectual by the inward operation of God's holy spirit, we have true faith begot in us, whereby we are assured of God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and of the full remission of all our sins, the

consideration whereof doth comfort and raise us up from falling into desperation and utter destruction. Seventhly after this assurance of God's love and of the forgiveness of our sins there followeth first a true hatred of sin, because it is sin, an unfeigned sorrow not so much in regard of the punishment which by our sins we have justly deserved, as that because we have offended our so gracious a God and tender loving father. Secondly this sorrow will not suffer us to hide, excuse, or extenuate our sins, but moveth us in all humility to prostrate ourselves before God's mercy seat, and in grief of soul to confess them, acknowledging that confusion and condemnation is due unto us, which by no means we can escape but by God's mercy, and the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly being assured of the pardon of our sins past, we labor and strive for the time to come to leave and forsake them, and to mortify the flesh and corruptions thereof whereby we are led captive unto sin, and also we endeavor with a fervent zeal of God's glory to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, that so by our godly lives we may glorify him and express our thankfulness for all his inestimable benefits. Fourthly if at any time besides or contrary to our purpose we be overtaken by our corruption, and fall into sin, there followeth in us a holy anger and indignation with ourselves, because we did not more carefully look to our ways; which godly anger preceedeth to the taking of a holy kind of revenge, to the end that thereby our sins may be subdued and our corruptions mortified. For example he that hath offended through gluttony and drunkenness being truly penitent and angry with himself for his sin, will also tame the flesh by punishing the same through fasting and abstinence. He that hath offended by using excessive pride in apparel, being angry with himself upon his true

repentance doth withdraw from himself such costly attire as otherwise in respect of his calling he might lawfully wear.

And thus may we come to the assurance that our repentance is true and unfeigned if we can find these degrees thereof and these effects and fruits in our selves. The second sign of unfeigned repentance is that it be whole and entire and that both in respect of the subject and also the object thereof. In respect of the subject or of him in whom it is, it is required that it be not of any part alone, or yet of all parts saving one, but it must be entire and total of the whole man and of every of his several partes, it must be a reformation in the forsaking of sin and embracing of righteousness, not in the body or soul alone but of them both, and of all their several faculties and powers, it must not only be of the outward actions, but also of the inward affections and cogitations, it must not only be of the tongue and hand, but also of our wills and hearts, according to that Jam. 4:8. Draw near unto God and he will draw near unto you: cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purge your hearts you wavering minded. Otherwise if we do not turn unto the Lord with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our bodies and every faculty and part of them, if we willingly entertain sin, and purposely suffer it to lurk in any secret corner of us, our repentance is hypocritical and not acceptable in God's sight. And hence it is that David saith, that if he should regard wickedness in his heart the Lord would not hear him. Psal. 66:18.

Secondly, it must be whole and entire in respect of the object: for it is not sufficient that we perform obedience unto some of God's commandments, if we endeavor not to show our obedience unto all, it is not enough if we forsake some of our sins, if we willingly and with delight entertain and nourish others, never striving against them nor laboring to mortify them, but

if we would approve our repentance to be sincere and unfeigned both unto God and our own consciences, we must desire and endeavor to perform obedience, as well to those commandments which seem hard and most unpleasant unto us, as unto those which are more easy and delightful, we must not only forsake those sins which are not so pleasing unto us, but even those which otherwise are as dear unto us as our right hand or eye; for he that truly repenteth of one sin repenteth of all, he that repenteth not of any one sin, repenteth of none as he ought; he that wittingly and advisedly neglecteth any one commandment will in time neglect all, whatsoever outward reformation may seem to be in him; he that willingly entertaineth any one sin and nourisheth it as his dear darling in his bosom, will in the end make conscience of none; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and even small sins if they be not mortified, will make room for those which are greatest and most heinous.

The third sign of true repentance is, when our conversion from sin unto God is not deferred in whole or in part from time to time but presently undertaken: neither is it sufficient to vow repentance unto God or to purpose it for the time to come, but we must presently endeavor and labor in it; it is not enough that we subdue some sins now and perform obedience unto some of the commandments, purposing to labor after more perfection when we have better opportunity, but we must presently labor and endeavor to perform obedience not to some, but to all God's commandments, and we must out of hand set upon all our sins and labor to mortify all our corruptions, for if the whole body of sin be not beaten down and subdued together, that which still liveth in us, will give life again unto that which is mortified, that which is still retained in the heart, will open a wide door to let in that which is expelled. And so we shall but take in hand an endless

and fruitless work, if we do not set aside all excuses, and instantly labor to destroy the whole body of sin, breaking through all difficulties and impediments, for we shall never want hindrances in these holy actions, and excuses for want of fit occasion and convenient opportunity, will continually offer themselves unto us, and therefore he that will not turn wholly unto God, till he have a clear passage and plain way free from all thorny distractions which pull him back, and worldly incumbrances, which like blocks lying before him hinder him in his journey, may as well resolve to sit still and never return unto God by unfeigned repentance.

The fourth sign of true repentance is if it be continual from the first day of our conversion unto the end of our lives, for it is not sufficient to serve God by fits, or that our religion should take us like a tertian ague but every other day; it is not that which God requireth, that we should divide our time between him and the world, or having begun in the spirit we should end in the flesh, but after we are gone out of this Sodom of sin, we must go forward in our journey of holy obedience, and never like Lots wife look back with a desire to enjoy the pleasures thereof again. We must so run this spiritual race that we may obtain, now we know that runners of a race, as they do not stand still after the watchword is given, but labor with all speed to set forth with the first, so they do not sit down in the mid-way, much less run one while backward and another while forward, but they still hasten on till they come to the goal and obtain the garland, and so it behooveth us to run speedily to the Lord by unfeigned repentance, and not to desist in this our race till the end of our lives, if we purpose to receive that crown of glory which the Lord hath promised us. Our life therefore must be a continual repentance, and so long as we live so long must we grieve for our

sins past and present, and strive after newness of life and a greater measure of sanctification.

The last sign of unfeigned and true repentance is if it be mixed with faith; for true repentance is a fruit of faith, and they are never disjoined the one from the other, neither can we ever sorrow for sin as we ought, till we have some assurance of God's mercy and love in Jesus Christ; for otherwise though our sorrow be never so great yet it is not so much for sin as for the punishment thereof, not so much because we have thereby displeased God, as for those torments of conscience which we presently endure, and the torments of hell which for the time to come we fear. And therefore this desperate sorrow is itself to be sorrowed for, as being severed from faith and therefore sinful, and not proceeding from any love of God or hatred of sin, but from the fear of punishment and condemnation.

But it may be demanded why amongst the signs of true repentance I have not numbered tears and weeping for our sins; to which I answer because howsoever it is a notable fruit of unfeigned repentance, unto which every Christian with true compunction of heart is to accustom himself, yet notwithstanding it is not an inseparable property thereof; for often times there is tears whereas there is no true repentance, and there is true repentance whereas there is few or no tears. For the first we may plainly perceive by continual experience that tears proceed from diverse other causes then from true repentance, sometimes from excessive joy whereby the pores and passages of the eyes are loosed and opened, and sometimes from natural and worldly sorrow whereby the said passages are constricted and straightened. Sometimes from furious anger, and sometimes from compassion and pity; and in spiritual things sometimes these tears flow from unfeigned repentance, sometimes from desperate sorrow conceived

upon the apprehension of God's horrible wrath or of the fearful torments and eternal condemnation prepared for them. Wherefore it cometh to pass that in the abundance of their tears, they utter from a heart full of raging malice, horrible blasphemies against God. And example hereof we have in Esau who in the midst of his weeping and howling comforted himself with the remembrance of his fathers death and of that most wicked murder which he intended unto his innocent brother. Gen. 27:41. So the rebellious Israelites being discouraged with the news which the spies brought who were sent to search the land, are said to have cried and wept, and yet in the midst of their lamentation to have murmured against God and his servants Moses and Aaron. So that simply tears are not a sign of true repentance unless they issue from a broken heart and contrite spirit, from a true hatred of sin, and from hearty sorrow conceived because we have offended our gracious God. On the other side if we be in sincerity of heart, truly sorry for our sins in these respects because we hate our sins and love God, and are displeased with ourselves because we have displeased our gracious father, endeavoring to forsake our sins and to lead a new life in holiness and righteousness, then though we can seldom or never shed tears which is the case of some of God's dearest children yet our repentance is true and unfeigned, for in this action the broken and contrite heart is more to be respected then the blubbered eyes howsoever most commonly they go together.

And so much concerning the signs of true repentance, which if after due examination we can find in ourselves, we may be assured that we are truly penitent; nay I will say more for the comfort of all humbled sinners if after diligent search they find not in their own sense and feeling these signs of true repentance in them at all or at least in very small measure, yet if they

earnestly desire and sincerely endeavor to attain unto true repentance using those good means ordained of God for this purpose, they may assure themselves that they have truly repented in the sight of God who accepteth of the will for the deed and of the affection for the action, as before I have shown.

And thus may we repel the temptation of Satan and receive comfort unto our own souls when he laboreth to persuade us that our repentance is not true and unfeigned, but false and hypocritical: but if the tempter cannot thus prevail, in the next place he will tell us that our repentance though it be true yet it is not sufficient, neither is there any proportion between our small repentance and our great sins as God's justice doth require, To which we must answer that the remission of our sins and reconciliation with God, dependeth not upon the dignity or quantity of our repentance, but upon the righteousness and full satisfaction of our Savior Jesus Christ; neither do we repent to the end that thereby we may in whole or in part satisfy for our sins; for though it could be imagined that the whole substance of our bodies should be resolved into tears, yet would they not all of them satisfy and appease God's wrath for one breach of any of his commandments, neither is it the water of our eyes no nor yet the blood of our hearts wounded deeply with sorrow, which will purge us from our sins either in respect of the guilt, punishment, or corruptions themselves, but it is the water and blood which flowed from our crucified Lord which cleanseth our guilty souls from the filthy spots of sin, being applied unto us by a true and lively faith. And therefore let us not with the popish rabble foolishly imagine that we can by our repentance merit anything at God's hand or satisfy his justice for our sins, for so shall we rob our Savior Christ of the glory due unto him for our salvation, and spoil our souls of all true comfort, but let us repent and

unfeignedly turn unto God in obedience to his commandment, and to the end that thereby we may approve our faith before God, the world, and our own consciences to be true by this lively and undoubted fruit thereof, For it cannot be if we have attained to the assurance of God's love and the remission of our sins for the merits and satisfaction of Christ, but that we will love God again, and this love cannot be idle but will show itself in a fervent zeal of God's glory, and this zeal will make us abhor sin whereby our gracious God is dishonored, and love righteousness whereby his holy name is glorified, and even sorrow with bitter grief when as we are overtaken with our corruptions and fall into sin, seeing our Savior Christ hath not spared his precious blood to purge us, when as nothing else could make us clean. Seeing therefore our repentance doth not satisfy God's justice nor purge away any sin, let us not be persuaded by Satan that reconciliation with God, and the remission of our sins dependeth on the dignity or quantity of our repentance, but let us assure ourselves that it is only the blood of Christ applied unto us by a lively faith, that purgeth us from all our sins, and maketh full satisfaction unto God's justice: And therefore though our repentance be but in small measure, yet so it be true and unfeigned it is a certain fruit of a lively faith, and he that believeth is made partaker of Christ and all his benefits.

Lastly Satan will object that many who have more bitterly sorrowed then we, and have shown more notable signs of exceeding repentance, have notwithstanding been rejected and condemned. To which we are to answer, that though such have shown more sorrow yet they have had no true repentance, in that their sorrow hath been destitute of faith and not so much for any hatred of sin or love of God, or unwillingness to displease him, as for horror of conscience and desperate fear of eternal condemnation. And

therefore though notwithstanding such sorrow, they have been condemned, yet we may be assured that upon our true repentance, whereby on the one side we look upon our sins and are grieved for them, and on the other side behold God's merciful and gracious countenance in Jesus Christ by a lively faith, we shall have the pardon of our sins and be made partakers of eternal salvation. For the promises of the Gospel are not made to those who afflict themselves with a desperate sorrow, without any hope or desire of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, but unto those who turn unto him by unfeigned repentance which is joined with a true faith and assurance of the remission of our sins and everlasting life.

CHAP. XLII. HOW WE MAY PROVE AGAINST SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS THAT WE HAVE TRUE FAITH.

And so much for answering those temptations of Satan, whereby he laboreth to prove that we have no repentance or at least a false and insufficient repentance, and consequently that the sweet and gracious promises of the gospel do not belong unto us: now we are to produce and answer such temptations as he allegeth and suggesteth into the minds of those who are effectually called against their faith; and these are of two sorts: the first whereby he laboreth to persuade them that they have no faith; the second that their faith (if they have any) is so weak, so imperfect and so mixed with doubting that it is altogether insufficient for their salvation. For the first he will thus frame his temptation. Though thou boastest much of thy faith, and thereby presumest that thou shalt attain unto salvation, herein thou mayest much deceive thyself and altogether fail of thy purpose; for there may be in many shows and shadows of faith, and yet nothing in them but infidelity, there are also many kinds of faith, and yet but one justifying and saving faith, there is a general or historical faith, there is a faith of working miracles which Judas had as well as Peter, there is a temporary or

hypocritical faith, there is a dead faith, there is also carnal presumption, wherewith many who have made goodly shows have been bewitched and deceived to their perdition; seeing then there are many false faiths, for one true faith, it is likely that thine is one of the greatest number, and consequently no true faith. And therefore do not flatter and deceive thyself in thy fond presumption, by applying unto thyself the sweet promises and gracious consolations of the gospel, for they appertain only unto those who are endued with a true lively and justifying faith, of which thou art altogether destitute.

And thus Satan endeavoreth to persuade the Christian exercised in the combat of temptations that he hath no faith, to the end that he may destroy it, and if it were possible bring it indeed to nothing: to which temptation we may first answer thus generally, that Satan's testimony is no sound argument to prove that we have no faith, nor to be believed of us, seeing he is not only a malicious murderer, who continually seeketh our destruction, but also a false liar from the beginning, who hath not feared to be lie men only but even God himself accusing him of untruth, envy and want of power in that temptation wherewith he assailed and overcame our first parents: and therefore if he be so audaciously impudent, as that he durst be lie God himself, we may assure ourselves he will make no scruple of be lying us. Seeing then Satan is a malicious liar, who desireth nothing more than our destruction, let us not doubt of our faith because of his testimony, nay rather because he saith we want faith, we may assure ourselves that we are endued therewith, for that he may work our final overthrow, it is his usual custom to tell the true believing Christian that he is destitute of faith, and contrariwise the unbelieving worldling that he hath a strong faith, whereas in truth there is nothing in him but secure presumption. And

therefore let it suffice us that we know we have a lively faith by the testimony of God's spirit, and by trying and examining our faith by the touchstone of God's words, for on these our faith dependeth and not on Satan's testimony.

But let us after a more especial manner arm ourselves against this temptation; and to this purpose it behooveth us first that we prove against Satan's false suggestions, that we have faith: and secondly that we arm ourselves by all good means with the shield of faith, seeking daily more strength and increase thereof, until at last we attain unto that fullness of faith which will fill our souls with true peace and comfort, and also beat back all the violence of Satan's subtle and fierce temptations.

For the first: we may prove that we have a true justifying faith by diverse arguments, as first by the degrees thereof, from which we may thus reason? Whosoever can truly find in himself the several degrees of a lively faith, he may certainly be assured that he is endued therewith, but I (may every Christian man say) do truly howsoever in weak measure find these degrees of a lively faith in me, and therefore I am assured that I am endued therewith.

The first degree unto true faith, is the illumination of our dark and ignorant minds with the knowledge of the Gospel, or with the main principles thereof, wrought in our minds by the outward means ordained of God, and the inward operation of his holy spirit; whereby we give our assent to that truth of God in which the understanding is informed. And of this the apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. 2:4, where he saith that it is the will of God, that all men should be saved, and come to the acknowledging of the truth, that is to the knowledge of the truth of God, and assenting thereunto.

The second degree is an assurance that our sins are pardonable, which is wrought in us by the knowledge and due consideration of God's infinite mercy, and Christ's invaluable merits and indefinite promises of the Gospel, made without exception to ill repentant and believing sinners; from whence also ariseth a general hope that we shall receive the pardon and remission of our sins, which hope is nourished and increased by this consideration, that the Lord hath placed us in his church, and graciously granted unto us the outward means whereby we may be brought unto unfeigned repentance, and have a lively faith wrought in us, even the ministry of the word and administration of the sacraments, upon which only condition the covenant of grace and all the sweet promises of the Gospel, are made and assured unto us.

The third degree is a hungering desire after grace, that is not only to be made partakers of God's mercy, and Christ's merits and righteousness by which we are justified, reconciled unto God, and receive the pardon and remission of all our sins, but also after the means and instrumental causes whereby the assurance of God's mercy and Christ's merits is derived unto us, namely true faith and unfeigned repentance, and the rest of the graces of God's sanctifying spirit. The which desire of grace is the beginning of grace, neither can we desire it till in some measure it be wrought in us; for regeneration and sanctification is begun at the same time in all the parts and faculties of our bodies and fowls, so that he who is truly regenerate many faculty or part, is also regenerate in the whole man. And therefore whosoever hath his will renewed and sanctified to desire that which is good, is also sanctified and renewed in his understanding, affections, and in all the powers and faculties of body and soul. Moreover (as before I have delivered at large) our desire of grace, faith, and repentance, are the graces

themselves which we desire, at least in God's acceptation, who accepteth of the will for the deed, and of our affections for the actions. And therefore if we earnestly desire to repent and believe, we do repent and believe in God's sight: and the Lord hath made the like gracious promises to this earnest desire of grace, which he hath made to those who find themselves plentifully endued with the graces themselves. So, Matth. 5:6. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. So the virgin Marie saith in her song, Luk. 1:53. That the Lord filleth the hungry with good things, and sendeth away the rich empty. And our Savior Christ calleth unto him such as thus hunger and thirst, promising that he will satisfy them. John 7:37, Rev. 21:6, and 22:17. Lastly whosoever feeleth this desire in him joined with a careful and continual use of the means whereby his desire may be satisfied, he may assure himself that the Lord who hath wrought in him, the will to desire, will also in his good time work in him ability to perform, and the graces which he so earnestly desires; for he will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry and will save them. As it is, Psal. 145:19. So Psal. 10:17. Lord thou hast heard the desire of the poor: thou preparest their heart and bendeest thine ear unto them. And therefore if in the midst of our afflictions and grievous temptations, we can cry out with the Prophet David, Psalm. 38:9. Lord I pour my whole desire before thee, and my sighing is not hid from thee. We may be assured how miserable soever we are in our own sense and feeling, that we are in the state of grace, and shall have our desires satisfied, for he that hath begun this good work in us, will also in his good time finish and perfect it, as the Apostle speaketh, Phil. 1:6.

The fourth degree is an approaching unto the throne of mercy, that we may in all humility confess our sins, and acknowledge that we are guilty of

death and condemnation, and also that we may in the name and mediation of Christ obtain the pardon and remission of them. And of this the Apostle speaketh, Heb. 4:16. Let us therefore go boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And the Prophet Hosea, chap. 14:2. O Israel return unto the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 3. Take unto you words and turn unto the Lord and say unto him: take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips. An example hereof we have in the Prophet David, Psal. 32:5. Then (saith he) I acknowledge my sin unto thee, neither hid I mine iniquity: for I thought I will confess my wickedness unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the punishment of my sin. So likewise the prodigal Son having attained unto the sight of his sin and to a desire of forgiveness, resolveth to go unto his father, and to say; Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. Luke 15:18,19.

The fifth degree is a specially persuasion wrought in us by God's spirit whereby we particularly apply unto us the sweet promises of the gospel, and are assured of God's love and favor, and of the remission of our sins for the merits, righteousness, and obedience of Jesus Christ, resting upon him alone for our salvation. An example whereof we have in the Apostle Paul, Gal. 2:20. Thus (saith he) I live yet not I now but Christ liveth in me: and in that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God, who hath loved me and given himself for me. And this persuasion ought to go before sense and experience, for first we believe and are persuaded of the truth of God's promises and resist diffidence and doubting, and afterwards follows joyful sense and experience of God's mercy, truth, and goodness towards us. And hence it is that the Apostle defineth faith to be the ground of things which

are hoped for, and the demonstration or evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1, and to this purpose our savior Christ saith to Thomas. John. 20:29. Thomas because thou hast seen me, thou believest, blessed are they which have not seen and have believed. An example hereof we have in the Canaanitish woman who though she had no experience of God's truth in his promises, yea though she had many repulses yet believed, and afterwards to her comfort had joyful experience of them, Matth. 15:27.

An these are the degrees of faith, which whosoever findeth in himself he may be assured that he hath a true lively and justifying faith notwithstanding all the temptations of Satan. If therefore having heard the gospel we have attained unto some measure of knowledge of the chief principles thereof, if we have given our assent unto this truth in which our understandings are informed; if hereby we have attained unto this assurance that our sins are pardonable and have conceived some hope in consideration of God's infinite mercy and Christ's merits that we shall be forgiven and pardoned; if we have an hungering desire after grace and mercy and highly esteem the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, so that we wish nothing more than to be made partakers of them; if by this desire we have been moved to flee unto the throne of grace, and there humbly acknowledging our sins have earnestly desired pardon and forgiveness. Lastly if at any time we have discerned in in ourselves a persuasion of God's love and of the pardon and remission of our sins, and that we have or do rest upon the alone merits and obedience of Christ Jesus for our justification and salvation, then may we be assured that we are endued with a true justifying faith.

The second argument to prove that we have a true and a lively faith is the testimony of God's spirit; for as the Apostle speaketh Rom. 8:15. We have the spirit of adoption whereby we cry abba father. 16. And the same spirit

beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and ver. 26. Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed &c. Whosoever therefore have this testimony in their hearts and consciences that they are the children of God, whosoever at any time feel or have felt the spirit of God powerful in them, in pouring out their souls in hearty prayer with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed, they may be assured that they have received the spirit of adoption and consequently are endued with true faith, for the spirit and the fruits thereof (amongst which faith is one of the chief) are never severed. Moreover the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 2:12, that we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are given to us of God. That is not only his spiritual graces in this life in which number faith is one of the greatest, but those excellent joys in God's kingdom in the life to come, of which also we have some knowledge and taste by the illumination of the same spirit. Lastly the Apostle affirmeth, 2 Cor. 1:22, that God hath sealed us, and hath given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts, and Eph. 1:13. He telleth the Ephesians that after they had heard the gospel and believed, they were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which was the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the possession purchased unto the praise of the glory of God. Wheresoever therefore is this testimony of the spirit which as an earnest or seal assureth them that they are the children of God there also is faith, for as the Apostle witnesseth after that we believe we are thus sealed.

The third argument to prove that we have faith is the conflict and fight which every Christian feeleth in himself between the spirit and the flesh, the world and the devil, and the combat which is between faith and doubting;

for so long as we are destitute of the spirit and a lively faith, we are wholly over-swayed with the flesh, and Satan like a mighty tyrant holdeth us captive peaceably and without any resistance; but when we have received the spirit of God and have faith wrought in our hearts, then beginneth a fierce battle which never endeth till by death our spiritual enemies get a final overthrow. Though therefore this fight be most sharp and exceeding troublesome to the poor Christian, yet he may thereby gather unto himself sound comfort and certain assurance that he is endued with the spirit of God and a lively faith; for when he discerneth that he is assaulted with Satan and his own corrupt flesh, he may be assured that Satan and his own corrupt flesh, he may be assured that Satan is diseased of his quiet possession by a superior power which can be no other but the power of God's spirit, secondly by his assaulting it manifestly appeareth that he findeth some resistance so as he cannot peaceably reenter, thirdly that howsoever our faith seem unto us never so weak yet it is so strengthened continually by virtue of God's spirit that Satan and all the power of hell cannot prevail against it, for otherwise how could such weakness withstand such might?

Lastly being assured that it is the spirit of God which assisteth and enableth us to withstand Satan, we may also be assured that in the end we shall obtain victory, unless we would fondly imagine that the devil is stronger than God, and the violence of his temptations more forcible to destroy us, then the spirit of God to protect and defend us; for now they have joined battle and either the one or the other must get the upper hand, either the spirit of God must thrust out Satan, or Satan the spirit of God; and therefore how can we doubt of conquest, seeing we are assured that God cannot take the foil, for his power is omnipotent and with a word of his mouth he is able to destroy Satan and all his adherents, and of his will we

need not to make any question, for it will not stand with his glory to receive a repulse by giving Satan place, after that he hath taken upon him our protection.

Yea (will the tempter say) but how wilt thou know that this battle is fought in thee, how canst thou be assured that it is the spirit of God which fighteth in thee against thy spiritual enemies, and not rather thine own tumultuous passions and perturbations; and diverse temptations suggested by the same devil. To which it is easy to make answer, for neither doth the flesh fight against Satan, nor Satan against the flesh, nor either of them against themselves, for so their kingdom being divided could not possibly stand, as our savior Christ himself hath taught us, Matth. 12:25,26. And therefore it must needs be some other force which causeth this opposition which can proceed from nothing else but the spirit of God.

But this will more manifestly appear, if we consider the contrary affections and actions which plainly show themselves in this battle, for we find our faith assaulted with doubting and infidelity, and these also again beaten back after they have gotten some ground and subdued with the strength of faith; we discern also our affiance in God shrewdly shaken with diffidence and distrust, and afterwards this distrust vanquished again by affiance, so as after we have uttered through the violence ostentation some diffident and impatient speeches, yet at the length we grow to Job's resolution: Though he kill me yet will I trust in him. We may also discern our zeal sometime so hot in God's service that it expelleth coldness and the fruit thereof dullness and drowsiness of spirit, and sometimes by them it is cooled and in outward appearance quenched; and the like may be said of all the other fruits of the flesh and the spirit. Besides which fight and striving between them and their fruits the Christian may observe in himself a

misliking of the corruptions of the flesh, great grief and vexation of mind, because he is still subject unto them and an earnest desire to be freed from them, joined with an holy endeavor in the use of the means which are ordained of God for this purpose; and howsoever through the violence of Satan's temptations and his own corruptions ye be sometimes led captive into sin yet afterwards he is grieved for it, he hateth and abhorreth it, and earnestly desireth and endeavoreth for the time to come to leave and forsake it, and to serve the Lord in newness of life. Now whence doth all this opposition and contrariety proceed? Shall we say from the flesh, why it is against all reason; for as the Apostle James disputeth, Jam. 3:11. Doth a fountain send out at one place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree bring forth olives, or a vine figs? Or rather as our savior Christ reasoneth, Matth. 7:16. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? So may I demand can the flesh in the which as the Apostle affirmeth dwelleth no good thing, bring forth the fruits of the spirit which are quite contrary to the nature thereof, namely sorrow for sin, hatred of itself, and the corruptions thereof, and earnest desire of sanctification and holiness of life: it is impossible. And therefore we may conclude that they are the fruits of God's spirit in us, and consequently that we are the sons of God who are endued with a true and lively faith; for as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, which privilege belongeth only to the faithful as appeareth, John. 1:12. As many as received him to them he gave power to be the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. So that whosoever have the spirit have faith also, for the spirit and faith which is a fruit thereof cannot be severed.

The fourth argument whereby we may be assured that we have faith, is our mortification and dying unto sin and rising again to newness of life; for

the blood of Jesus Christ which is applied unto us by faith as it doth wash away the guilt and punishment of our sins, so doth it also cleanse us in some measure from the corruptions themselves; and as his death and obedience hath merited the pardon of our sins, so also God's spirit by virtue whereof we are more and more freed from the bondage and servitude of sin and Satan, and as by his resurrection he hath made way for our second resurrection whereby we rise to everlasting happiness, so also for our first resurrection whereby we rise from sin to newness of life. If therefore we can find in ourselves that our sins and corruptions are by little and little mortified, that we strive and endeavor after holiness and righteousness of life; if our understandings be somewhat enlightened in the knowledge of God's truth and our stubborn wills inclined to holy obedience, if we discern that our affections are in some measure changed and renewed, then may we be assured that we are endued with a true and lively faith, which hath applied unto us Christ Jesus and his bloodshed, death, and merits, by virtue whereof this work of regeneration is begun in us.

Lastly, we may be assured that we have faith by the several fruits of sanctification and regeneration which proceed from it: for example when we can sorrow and grieve for our sins past, not for any worldly loss or fear of punishment, but because thereby we have offended God, when as we hate our present sins and corruptions, especially those which stick fastest unto us, and are most pleasing to our corrupt nature; when as we endeavor and strive to forsake and mortify all sin though our carnal affection be much endeared to it, by reason of some great pleasure or profit which it bringeth with it, avoiding with no less care those sins which bring worldly benefit, then those which are accompanied with shame and punishment, when as we love God even when he afflicteth us and in obedience to his commandment,

perform such holy duties, and embrace such virtues, not only which are commendable in the world, but also those which are accompanied with shame and reproach, when as we love our brethren, yea even our enemies and show this our love by giving unto those who want, and forgiving those who offend us, and when more especially we extend this love and the fruits thereof to those who are of the household of faith, and amongst these principally to God's ministers who are instruments appointed of God, for our conversion and salvation, when as we can submit ourselves unto God's will, and rest contented in all estates with his good pleasure, when as we loath this life and the vanities of the world, and desire our dissolution that we may be with Christ and be freed from our sins; when as we are patient in afflictions, and in the midst of them have some hope of tasting God's mercy and goodness, grounding our hope upon God's promises and our own former experience; when as we delight in the hearing and meditating in God's word, and continue constant in the profession and practice of his truth, not only when our obedience is good cheap, but also when it is dear and very costly, and as well when it is accompanied with loss, as when we are in hope to gain thereby. These and many other the branches of sanctification are the undoubted signs of a true and lively faith, and therefore whosoever after due examination, find that they are endued with them, may also be assured notwithstanding all Satan's suggestions to the contrary that they have faith, for this is the root from which these fruits spring and they cannot be severed.

CHAP. XLIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS GROUNDED UPON OUR WANT OF SENSE AND FEELING OF FAITH, ANSWERED.

And these are the signs by which every believer may be assured that he hath a true and lively faith: which howsoever they be to be observed in every faithful man, yet not at all times, for oftentimes it cometh to pass that the believing Christian doth neither feel his faith nor the fruits thereof, especially in the infancy of faith and in the combat of temptations, which giveth occasion unto Satan of suggesting into his mind a dangerous temptation. Thou braggest much (will he say) of thy faith, and thou confirmest, this thy persuasion that thou art endued therewith with many signs and fruits which have accompanied it; but if now thou examine thyself a right thou shalt find in thee no such matter; and not to stand upon other arguments, I appeal unto the testimony of thine own conscience, whether at this present thou hast any sense or lively feeling of faith, or canst discern those fruits thereof which before thou hast spoken of; if not, then do not flatter thyself in vain with a fond persuasion, for though thou wilt not believe me, yet at least believe thine own sense and feeling which plainly

telleth thee that either thou never haddest any true faith indeed, or if thou haddest yet that now it is quite lost and perished.

For the answering of which temptation we must distinguish between the habit of faith, and the act of faith; or between faith itself and the work and function thereof, which is to apprehend and apply Christ's merits and God's mercy and loving favor, with all the gracious promises of the gospel; as it is an habitual faculty of the mind, it always continueth and abideth in God's children, after it is once wrought in them by the spirit of God, but in respect of the function act or work thereof it hath many intermissions, and oftentimes seemeth to be cast as it were into a dead sleep. Now we are to know that we cannot sensibly discern faith, as it is an habitual virtue or faculty of the mind although we have it in great measure in us, but only so far forth as it manifesteth itself in his actions, works, and fruits; and therefore it is an unsound and false manner of reasoning, to infer because we do not sensibly feel and discern that we have faith, therefore we are destitute thereof; for the habit of faith or faith itself may be in us, and yet for a time may be so hindered by outward accidents, that it cannot show itself in his actions and fruits, by which alone it is sensibly discerned.

But I will make this more clear and manifest by some familiar similitudes and examples, we know that in the sicknesses and diseases of the body nature is so enfeebled and overcome, that sometimes the party affected falleth into a dead swoon wherein he is deprived for a time, not only of the use of the understanding, reason, and memory, but also of his senses, motion, and vital functions, so that in respect of sense and outward appearance, he is quite deprived of all his vital sensitive and intellectual faculties, but yet a while after by reason of some outward means used, or by the secrete power of nature working in him, he is restored to the use of all

again, and liveth, feeleth, moveth, and understandeth as in former times, because he had not lost these faculties but only by some grievous impediment was hindered of the use of them in their actions and functions; so that here this manner of reasoning appeareth absurd and false, these faculties of the soul cannot be sensibly discerned, and therefore he is quite destitute of them: And thus also it is in respect of our faith and other habitual virtues, oftentimes through the sickness of the soul in sin or the outward violence of Satan's temptations, it seemeth cast into a swoon and deprived of all the spiritual faculties and virtues thereof, faith, love, zeal, hope, patience and the rest, but yet soon after by hearing the word, by godly admonitions, instructions, reprehensions, and consolations made effectual by the inward operation of God's spirit it is revived, and all the spiritual graces thereof show themselves again in their wonted strength; so that this inference is no less false then the other, there is no sensible appearance of these sanctifying gifts and graces, and therefore they are quite lost and perished, for the graces themselves remain though for a time they appear not in their actions and fruits.

So in the time of winter the fruitful trees are so nipped with the cold frosts, and so weatherbeaten with tempestuous storms that they appear naked and bare, not only without fruit but also leaves, so as if we shall judge according to sense and outward appearance we should falsely conclude that they are dead; for by experience we know that they live and suck nourishment out of the earth, even when they are most spoiled of their summer beauty, and though they are tossed with the winds yet hereby they are not hurt but rather take deeper root and so are made capable of more nourishment, and though they be nipped with cold frosts yet hereby they are not made barren nay rather hereby their worms and cankers are killed, and

they prepared and made fit to bring forth more fruit in the time of summer, when the comfortable spring approacheth, and the sweet showers and warm sun beams fall and descend upon them. And thus it is with the spiritual graces in the poor Christian, in the winter of affliction they are nipped with the cold frosts of fear and doubting, and weatherbeaten with the boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations, so as they seem even dead at the very root if we shall judge according to outward sense and appearance, but yet by experience we find that it is far otherwise, for hereby they are not overturned though they be shaken, and this shaking maketh them to take more deep root in godliness, and though they be nipped and pinched with fears and doubting's yet they perish not, only the canker-worm of pride, sonde presumption, and self-confidence is mortified and killed; and they hereby are prepared and fitted to bring forth more plentiful fruits of holiness and righteousness, when the spring of true comfort cometh, wherein the sweet showers of God's holy spirit distil upon them, and the warm sunshine of God's love and favor again appeareth to them.

The sire is sometime so covered with ashes that it sendeth forth neither light nor heat, and therefore in outward sense and appearance it seemeth quite extinguished, but when the ashes are removed and more wood added to it, it bursteth out into a great flame, and makes all the standers by to perceive his heat and light; and so the graces of God's spirit are sometimes so covered with the ashes of our corruptions that there appeareth no spark of them nor yet any heat of true comfort, but when our corruptions are removed with unfeigned repentance, and a new supply of grace ministered unto them by God's spirit, then doth their light appear unto us and warm our hearts with true comfort, and not to us alone but even those about us see our shining light and glorify our heavenly father.

A man hath not always the use of his senses, reason, and understanding as in his sleep, but because we cannot sensibly discern these faculties shall we therefore conclude that this man who is a sleep is senseless unreasonable and without understanding; it were most absurd; for if we but expect a while till he be thoroughly awakened our argument will appear manifestly false: and so sometime the poor Christian is overtaken with the sleep of drowsy security and is overwhelmed for a time with hardness of heart, and dullness of spirit, so as none of those spiritual graces which are in him can sensibly be discerned by himself or others, but shall he or we conclude or believe Satan so concluding, that he never had them, or now is deprived of them? Why it were as absurd as the other. For when he is awaked out of his drowsy sleep by the voice of the Lord sounding in his ears, and by the good motions of his holy spirit his faith, love, zeal, and all other virtues and graces show themselves in their fruits and actions, as manifestly as in former times.

Seeing then those arguments which are taken from sense and feeling so often fail, let us not be persuaded by Satan's temptations to believe that we are destitute of faith and other sanctifying graces of God's holy spirit, because at sometimes we cannot sensibly discern them, for though now our souls seem so sick in the sense of sin that there appeareth no sign of life, yet the Lord will raise us up again and restore us to perfect health, though now we see no fruits of faith whilst we are nipped with the winter of temptations, yet the Lord will water us with his holy spirit, and warm our frozen hearts with the lively beams of his love and favor so as we shall bring forth abundant fruits in due time and season; though now there appear not a spark of grace in us by reason all is covered with the ashes of our corruptions, yet the Lord will surely ad a fresh supply and blow upon us by

his holy spirit so that our light and heat shall appear to ourselves and others, and though now our spirits be oppressed with drowsy dullness, yet the Lord in his good time will cause us to awake by hearing his voice, sounding in our ears out of his holy word, and will again quicken and revive us with his holy spirit, so as after this sleep we shall be enabled to follow with cheerfulness our labors and works, both which concern his service, and those duties also which concern our brethren, only let us not tempt the Lord in prescribing him a time, but wait his leisure and he will surely help us.

CHAP. XLIIII. HOW THE WEAK
CHRISTIAN IS TO COMFORT
HIMSELF, WHEN HE IS DEPRIVED
OF THE SENSE OF FAITH, AND
SENSIBLY FEELETH THE CONTRARY
CORRUPTIONS.

But thou wilt say how is it possible that my soul should receive any comfort, or that I should preserve myself from falling into utter desperation, seeing I cannot feel in me any good thing, nor discern any spark of grace? What hope remaineth when as I plainly discern in stead of faith, doubting and infidelity, instead of the love of God, hatred and rebellion, instead of zeal, coldness and drowsy dullness, and instead of all sanctifying graces, nothing else but a heavy mass of filthy corruptions? I answer that when thou hast no comfort in thy present sense, and feeling then thou must call to thy remembrance the times past, in which thou hast by faith apprehended God's love, mercy, and goodness towards thee, and brought forth the fruits of thy faith in the works of holiness, appertaining to God's service and the works of Christian righteousness belonging to our brethren, for we may assure ourselves that if ever we have truly discerned

these graces of God's spirit, by the fruits of sanctification in us, they are not taken from us, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, as it is, Rom. 11:29. And where he hath begun a good work therein he will finish it and bring it to perfection. As the Apostle speaketh, Phil. 1:6. We know that the woman being with child feeleth no life nor motion of the child diverse months together, after the time of her conception, and after that she hath felt it stir and move oftentimes, there is an intermission wherein she feeleth not the motion there of a good space together, and yet notwithstanding because in former times she hath felt it, she is persuaded that a live child is in her, and comfortably hopeth to have happy travail. And thus it fareth with God's children oftentimes, after that by the seed of the word faith is begotten and conceived in them, they feel no life, motion, nor undoubted signs thereof a long while, and after that they have the remission of their sins and are reconciled unto God, they have not the feeling and sense of pardon and reconciliation diverse months, yea sometimes many years together which the Lord in his wisdom and mercy doth that he may move them hereby unto more serious repentance, and earnestly to hunger after a greater measure of faith, carefully using the means ordained for this purpose, and that they may more esteem and be more thankful for his invaluable benefits after that they have full assurance of them. And after they have a feeling of faith and other spiritual graces by their motions and fruits, oftentimes again they are deprived of it, either because they have wounded their consciences by falling into some known sin, or for that it pleaseth the Lord to exercise their faith and manifest his power in their weakness, moving them hereby to deny themselves and to rest wholly upon him, yielding unto him the whole glory and praise of their salvation. What therefore is to be done in such a case? Surely they are not utterly to be discouraged nor to suffer themselves to

sink into the gulf of desperation; but as the sense and feeling of their state ought to humble them under God's hand, and to move them to enter into a due examination of themselves, and to a serious repentance for their sins, so they must take comfort unto themselves, and prop up their declining faith by calling to mind former times wherein the Lord hath shown his merciful and gracious countenance unto them, and wherein they in token of thankfulness have glorified God, by their holiness and righteousness of life. An example whereof we have in the Prophet David, Psal. 77, who being grievously afflicted, could not receive in his soul any true comfort, for howsoever he did think upon the Lord yet he was still troubled, and though he prayed unto him yet his spirit was full of anguish. What help did he then find in this his present distress? He telleth us in the fifth verse: Then (saith he) I considered the days of old, and the years of ancient time; I called to remembrance my song in the night, namely his songs of thanksgiving, whereby he had praised God for his great benefits, and ver. 11. I remembered the works of the Lord, certainly I remembered thy wonders of old. So the holy man Job apprehending and conceiving of God as of his enemy, in respect of his present sense and feeling, and being moved by his friends to doubt of his graces, which he had received and to condemn himself for an hypocrite, comforteth himself and strengtheneth his faith in the midst of all these grievous temptations, by calling to his remembrance his fruits of faith and works of sanctification, which he had discerned in himself in former times, as appeareth, chap. 31. Whose example if the children of God in like distress will follow, how miserable soever they are in their present sense and feeling, yet they may receive unto themselves comfort, because God's gifts and calling are without repentance.

But here Satan will further object that we are not only without all sense and feeling of faith, but also that we do sensibly feel the heavy burden of God's wrath, and plainly discern his frowning and angry countenance against us, and therefore howsoever those children of God who are in his love and favor may have some faith in them although it do not always so sensibly appear, yet it is impossibly that we should have any spark thereof seeing we have not any sense of God's love and favor; nay do sensibly perceive the clean contrary; to which we are to answer that faith doth not rely itself upon our sense and feeling; for as the apostle saith faith is the ground of things (not presently enjoyed but) which are hoped for, and the evidence or demonstration of things (not which are subject to the senses and sensibly discerned but) which are not seen, Heb. 11. I and we believe that such joys are prepared for us as neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor the heart of man conceived as it is, 1 Cor. 2:9, and it is a kind of infidelity to believe only those things which are subject unto our senses and understandings; and therefore when Thomas would not believe that Christ was risen before it was made manifest to his senses he is reprov'd for infidelity, be not (saith he) faithless but faithful. So that when our sense and feeling cease their faith beginneth his chief work; and the most excellent faith showeth itself most clearly when we have no sense and feeling, or when we discern and feel the plain contrary; for it is an easy matter to be strong in faith when God showeth himself gracious and merciful; but when he appeareth unto us like an angry judge, when as his wrath flameth out against us, then to behold his love through the vizard of anger, to apprehend by faith his mercy and goodness towards us, when our senses apprehend nothing but his wrath and displeasure, to grow to Job's resolution in the midst of our bitter agonies and grievous afflictions, though he kill me yet

will I trust in him, and when we have received many repulses and bitter snubs yet with the Canaanitish woman to continue our suite, argueth such a faith as is hardly found no not in Israel. Our want of sense therefore of God's love and favor doth not argue want of faith, for our faith is not grounded upon our sense and feeling, but upon God's gracious promises, immutable goodness, and infallible truth, and if ever we have tasted of God's love and mercy, whatsoever we apprehend in our present sense and feeling, faith concludeth that we are still in his love and favor, for he is without change or shadow of change as the apostle speaketh, Jam. 1:17, and whom he loveth to the end he loveth them, as our Savior hath taught us. John. 13:1.

Though then our sense of God's love fail yet may our faith continue strong, as appeareth plainly in the example of Job, who though he conceived of God in his sense and feeling that he had hid his face from him and took him for his enemy, though he seemed to write bitter things against him and made him to possess the sins of his youth, yet by a lively faith he still rested and relied upon him, protesting that though he should slay him yet he would trust in him, as appeareth Job. 13:15. Yea our Savior Christ himself who could not sin through infidelity, in respect of his present sense and feeling complaineth that God had forsaken him.

If therefore Satan go about to persuade us that we are without faith because we presently apprehend not God's love nor feel the sweet taste of his goodness we are to answer that we are not to build our assurance upon our own sense and feeling, but upon God's unchangeable goodness and gracious promises made unto us in Christ Jesus; and if at any time our sense and feeling tell us one thing (namely that God hath withdrawn his love from us and will never again look graciously upon us) and the word of God

assure us of another thing (to wit that God will never forsake us, but continue his love towards us unto the end) we are not to give credit unto our own feeling but unto God's word; for otherwise what do we else but prefer our oft deceiving sense before God's infallible truth, and imagine that we can better discern and judge of our estate then God himself? But the word of God telleth us that if we turn unto the Lord by unfeigned repentance sorrowing for our sins past, hating our present corruptions, and desiring and endeavoring to mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof and to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life; and if we believe in Jesus Christ resting upon him for our salvation; or though presently we feel not this faith and repentance yet if ever in former time we have discerned it in us, that then we are received into God's love and favor and therefore shall have his love continued unto us unto the end, be made partakers of his gracious promises and heirs of everlasting life; for the promises of the gospel are not restrained to those who feel their faith, but to those that have faith, not to those who feel that they do believe, but unto those who do believe.

Neither is the not feeling of God's love and favor a good argument to prove that we are out of his love and favor, or the apprehension of his wrath and anger in our sense and feeling a sound reason to persuade us that we are subject to his wrathful displeasure; seeing the being of a thing, and the sensible discerning of the thing to be, are diverse, and therefore howsoever at sometimes they concur, yet oftentimes they are severed and disjoined: so that the conclusion which is inferred negatively from the senses, to prove the not being of their object is not only commonly false, but also oftentimes absurd and ridiculous; for example sometimes we see not the beams of the sun, as in the night season, or when it is covered with some thick black cloud, but shall we here hence conclude that the sun shineth not, nor will

ever again appear unto us? So the bright beams of God's love and favor are sometimes hidden from us in the night of temptations, and so shadowed with the cloud of our grievous sins that we cannot sensibly discern them, but shall we hence infer that there is no grace and mercy to be found with God, or that he will never again make them shine upon us? The one is as absurd as the other, and both grossly false. So sometimes the Sun is eclipsed by the interposition of the Moon, so as we cannot discern his light or very dimly, but if any man should conclude from hence that it were quite taken away, or that we were deprived utterly of his life-preserving influence, the experience of two or three hours would show the sottish weakness of his sensible argument, and so in like manner God's favor and love are sometimes so eclipsed with the interposition of some great afflictions, that we cannot discern them for a time or but very dimly, but if we shall infer hereof that they are quite taken from us, and that they cast forth no comfortable influence on us, our present preservation from being swallowed up into utter destruction, and the speedy return of wanted joy and consolation, by the apprehension of God's love and goodness towards us, will evidently show that this argument taken from the senses is void of reason.

Lastly, it appeareth by the examples of God's children from time to time, that though they have been endued with a great measure of faith, and in a high degree of favor and love with almighty God, yet sometimes in their own sense they have found in them, instead of faith nothing but doubting, diffidence and infidelity, and for God's love and favor, they have apprehended nothing in their present feeling, but the wrathful anger of God, and his grievous displeasure. Look upon the holy man Job who by God's own testimony was the justest man upon earth, and highly in God's love and

favor, and you shall find that sometimes he showeth in his grievous afflictions no sign of faith, but gross doubting and in outward appearance utter despair of God's mercy and love, for he curseth the day of his nativity, and wisheth that he had never been borne, he complaineth that God was his enemy, and had made him as a mark whereat he shot venomous arrows, that God's terrors did fight against him, and that he did hide his loving countenance from him. So the Prophet David a man according to God's own heart showeth plainly that sometime he hath no sense and feeling of the graces of God's spirit in him, as when he desireth the Lord to create in him a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within him, to restore him to the joy of his salvation and to stablish him with his free spirit; and sometimes he apprehendeth in his present sense and feeling, instead of God's love and favor, nothing but his wrath and displeasure, and therefore complaineth as one rejected and forsaken of God. So, Psal. 22:1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my health, and from the words of my roaring. 2. O my God I cry by day but thou hearest not and in the night and have no audience. And Psal. 77:7, he thus complaineth, will the Lord absent himself forever? And will he show no more favor? 8. Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? 9. Hath God forgotten to be merciful? Hath he shut up his tender mercies in displeasure? 10. And I said this is my death, &c. So, Psal. 88:14. Lord why doest thou reject my soul and hidest thy face from me? 15. I am afflicted and at the point of death, from my youth I suffer thy terrors doubting of my life. 16. Thine indignations go over me and thy fear hath cut me off. The Prophet Jeremiah likewise being grievously afflicted in body and mind, was for a time deprived of the sense of God's love and favor, apprehending nothing but present misery, and instead of faith, affiance in God, peace of

conscience, and other sanctifying graces, he bewrayeth his doubting, diffidence and impatency, cursing the day of his birth, and even the man that brought first news hereof to his father, and wishing that his mother had been his grave, or her womb a perpetual conception. As appeareth, Jer. 20:14,15. &c. The like may be said of the Apostle Peter, for where I pray you was the sense and feeling of his faith, affiance in God, zeal of his glory, love, fear, and other sanctifying graces, when as he shamefully denied his master, yea forswore him with bitter cursing? And yet we must either grant that Peter at this time was endued with a lively faith, or else that the prayer of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was not effectual, for he had prayed for him that his faith might not fail, as appeareth, Luk. 22:32. But what should I insist in the examples of these the servants of God, seeing the alone example of Christ himself is sufficient to clear this point, for though he were the only begotten and best beloved Son of his heavenly father yet in his own sense and feeling, he apprehended nothing but God's wrath and grievous displeasure, and lamentably complaineth as a man abandoned and cast out of all love and favor: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, which words show both Christ's affiance in God and his present apprehension in his sense and feeling, for in respect of his affiance and trust in God he calleth him still his God, in respect of his sense and feeling he complaineth that he is forsaken. Whereby it is manifest that a man may be dearly beloved of God, and yet for a time apprehend nothing but his wrath and displeasure, that he may have faith and affiance in God, yet at the same time be deprived of all sense and feeling of his love and favor. And therefore when we are exercised in the combat of temptations, let not Satan persuade us that we are utterly deprived of the love and favor of God, because through the violence of his temptations and grievousness of our

afflictions we do not apprehend it, nor that we are destitute of faith and all other spiritual graces because we do not sensibly discern them in our feeling, for this hath been the state of the dear children of God from the beginning of the world and shall be to the end thereof.

CHAP. XLV. OF THE MEANS WHEREBY OUR FAITH MAY BE STRENGTHENED AND INCREASED.

And so much concerning those reasons whereby we may prove that we have faith, and also answer Satan's temptations whereby he laboreth to persuade us that we are destitute thereof. The second means whereby we may arm ourselves against Satan and his suggestions, is that we most earnestly labor and endeavor after we have found that we have some faith to increase therein, and grow up from saith to saith until we come to that fullness of persuasion which will bring such peace of conscience as Satan and all his temptations shall not be able to disturb. Otherwise we shall be continually subject to fears and doubting's, and exceedingly shaken with Satan's temptations, and in truth not without cause if we stand still at a state, for howsoever Satan and all the power of hell cannot prevail against the least measure of true faith to quench and utterly to destroy it, yet this will bring no sound comfort unto those which rest contented with this little quantity and never labor after increase, because this is a shrewd presumption that their faith is false and counterfeit, for as soon as the seed of true faith is sown in us, and hath taken root it sprouteth up until it come

to full ripeness, in which respect our Savior compareth it to a grain of mustard seed, which though it be one of the least seeds of the garden, yet it groweth to a great tree. Neither in truth is it possible that any who have tasted of true faith, and of those inestimable benefits which it assureth us of, should content themselves with a small pittance and never labor after more, for who is it that having tasted and eaten a little bit of some delicious meat, doth not with a hungering appetite desire more till he be filled and satisfied, who is it that having any weak title and assurance of some goodly inheritance, doth not earnestly desire and use all good and lawful means whereby his title may be strengthened and his assurance confirmed? And can we think that any have truly tasted of faith and the excellent benefits which accompany it, as namely assurance of God's love, and the remission of our sins, peace of conscience, joy in the holy Ghost, who content themselves with a little modicum and never hunger after more? Or can we imagine that we have any small title or true assurance of those unspeakable joys of God's kingdom, and that unluable patrimony of everlasting glory, if we never use means to confirm our title and strengthen our assurance? Surely it is impossible, and therefore if we would have any sound comfort and peace of conscience, if we would ever attain to a certain persuasion that we have true faith indeed, let us use most carefully and diligently all good means, whereby we may strengthen and confirm our faith, until it grow from a small seed to a great tree, which will bring forth plentiful fruits of godliness and righteousness, and until it wax of a small spark unto a great flame which will thoroughly warm our hearts with true comfort, which are naturally frozen with fear and doubting, for howsoever Satan cannot quench the least spark of lively faith, yet he will so cover it with the ashes of his temptations that we shall neither discern the light nor feel the heat thereof.

Now the means which we are thus carefully to use are of two sorts: the first tending to the increasing and strengthening of our faith, the other serving to preserve us from doubting and desperation. The means to strengthen and increase our faith are diverse, the first is the frequent and attentive hearing of God's word, for as this is the ordinary means whereby faith is begotten and begun in us, so is it a chief means to strengthen and confirm it; as it is that lively seed from which faith doth spring, so is it that heavenly dew whereby it is watered and increased from a little plant to a great tree: and therefore as it is not sufficient for a fruitful harvest, that the blade or branch should sprout up unless it be watered continually with sweet dew and showers from heaven, and so preserved from dying and withering, so if ever we mean to reap the ripe fruits of faith to our everlasting comfort, we must be careful that not only it take rooting, and bring forth a blade of an outward profession, but also that it may be watered with this heavenly dew of God's word, otherwise when the sun of affliction and persecution ariseth it will die and wither.

The second means to strengthen our faith is diligently to read and mediate in God's word especially the Gospel, wherein is contained those sweet and gracious promises which are made in definitely unto all who repent of their sins, and believe in Jesus Christ, resting and relying upon him alone for their salvation. And to this purpose our Savior willeth the Jews to search the Scriptures, because they are they which testify of him. John. 5:39. And hereby David saith that he was comforted in his troubles and even quickened when he was dead, Psal. 119:50.

The third means is holy conference with our godly brethren; for hereby those which are falling are confirmed and the weary hands and weak knees strengthened as Eliphaz speaketh, Job. 43:4. And those who are weak in

faith are comforted and established with the godly instructions, profitable exhortations, and sweet consolations of those who are more strong; and therefore the Apostle Paul exhorts those who had attained unto a great measure of faith that they admit such as were weak into their company to be made partakers of their Christian conferences to the end that hereby they might be more and more strengthened and confirmed. Rom. 14:1.

The fourth means is the holy use of the sacraments; for the Lord hath added them as seals to the handwriting of his covenant of grace to confirm our faith in the full assurance of his promises, and to take away all doubting. For whereas the weak conscience might make some scruple in respect that the promises of the gospel in the preaching of the word are delivered indefinitely and after a general manner, in the use of the sacraments they are assured unto them particularly and as it were by name, and that not after some obscure and hidden manner, but most familiarly by such common signs are subject to the senses and within the reach of the shallowest capacity.

A fifth means to confirm our faith is to be continually conversant in good works, and to bring forth the fruits of holy obedience, for hereby our faith is exercised and by exercise strengthened and increased; whereas contrariwise the neglect hereof doth wound the conscience and so quench the lively heat of faith that though it be not quite extinguished, yet it will not sensibly be discerned. As therefore the strength of the body is increased by exercise and for want thereof waxeth faint and languisheth, and as the stomach is by outward exercise of the body made more fit to perform his duty of concoction; so our faith being exercised in good works is made more strong and fit to perform his duty in applying Christ and the sweet promises of the

gospel unto us, and without this spiritual exercise it waxeth faint and the strength thereof abateth.

The last means to strengthen and increase our faith is continual and fervent prayer, for faith is not in our own power but it is the free gift of God, as the Apostle teacheth us, Eph. 2:8, neither can any man come unto our Savior Christ by a lively faith except it be given him of the father, as himself speaketh. John. 6:65. And therefore when we see the small measure of our faith, we are with the apostles to pray unto the Lord that he will increase it. Luk. 17:5. And when we perceive that it is grievously assaulted with doubting and infidelity, we are in fervency of spirit to cry out with the father of the possessed child: Lord I believe help my unbelief. Mark. 9:24. And then we may be assured that the Lord will hear us and satisfy our godly desires, making us to grow up from faith to faith, till at length we attain unto such a fullness of persuasion, that we shall be able truly to say with the Apostle; I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, as it is, Rom. 8:38,39.

And these are the means which properly tend to the strengthening and increasing of our faith, which whosoever carefully and conscionably use, they shall assuredly find them effectual for this purpose: Now we are to speak of those means whereby we may be preserved from doubting and desperation, of which I shall not need to speak much, seeing the most of these points are handled before.

The first means to preserve us from desperation is to call continually unto our remembrance that the promises of the gospel are general and indefinite, excluding none how unworthy and sinful soever they be, if they do not

exclude themselves through their own infidelity; So Matth. 11:28, our Savior calleth all humbled and repentant sinners without exception, saying, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will ease you. And John. 3:16. God so loved the world that he sent his only beloved son, that as many as believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life. So Matth. 9:13, our Savior saith that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; either then refuse the name of repentant sinner or acknowledge that he came to save thee. And John. 6:40, our savior saith that it is his fathers will who sent him that every man who believeth in him should have everlasting life. Seeing therefore God taketh no exception, nor excludeth any let us not exclude ourselves through our want of faith and infidelity.

Secondly, we are to consider that the Lord hath not only propounded his gracious promises unto us, but also hath commanded us to believe them. So, Mark. 1:15. Repent and believe the gospel. And 1 John. 3:23. This then is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ &c. now to believe in Christ is not only to believe that he is a savior, for this even the devils believe also, but to believe that he is our savior and to rest wholly upon him for our salvation, and to say with the Apostle Paul, Gal. 2:20. I live by the faith in the son of God, who hath loved me and given himself for me. And to the end that we may be armed against doubting, and enabled to perform this commandment, it hath pleased the Lord to add unto his word his oath, that by two immutable things wherein it is impossible that God should lie we should have strong consolation, as the apostle speaketh, Heb. 6:18. Yea, he hath also unto his word and handwriting annexed his Sacraments as seals, that there might be no place left for doubting. Seeing therefore the Lord hath expressly commanded us to

believe, and used all means to enable us to perform his commandment, let us not now dispute the question whether we are worthy to believe or no, or whether such grievous sinners are bound to this duty, but setting all excuses aside let us believe in obedience to God's commandment.

Thirdly, we must not always set before us the innumerable multitude and huge weight of our sins, but withal call to our remembrance the infinite mercies of God and merits of Christ, who hath offered unto his father a propitiatory sacrifice and full satisfaction for all our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of all the world, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 John. 2:2. Seeing therefore our debt how great soever it be is already discharged; and our sins how outrageous soever they be, are fully punished long ago in our Savior Christ, and seeing God himself who hath received this debt and taken this punishment, is of infinite justice and mercy, why should we now despair of pardon? Nay, why should we not most certainly be assured that the roll and reckoning of our sins how long soever it be, is quite blotted out and cancelled, so as they shall never again be laid to our charge.

Fourthly, we are to consider that desperation itself is a most heinous and outrageous sin, for it causeth men to deny God's truth in his promises and to account him a liar, as the Apostle plainly speaketh, 1 John. 5:10. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believed not the record, that God witnessed of that his Son, it maketh them to deny the infiniteness of his mercies as being overmatched with the multitude of their sins, and the sufficiency of Christ's merits, as though they were not a full satisfaction for their horrible offenses: yea it maketh them to deny God's justice in thinking that he will punish that sin again in them, which hath already been punished in Christ, and exact that debt which he hath already discharged. Now to deny the truth, mercy, and justice of God is to deny God himself,

for his attributes are his essence, the truth of God is the true God, the mercy of God is the merciful God, and the justice of God is the just God. So that he who despaireth falleth into the most horrible and capital sin of Atheism even the highest degree of wickedness, and therefore more heinously offendeth God by this sin alone, then by all his other sins whatsoever, though they appear never so monstrous and abominable in his own eyes. For example the sin of Cain in despairing of God's mercy, was far more horrible then his monstrous sin which he committed in murdering his own brother: the sin of Judas in despairing of God's mercy, was without comparison greater than his sin in betraying his Lord and master, in a word to commit Idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and such like are heinous sins, but utterly to despair of God's mercy is greater than they all. Though then we have committed other horrible wickedness against the Lord, yet in no case let us despair, for this were to add sin unto sin, and to clog our consciences more with the last then with all the former, till with their intolerable weight they press us down unto hell; you would count him worse than mad who being oppressed with a heavy burden should (instead of using other means to ease himself) add thereunto a double or treble weight, till he were pressed down groveling unto the earth; but assuredly such and greater madness it is when we feel our consciences clogged with a heavy burden of sin, instead of seeking ease in coming to Christ by a lively faith, to fall into utter desperation and thereby to add a treble weight to the already intolerable burden of sin, which lieth upon our consciences until they be pressed down into the torments of hell. Everyone would esteem him a most desperate wretch, who having offended such a gracious Prince, as would most surely forgive him upon his unfeigned sorrow for his fault, should instead of humbling himself and asking pardon desperately refuse

his Princes mercy, and with all deny his truth in his promises his mercy, justice, and even disavow him for being a lawful Prince. But such and much more wickedness do they desperately commit who having offended God by their grievous sins, who is so gracious and merciful, that he would most certainly forgive them upon their true repentance, instead of humbling themselves by unfeigned sorrow, do desperately refuse to be partakers of his mercy, and not only so but deny the infiniteness of his mercy; justice, truth in his promises, and consequently his godhead and being. And therefore when (the weight of sin pressing us) Satan persuadeth us to despair of mercy and forgiveness, let us in any case resist this temptation, and boldly say unto the tempter; it is enough and too much that I have offended my gracious God with my other sins, though I do not ad thereunto this sin which is greater than all the rest, the weight of my other wickedness is already too too heavy upon my conscience, and therefore far be it from me to load it with a far more unsupportable burden; I have already too much dishonored my good God by my horrible sins, and therefore I will in no case more dishonor him, now then in committing all my other sins, by denying his mercy, justice, truth, and even the godhead itself; for what were this but being already in a burning fever to cast myself into the fire, or being gone over the shoes in the filthy puddle of sin to plunge myself over head and ears, and even to drown myself in the bottomless gulf of desperation? Nay rather now I will break of my sins by unfeigned repentance and turn unto the Lord whom I have offended, assuring myself that his mercies are infinite, and therefore he is ready to forgive, and the merits of Christ a full satisfaction for all my sins though many and heinous, and therefore in him I may boldly challenge forgiveness as a thing of right appertaining to me.

And thus are we to resist Satan's temptations and though we be often foiled yet to rise again, in no case suffering him to pluck out of our hand the shield of faith, though he hath disarmed us of the breast-plate of righteousness; for if once we be deprived of this part of this spiritual armor we shall lie open to all his blows and thrusts, until we be wounded to the very death.

But most lamentable it is to see the grievous misery of poor humbled sinners whereinto they are brought through the violence of Satan's temptations; for howsoever feeling the heavy weight of their other sins they earnestly desire to be freed from them, howsoever being tormented with the grievous smart of their other wickedness they hate and abhor it, yet they easily suffer themselves to be plunged into desperation with every frivolous temptation; and quietly offer their hands to be manacled, and bound in these givens of hell without resistance. But let all such stir up themselves, and gather their oppressed spirits together, saying to their own consciences I hate and detest from my heart my former wickedness, and shall I now entertain a sin more horrible then all the rest; the burden of my other sins oppress me and make me earnestly to desire ease, and shall I add a load far more intolerable to my afflicted conscience? I am filled with shame and confusion because by my former sins I have dishonored my gracious God? And shall I continue more to dishonor him by doubting of and denying his mercy, justice, and truth in his promises? I have heretofore with Judas betrayed my Savior Christ unto the death, yea and with my sins I have whipped, mocked, and crucified him, and now he having made full satisfaction for my sins, and called me unto him that he may ease me of this intolerable burden, should I with Judas refuse to come desperately cast of all hope of mercy and become mine own hangman? Be it far from me, nay

as I hate all other sin so let me hate this above all the rest, as being more heinous then all the rest; as I desire to be eased and freed from the heavy burden of other my wickedness, so I will with all my power resist Satan when he seeketh to load me with this load of desperation as being far more intolerable; heretofore I have dishonored God by my sins, but now I will give him glory in believing and acknowledging his infinite mercy, goodness, justice, and truth in his promises; and seeing by my sins I have crucified the Lord of life, I will not ad hereunto this outrageous wickedness, to trample his precious blood under my filthy feet as a thing unholy and of no worth, neither will I through my unbelief make it to be spilled in vain; but now with all care and conscience I will gather it up as a most precious balm, and with the hand of faith apply it to those grisly gashes, and deep wounds which sin hath made in my soul and conscience, and with this spiritual laver I will wash my polluted soul till it be thoroughly purged from all uncleanness. And seeing I have deprived my soul of that inherent righteousness wherewith it was endued by creation, now I will apply thereunto a far more excellent righteousness by the hand of faith, even the righteousness of Jesus Christ God and man, wherewith being adorned I may boldly offer myself into the presence of my heavenly father and receive the blessing of everlasting happiness.

Lastly, we are to consider that as desperation is a sin in it own nature most grievous, so also it is unto ourselves most pernicious, for whereas other sins make us worthy of the torments of hell and eternal condemnation, this as it above all the rest entitleth us unto the right of this hellish inheritance, so also it entereth us into the most certain and present possession thereof even whilst we live upon the earth. For what are the torments of a despairing conscience but the flashings of hell fire? And what are their blasphemies

which they utter against God, and their impatient cursing's of their accursed selves, but the yelling cries of damned souls? And therefore if we would not cast ourselves into the jaws of hell, if we would not whilst we live begin to die an everlasting death, let us in no case suffer ourselves to be plunged with the violence of Satan's temptations into this bottomless pit of utter desperation.

Yea will the afflicted soul say but how should I avoid it, seeing I am forcibly pressed into it with the intolerable weight of my sins, and with the sense and apprehension of God's fearful wrath and displeasure, feeling no comfort nor assurance that ever I shall receive pardon? To which I answer that yet in no case they are to despair, but to hope against hope, and to believe against belief, and as it were from the bottom of hell to cast up the eye of faith into heaven, laying hold of God's mercies, and Christ's merits; knowing that faith is of things not seen neither with the bodily eye, nor with the eye of reason, and that the Lord seemeth often to hate those whom in truth he dearly loveth. For so long as we believe God's promises and have some hope that our sins are either pardoned or at least pardonable there is certain comfort; but when as all hope is cast of and that we reject all God's promises through unbelief and fall into utter desperation, there nothing remaineth but most certain destruction; when sin lieth upon us, it no question exceedingly vexeth us with the torments of conscience, but if we despair we presently instead of obtaining ease cast ourselves into the torments of hell; the pangs of conscience caused by the sense of the heavy burden of sin, are a good means to bring us to Christ, that we may be eased of this burden; but despair stayeth us in the midway, and utterly debarreth us from ever being partakers of Christ or any of his benefits. And therefore though the burden of sin be never so irksome and grievous, yet let us be

contented to bear it till we come unto Christ for ease, let us beware in any case that we do not faint through impatency and want of hope and so fall into desperation, for so shall we but increase the weight of our sins in exceeding measure, which already we think an intolerable burden, and consequently our horror of conscience; so shall we bring ourselves from a doubtful or rather hopeful state, to most certain and present destruction, so shall we change our temporary grief for that which is everlasting, and the terrors of conscience for the torments of hell; so shall that which we most fear and flee, presently overtake and overwhelm us; for whilst in an horrible manner we fear the pains of hell, we cast ourselves into them by falling into utter desperation; as if a man for fear of death should cut his own throat, or for fear of hanging should drink some deadly poison, whereby they are presently tormented with that which they fearfully abhorred, and choose rather to be oppressed with the evil they feared, then any longer to endure the fear itself. Which howsoever it may carry some show of reason in undergoing a momentary and temporary death, wherein oftentimes the fear is more intolerable then the pain feared; yet it is extreme madness to plunge a man's self, body and soul into the eternal torments of hell, rather than for a time to endure the horror thereof, seeing this horror and fear is but a small flea-biting in respect of those hellish punishments, and as it were but a smoke of that eternal fire.

CHAP. XLVI. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS CONCERNING SMALLNESS, AND WEAKNESS OF FAITH ANSWERED.

And so much for answering those temptations, whereby Satan laboreth to persuade the afflicted Christians that they have no faith, wherewith if he cannot prevail, in the next place he will tell them that their faith is so small if it be any at all, so overwhelmed with doubting, so unfruitful, and so mixed with imperfections, that it will not be effectual and sufficient for their salvation. Which temptation if we would withstand, we must not dream or imagine that to have a true faith, is to have a perfect faith which is never assaulted with doubting nor shaken with any temptations, for there is no such faith to be found in any of God's children, seeing the most perfect are partly flesh and partly spirit, and as the fruit of the spirit is faith and affiance in God, so the fruit of the flesh is doubting and infidelity, and these continually assault and fight one against another.

Again we are to know that there are diverse degrees of true faith, and that all the children of God have it not in the like measure: for some have attained to a strong and great measure of faith, as those who are endued with much knowledge, and firmly assent unto that which they know, and

are most certainly persuaded of their salvation in Christ, and that all the gracious promises of the gospel do belong unto them, so as nothing in the world shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; others are weak and endued with a small measure of faith, as those who have little knowledge, weak assent and persuasion, being yet but babes in Christ, and growing up from faith to faith, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 1:17, till at length they attain to that fullness of persuasion, of which mention is made, Heb. 10:22. Now we are to hold first that this small and weak measure of faith is notwithstanding a true faith, and therefore sufficient for the salvation of those who are endued therewith, neither are the promises of the gospel made to those only who have a strong faith, but to those who have a true faith; John. 1:12. As many as received him he gave to them prerogative to be the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. And, John 3:18. He that believeth shall be saved, in which and such like places there is no measure of faith propounded, but the promises are made indefinitely to all that believe, how small and weak soever their faith be in respect of the quantity and apprehension, so that in regard of the quality it be true and lively.

That a weak and small measure of faith is true and lively faith, it is manifest both by reason and also plain testimonies of the Scripture; for the first: diversity of degrees in quantity of a thing doth not take away and annihilate the existence and true being thereof; for example a small drop of water is as well and truly water as the whole Ocean, a little spark is true fire both in respect of substance and quality, as well as a mighty flame, a little man is as truly a man as a great Giant: and so a little faith is as well a true faith as a full persuasion; neither doth the small quantity take away the being, nature, and truth thereof. Secondly, this also manifestly appeareth by

the Scriptures, whereas many are said to have faith and to believe, who hearing the doctrine of Christ and seeing his miracles believed, and acknowledged him to be the true Messiah and their Savior, though at the same time they had attained to an exceeding small measure of knowledge, and were ignorant of many of the chief principles of Christian religion, because they nourished not this their ignorance, but resolved to use all those good means of increasing in knowledge which God hath ordained for this purpose. And thus many of the Samaritans are said to have believed for the saying of the woman and because of his own word. John. 4:39,41. Thus a certain ruler and all his household are said to have believed, when they saw the miracle which our Savior wrought in curing the rulers son of his fever only with his word, ver. 52. Yea the apostles themselves whose faith our savior Christ compareth to a firm rock against which the gates of hell should never prevail, were notwithstanding endued with weak and small measure of faith, before the ascension of our Savior, and sending of the holy ghost. For they were ignorant even of the main principles of Christian religion, and of diverse articles of faith, and consequently could not believe, assent, or be persuaded of those things which they did not understand. For example howsoever they knew and acknowledged that our Savior Christ was the promised Messiah, yet they were ignorant that he should redeem mankind by his death; for when he foretold that he should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified, it is said that they understood none of those things. Matth. 20:18, Luk. 9:45. So also they knew not that being dead he should rise again the third day as the Evangelist showeth, Mar. 9:32. And when they heard thereof by the women they thought it a feigned thing as it is, Luk. 24:11. They were ignorant also of his ascension as appeareth. John. 13:36, and 14:5, and of his kingdom, for they dreamed of

an earthly kingdom, and of worldly preferments which they were to have by him, as we may see. Act. 1:6, Mar. 10:37. By all which it plainly appeareth that though the Apostles were endued with a true faith, yet their faith was exceeding weak and small, as also it is most evident in that reprehension used by our savior when they were in some appearance of danger. Matth. 8:26, wherefore are ye fearful, O ye of little faith.

And therefore though we find our faith to be weak and small yet let not Satan persuade us that for this cause it is false and counterfeit, or that we shall easily be overcome of every temptation and never persevere unto the end that we may be saved; seeing a weak and small faith may be a true faith, against which how weak in itself soever it be, yet the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, for the weaker our faith is, the stronger shall we find God's power in sustaining and preserving us, the more that Satan laboreth to winnow us in the sieve of his temptations, the more effectually will our Savior Christ make intercession for us that our faith fail not; the feebler our faith is in apprehending Christ, the more powerful will his spirit be in apprehending us and in joining us inseparably in a holy communion with him. But yet we must not content ourselves with a small and weak measure of faith, but earnestly labor after more perfection, and to grow from faith to faith, till we attain unto fullness of persuasion, Otherwise we shall make it manifest that we deceive ourselves with a show and shadow of faith, and that as yet we have no true faith indeed, which as it resembleth the grain of mustard seed in respect of the smallness at the beginning thereof, so also in the growth and increase, and therefore if ever we would attain unto peace of conscience, and assurance that we are endued with a true and lively faith, we must earnestly labor in the use of those means ordained of God for the increase of faith, and fervently pray unto God that

he will not only sow the seed of faith in our hearts, but also that he will so water it with the dew of his grace and holy spirit that it may grow from a small seed to a great tree, and that he will never cease blowing this smoking flax with the breath of the same his holy spirit, till it increase from a little spark to a mighty flame, whereby our hearts being warmed with true comfort, may with fervent zeal seek to glorify his holy name by our Christian and holy conversation.

Secondly, we are to know that how weak and small soever our faith be so it be true the Lord will not reject it, nor us in regard of it, for he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax till he bring forth judgment unto victory, as himself hath spoken. Matth. 12:20. He will not contemn the least measure of his own grace which he hath bestowed upon us; for though it be in never so small a quantity yet if it be true it is his own gift, and his gifts are without repentance, neither doth he ever contemn that which himself hath given, nor take it away after it is once bestowed; nay rather to him that hath shall be given until he have abundance, he that hath received 5 talents shall receive 5 more, yea and he that hath but one if he do not hide it, but use it to his masters glory shall be accepted and have his talent doubled. We read in the scriptures that Christ reprov'd some for their small faith, but yet we never read nor heard that he rejected and cast of any, though their faith were never so weak if it were true, no not him who cried out in the sense of his own weakness; Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief. And therefore if with him we find a true faith in us, at least in some measure, and though it be exceedingly mingled with doubting and assaulted with infidelity, yet if we can with this man earnestly pray the Lord to help our unbelief, and with the Apostles heartily cry out: O Lord increase my

faith, the Lord will accept of our hearty desire, and grant our request which is made by his own spirit in us, and that according unto his own will.

Thirdly we must understand that faith doth not justify and save us by itself as it is a virtue or faculty of the mind and heart, or in respect of its own excellency, quantity, and worthiness, (for what were this but to embrace again the doctrine of the papists which we have rejected, and to seek for justification in ourselves, and for our own merits and worthiness?) but as an instrument whereby we lay hold of, and apply unto ourselves Christ Jesus with his righteousness and merits, by which only we appear just before God; now a weak faith as truly though not so powerfully doth apprehend and apply Christ Jesus and all his merits and obedience as a stronger faith, even as a small and weak hand if it be able to reach up the meat to the mouth, doth as well perform its duty for the nourishment of the body as one of greater strength; because it is not the strength of the hand but the goodness of the meat which nourisheth the body: So a weak faith laying hold of Christ and applying him and his benefits, to the believer, is sufficient to nourish him to everlasting life as well as a stronger, because it is not the worthiness or excellency of the instrument, but of Christ which it apprehendeth that is effectual for our justification and eternal salvation. So in like manner as a small and weak hand is able to receive an alms as well as a stronger and greater, and as a little eye doth see the whole body of sun, or some great mountain as well as a bigger: so our faith though weak and small, doth apprehend Christ as truly and effectually for the salvation of the believer, as the greatest and most strong. Our Savior Christ compareth himself to the brazen Serpent, and the believing Christian stung with the sting of sin to the Israelites which did behold it to the end they might be cured: now we know that all of them were not a like sharp sighted, but

some were pore-blind, some blear eyed, some saw it but exceeding weakly and dimly, but yet notwithstanding as many as looked on it were cured and healed, though they were never so weak sighted; so whosoever being stung with sin do look upon Christ with the eye of faith, resting upon him alone for their salvation, though they be never so weak sighted, yet they shall be restored to health and be eternally saved, because it is not in their sight but in the object thereof Christ Jesus to justify before God, and to purchase for them eternal salvation.

CHAP. XLVII. OTHER TEMPTATIONS CONCERNING FAITH ANSWERED.

And thus may we answer Satan's temptations, which he groundeth upon the small quantity and weakness of our faith: besides which he suggesteth diverse others, as first that true justifying faith is a firm, certain and constant persuasion, whereas ours if we have any at all is weak and feeble, instable, inconstant and wavering, and that it is not only continually assaulted but also often foiled and overcome with doubting and infidelity, and therefore that it is but a shadow of faith, and not true faith indeed. The which temptation we may easily answer if we but remember that which already hath been delivered; namely that the best cannot attain in this life unto such perfection of faith as is quite freed from all infirmities and corruption, that there is diverse degrees of true justifying faith, some weaker, some stronger, some in greater, and some in smaller quantity, some like smoking flax, and a grain of mustard seed, and some like a bright burning flame which giveth light, and the lively heat of true comfort to those who are endued therewith, and of as high growth as the greatest tree in the garden, and yet all true faith and sufficient for salvation. That so long

as we continue in this life our knowledge is but imperfect and veiled with much darkness and ignorance, for we know but in part, as even the apostle speaketh in his own person, 1 Cor. 13:12. And therefore our assent and persuasion must needs be imperfect, and but in part, and often assaulted with much doubting: that howsoever faith and doubting are opposed in their own nature, yet notwithstanding they may be together in the same subject in respect of diverse partes. For we are partly flesh and partly spirit, and these two with their several fruits do continually fight and strive one against the other, and sometimes the flesh, sometimes the spirit with their several fruits get the upper hand, in the meantime both retaining their own nature and properties, howsoever they do not so evidently appear nor so powerfully work their several actions, when the adverse part prevaieth, and hath put them to the foil; for example, faith which is a fruit of the spirit, is continually assaulted by doubting, which is a fruit of the flesh, and proceedeth from the root of infidelity, and sometime faith prevaieth and sometime it receiveth the foil, but yet at the same time howsoever we cannot sensibly discern it, nor the actions thereof, yet it retains its own nature and properties, neither is it deprived of his firmness, constancy and certainty howsoever they be for a time covered and hid out of our sight, like the fire under the ashes, or the Sun under a cloud, as before I have said.

Though therefore we find in us much inconstancy and doubting, yet let not Satan persuade us that these are of the nature and properties of our faith, and that therefore our faith is not true but temporary false and counterfeit, for this inconstancy and doubting, proceedeth not from faith and from the spiritual and regenerate part, but from the flesh and the part unregenerate; and therefore howsoever it is assaulted, and sometimes foiled by them, yet in its own nature it is true certain and constant.

Secondly, he will suggest that the Saints mentioned in the Scriptures, had most certain and strong faith and in exceeding great measure, that they brought forth continually most notable fruits thereof, and were not subject to such infirmities and doubting as we feel in our selves. To which we are to answer, that this temptation is full of untruth, and hath no sound part in it: for first we are to assure ourselves that they fell into manifold doubting's and were subject unto innumerable infirmities and corruptions, which are not specified in the book of God: neither was it fit or expedient that it should be a register of all human infirmities, and of their manifold falls, but only that some should be recorded for our warning, that we might more warily watch over ourselves, lest we should fall into the like sins, and for our comfort also when we are fallen, in that our case is common with God's dearest children; in which respect the Scriptures is not wanting Look upon Abraham the father of the faithful whose faith was so strong that he above hope believed under hope, and you shall see that his faith notwithstanding was sometimes shaken with diffidence and doubting, as when distrusting God's gracious promises made unto him, and not resting upon his almighty power, he was content to take unto him Hagar his maid and commit sin with her, that so by his own devise he might make good God's promise and obtain the blessed seed, as though God could not perform that which he had spoken, unless he helped him by such unlawful means. So where was the strength and constancy of Moses faith when he dishonored God before the people in not believing his word, and by showing his impatience. Num. 20:10,11, where was the strength and constancy of David's faith, when he complaineth that he was forsaken, that God had failed in his promises, that he had forgotten to be merciful and had shut up his tender mercies in displeasure? Psal. 22:1, and 77:8,9. Or of Job's faith when he cursed the day

of his birth and accounted God his enemy, who had set him up as a mark against which he shot poisoned arrows? Or of Jeremiah when he likewise wished that he had never been borne and bewrayeth great impatency. Jer. 20. Or of Jonah when he rebelled against God's commandment and fled from his presence, or when after his miraculous delivery, he murmured and uttered impatient speeches even against God himself for the loss of a poor gourd which kept him from the heat of the sun; and when the Lord mercifully and mildly reproved him saying, doest thou well to be angry for the gourd, he stubbornly answered: I do well to be angry unto the death. Jon. 4:9. Or of the Apostles themselves when they fled away and forsook their Lord and master Jesus Christ for fear of worldly punishment, and when after his death they would not believe the women reporting that he was risen again, until their own eyes had seen him? Lastly, though it be evident that diverse of the Saints mentioned in the Scriptures had a far greater measure of faith, and brought forth much more plentiful fruits then we can discern in ourselves, yet this is no good reason to prove that our weaker and smaller faith is no faith, or ineffectual for our salvation, for this is an absurd consequence, the Moon giveth much less light then the Sun, therefore it giveth no light at all, one hand is far greater then another, therefore the lesser is not a true hand, this man excelleth another in the use of reason, and therefore the other is unreasonable, because the diverse degrees in the quantity of things do not take away the truth of their being and existence so long as they be of the same nature and quality. Besides as the holy ghost hath set down examples of most strong faith in some of God's servants, so hath he made mention of some who have had but weak and little faith, to the end that we should so labor to attain unto the highest degree as that in the mean time we be not utterly discouraged with the

lowest; for example as he hath remembered the faith of Abraham who believed above hope under hope, so he hath not forgotten his weak faith who cried I believe, Lord help thou mine unbelief; as he hath mentioned the faith of Job who grew to this resolution: Though he kill me yet will I trust in him, so he hath expressed also the faith of Nicodemus, in knowledge weak and simple, and in practice and profession cowardly and fearful, as he hath set down the strong faith of Paul, who grew to this fullness of persuasion that nothing should be able to separate him from the love of God in Jesus Christ, so he hath not left out the little and weak saith of Thomas who would not believe further then he saw and felt. Yea the Lord in his word hath revealed unto us the diverse degrees of faith in the same men in respect of diverse times; at one time like a grain of mustard seed, at another time like a great tree, at one time like a little smoke, and soon after bursting out into a great flame, now like a weak reed wavering and declining with the smallest blast of any trial, and within a while like an immovable rock which beateth back huge billows and even a whole sea of violent temptations; in a word it setteth out to our view as it were portrayed in a fresh and live picture the diverse ages of a Christian as he is in his conception and preparation to grace, and as he is in his new birth and first conversion, as he is a babe, and as he groweth from his infancy to greater age and strength, till he come to ripe years and to be a strong man in Christ. Besides it showeth unto us his diverse relapses through sin the sickness of the soul, and how oftentimes the spiritual growth is hindered, and the strength of God's graces abated and much weakened by the quotidian ague of our corruptions and Satan's temptations, and also after these fits be driven away by virtue of God's spirit, how we receive a greater increase of grace and measure of strength, whereby we grow more in Christianity and godliness

in a year then we did in two before. All which is set down to this end that we should not make our infancy our full growth, but labor to increase in grace till we become of babes strong men in Christ; as also that finding ourselves as weak as little infants we be not utterly discouraged, for if we suck the breasts of our spiritual mother the true church, and receive from her the milk and stronger meat of the word and sacraments, we shall assuredly grow up from grace to grace, and strength to strength, till of babes we become strong men in Jesus Christ, and that though we have many great sickness of the soul, and relapses into sin whereby our spiritual growth for a time is hindered, and our strength in God's graces much abated, yet if we often feed upon the comfortable food of God's word and use this spiritual physic prescribed by God himself we shall not only again recover our former strength and health, but also find a great increase of God's graces in us.

Lastly, Satan will suggest that though our faith be true, yet it is so exceeding small and weak, that with the violence of his temptations and huge mass of our own corruptions it will easily be overthrown and turned into infidelity. To which we are to answer, that though hereby our faith may be shrewdly shaken yet it can never be overturned, though it may be covered with the ashes of our corruptions, yet it can never be utterly quenched; though through our grievous foils and falls in the combat of temptations, it may be as it were brought into a trance, so as we cannot sensibly discern any action, motion or life of faith, yet the habit and grace itself, after it is once given of God is never taken away, neither is it possible that it should be quite destroyed by all the power of hell.

And this may appear by diverse reasons; first because faith is not of ourselves but the free gift of God, as it is, Eph. 2:8. And whatsoever

sanctifying and saving grace the Lord giveth that he never taketh utterly away; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, as the Apostle speaketh. Rom. 11:29.

Secondly, whosoever truly believeth, he is truly knit and united unto the body of Christ and is made partaker of his holy spirit which as it begetteth and beginneth all the sanctifying and saving graces in us, so also it nourisheth, strengtheneth and confirmeth them so as they can never utterly fail, for whatsoever good work he beginneth that will he also perfect and accomplish. Phil. 1:6.

Thirdly, whosoever truly believeth he is truly justified, and whosoever is justified is elected called and shall be glorified, for these inseparably go together. Rom. 8:30, and consequently he that hath true faith whereby he is justified cannot fall away, seeing his justification is as certain as the eternal decree of God's election.

Lastly, God both can and will strengthen and confirm all those who are weak in faith, till they attain unto the end of their faith even the salvation of their souls, and therefore it is impossible that they which once truly believe should fall away and be condemned. Concerning God's power no man can make any question seeing it is omnipotent and almighty, and for his will he hath fully revealed it both by his word and works, namely that he will not take away that grace which he hath once given, but rather increase it till it be perfected and accomplished. For the first the Lord saith that he will comfort his Church and people, as the woman comforteth her child, Isa. 66:13, now we know that the mother doth not abandon her child, nor deprive him of that comfort which she can give him because he is sick and weak, but rather the sicker and weaker he is, the more is her care and diligence in relieving him in his distress; when he is not able to digest

strong meat she provideth for him comfortable food of light digestion, when he is so weak that he cannot go she carrieth him in her arms or otherwise supporteth him, when he is so sick that he falleth down to the ground in a swoon, she raiseth him up and never resteth till she hath recovered life in him, is this love in a natural mother? Then surely much more shall we find in our heavenly father, for though a mother may forget the fruit of her womb, yet will the Lord never forget us, as he hath promised. Isa. 49:15. And therefore the greater our weakness is in grace, and the more grievous our sickness is through sin, and the noisome humors of our corruptions the more carefully will he watch over us, with the eye of his providence, and support us with his almighty power in our greatest weakness, the more tenderly will he pity us, and in loving compassion will provide for us, such comfortable food as will be fit to nourish us and repair our decayed strength, when we cannot go he will with his almighty hand uphold us, and when we fall into a dead trance he will not rest till he hath again revived and quickened us with his holy spirit. Moreover our Savior hath said, that he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Matth. 12:20, but he will support our weakness with his almighty power, so that though with the reed we be borne down to the ground, with the boisterous blasts of Satan's temptations, yet we shall be raised up again, according to that Psal. 37:24. Though he fall he shall not be cast off, for the Lord putteth under his hand, and he will blow upon us with the breath of his holy spirit, till he turn our small smoke to a great flame which shall never be quenched by all the malice of our spiritual enemies. So Matth. 13:12, our Savior Christ hath promised, that whosoever hath, to him it shall be given and he shall have abundance. Neither doth he limit or define any quantity less or more but indefinitely promiseth abundant increase even unto the least, so

far is he from taking away that which he hath once bestowed. And whereas we through our weakness and frailness are easily cast down and fall away, and therefore have good cause if we should only look upon our infirmities to doubt and despair of perseverance, yet in respect of God's omnipotent power, watchful providence, and promised assistance we may confirm ourselves in faith, hope, and certain assurance of continuing unto the end; for the Lord upholdeth all that are falling, and lifteth up those who are already down, as the Psalmist speaketh, Psal. 145:14, the power of God is manifested in our weakness, his riches in our beggarliness, his mercy and goodness in our frailness, and manifold corruptions, and with his holy spirit he helpeth our infirmities, as it is, Rom. 8:26. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted in like sort yet without sin, and therefore he is able sufficiently to have compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way, because that he also was compassed with our infirmities, and the apostle reasoneth. Heb. 4:15, and 5:2

Secondly it appeareth manifestly by God's works, administration, and practice, that he will not deprive any of that sanctifying grace which he hath once bestowed, though the measure thereof be never so small; neither can we observe either by our reading the whole book of God or by our own experience that any man having received the least grain of true faith hath utterly been deprived of it, and rejected of God. Even the disciples themselves when they were reprov'd for their little faith, were by him strengthened and confirmed, so that all the power of hell could not prevail against it, and though Satan endeavored to sift them as wheat, yet Christ's intercession was more mighty to defend them, then the devil to destroy them, and his intercession a stronger prop to uphold them, then the weight

of Satan's temptations to overthrow and bring them to ruin; so he who cried out I believe Lord help thou my unbelief, though his faith was weak yet it perished not, but rather received a greater increase. Yea he rejected not Thomas in his willful doubting and obstinate incredulity, but offered all occasions of confirming his weak faith, and never ceased till he had fully assured him of his resurrection. In a word all the saints of God at one time or other have had experience of this mercy, power, and goodness of God in supporting their weakness, upholding them in their great infirmities, and in raising them when they were fallen to the ground; and to this end our Savior was anointed by God's spirit unto the office of his mediation, that he should preach the gospel unto the poor, heal the broken hearted, that he should preach deliverance unto captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised. Luk. 4:18. To this end he had familiar society with the frail and weak, with those who had little faith, that he might increase it, and no faith, that he might beget it, with publicans and sinners and men full of infirmities; to this purpose he calleth such as thirst and hunger feeling their own emptiness of grace, and earnestly desiring to be filled and satisfied, and such also as labor and are heavy laden with the unsupportable weight of their corruptions promising that he will ease them, lastly to this end he hath ordained the ministry of the word and administration of the sacraments, not only to beget faith where it is not, but to nourish and increase it where it is weak and feeble, and therefore though our faith be never so weak and small let not Satan persuade us that therefore it shall be overthrown and turned into infidelity, for the Lord hath assured us both by his gracious promises in his word and also by the performance thereof in his works from the beginning to this day, that where he hath given the least measure of faith or any other sanctifying grace, there he will

also increase, strengthen, and confirm it, and where he hath begun any good work there he will finish and perfect it, notwithstanding our frail weakness, and the forcible violence of all our spiritual enemies.

CHAP. XLVIII. OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

And so much concerning those temptations of Satan which he suggesteth to the end that he may frustrate our effectual calling. The next subordinate cause and means of our salvation is our justification, for whomsoever the Lord effectually calleth those also he justifieth, as it is, Rom. 8:30. In speaking whereof I will first show what it is, and afterwards answer such temptations of Satan as he suggesteth into our minds, to the end that he may infringe the doctrine of justification, and make it vain and unprofitable unto us.

For the first. Justification is an action or work of the whole trinity, the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, whereby God graciously and freely imputing unto every faithful man the righteousness and obedience of Christ the mediator doth accept of him and pronounce him to be just and righteous, for the glory of his name and salvation of the believer.

The efficient cause of our justification is God alone as appeareth by manifest testimonies. Isa. 43:25. I, even I, am he that putteth away thine iniquities for my own sake and will not remember thy sins. So Ezek. 16:8.

The Lord thus speaketh to his church and people; I spread my skirts over thee and covered thy filthiness. 9. Then I washed thee with water, yea I washed away thy blood from thee and anointed thee with oil. 10. I clothed thee with embroidered work &c. whereby he signifieth that he purged it with the blood of Christ from all sin, and adorned it with the rich robe of his righteousness. The Apostle likewise saith that it is God who justifieth him who in himself was ungodly. Rom. 4:5, and 8:33. It is God who justifieth, who shall condemn? The reason hereof is manifest because it is the Lord against whom we have sinned, as David speaketh, Psal. 51:4. And he alone is our supreme judge who hath authority to absolve or condemn us, and therefore he only can give unto us the pardon and remission of our sins and accept of us as just and righteous.

And this work is not peculiar unto any one person, but is commune to the whole trinity. For God the father being fully satisfied by the full satisfaction, righteousness, and obedience of Christ the son, applied unto us by the holy spirit, doth pardon and forgive us all our sins, and pronounceth and accepteth of us as innocent, and endued with perfect righteousness.

The motive or impulsive cause, which moved the Lord thus to justify us, was not anything in us or out of himself; but of his mere mercy, and free good will wherewith he hath loved us from the beginning, as it manifestly appeareth, Rom. 3:24. Where the Apostle saith that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And, Tit. 3:5,7. Not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of the new birth and renewing of the holy ghost. 7. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The instrumental causes are of two sorts: first on God's part the word and the sacraments, whereby the Lord offereth, conveyeth, sealeth, and assureth unto us his mercy and grace, Christ Jesus with his merits, righteousness, and obedience, the remission of our sins, and everlasting life.

Secondly on our part a true and lively faith, whereby we receive and apply unto ourselves the mercy of God, Christ Jesus and all his benefits, resting upon him alone for our salvation.

The material cause of our justification is the active and passive righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ, his inherent holiness, his fulfilling of the law, his death, sacrifice, and full satisfaction. So that we are not justified by the essential righteousness of the godhead, nor by our own works joined with Christ's merits, nor by any inherent righteousness infused of God through the merits of Christ; or by any other thing in ourselves or any other mere creature, but by the alone righteousness of our mediator Jesus Christ God and man, which is out of ourselves and in Christ as the proper subject thereof, and not belonging to us till by the spirit of God and a lively faith it be applied unto us and so becometh ours.

The formal cause of our justification is a reciprocal imputation or transmutation of the sins of the believer unto Christ and of his righteousness unto the believer: whereby it cometh to pass that the faithful man hath not his sins imputed unto him, nor the punishment due unto them inflicted on him, because Christ hath taken upon him the guilt and punishment, and by making full satisfaction unto his fathers justice, hath obtained the pardon and remission of all his sins. And also is clothed with the glorious robe of Christ Jesus righteousness, and so appearing before God both free from all sin and endued with perfect righteousness he is justified, reconciled, and eternally saved. And of this imputed righteousness the apostle speaketh,

Rom. 4:5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6. Even as David declareth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying. 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin. And, 2 Cor. 5:19. For God was in Christ and reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing their sins unto them &c. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us which knew no sin that we should be made the righteousness of God in him. And the Apostle affirmeth, 1 Cor. 1:30. That Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. So that now Christ's righteousness is our righteousness, his obedience our obedience, his merits our merits, as certainly, perfectly and effectually, even as if we ourselves had been most innocent fulfilled the law, or made full satisfaction to God's justice. By which it appeareth that in respect of ourselves we are justified freely of God's mere mercy and grace, without any respect of our own righteousness or worthiness; but yet through Christ and for his righteousness and obedience imputed to us, both which are signified by the Apostle Rom. 3:23,24, where he said that all in themselves are wretched sinners without difference, and thereby are deprived of the glory of God's kingdom, 24., and are justified freely of his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

The final cause of our justification is twofold, the chief and principal is the glory of God, for hereby the Lord hath most notably manifested his infinite justice and mercy, his justice in that he would rather punish our sins in his only begotten Son, then he would suffer them to go unpunished; his mercy in that for our sakes he spared not his best beloved Son, but gave him

to suffer death, yea the death of the cross, that by his one oblation he might make full satisfaction for our sins, and purchase for us everlasting life; and also in that he vouchsafeth unto us the outward means of his word and Sacraments, and the inward assistance of his holy spirit, whereby we are united unto Christ and have a lively faith begotten in us, which apprehending Christ his righteousness and merits we are justified, sanctified, and eternally saved. And this end is signified by the Apostle Rom. 3:24,25, where he saith that God hath justified us freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, to declare his righteousness by the forgiveness of sins and might show himself just by justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus. And chap. 5:21, he saith, that as under the law sin had reigned unto death, so now grace reigneth by righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, Eph. 2:5,6,7, he affirmeth that God hath quickened us in Christ who were dead in our sins and hath raised us up in him; that he might show in the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace through his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

The inferior and subordinate end is that our salvation may hereby be firmly assured unto us, for now our salvation is not in us but in the hands of God, and it is grounded not on our own works and worthiness, but upon the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ, which is a most certain and firm foundation which will never fail us. And this the Apostle showeth Rom. 4:16, whereas he saith, that the couchant of grace whereby we are assured of everlasting salvation is made by faith, that it might come by grace, and the promise might be sure to all the seed.

The parts of our justification are two, the remission of our sins, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, for as in every natural man there is the

corruption, guilt, and punishment of sin, and the absence or privation of holiness and righteousness, so in Christ we have a remedy for both: for the first by his passion and suffering: for the other by his actual obedience and perfect fulfilling of the law. And this is manifest Rom. 4:6,7, where the Apostle distinctly maketh mention, of the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed without works, and of the forgiveness, covering and not imputing of sin. Neither was it sufficient for the obtaining of everlasting life and happiness, that our mediator should by his death make full satisfaction for our sins, both of commission and also omission, but also that he should cloth us with his active obedience, whereby we might appear perfectly righteous before God.

The truth hereof may further appear, if we consider first that our Savior Christ was not bound to fulfill the law for himself, because he was from the first moment of his conception assumed into the hypostatical and personal union with the second person in Trinity, and consequently was not only man but God also, and therefore not bound to any law, neither needing any legal righteousness being already endued with a far more excellent righteousness even the righteousness of God. So that either our Savior performed obedience to the law to no purpose, or else to this end that he might impute it unto us, and thereby indue us with such a most perfect and everlasting righteousness as might give unto us the right of eternal life.

Secondly, if only our sins were pardoned and we not made partakers of Christ's active righteousness, our imputed righteousness should not excel the righteousness of Adam before his fall, for he neither committed sin of omission nor commission till he transgressed God's commandment in eating of the forbidden fruit; but we are made partakers of a more excellent righteousness by faith, then we lost in Adam, even the righteousness of God

by the faith of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 3:22, which consisteth not only in the absence of evil and sin, but in the presence also of actual holiness and righteousness.

Thirdly and lastly (because it is my purpose only to touch this point by the way as not so properly belonging to this treatise) we are united unto Christ Jesus, and he is become our head and we his members, by reason of which union as he communicateth himself unto us, so also that which belongeth unto him as he is our mediator, and consequently not only his passive obedience whereby he hath made full satisfaction for our sins, but also his actual righteousness whereby he perfectly fulfilled the law.

And thus it appeareth that our justification consisteth of two parts, the first the remission of our sins for the full satisfaction of Christ by his death and sufferings, the other the imputation of his habitual and active righteousness.

The remission of sins is the first part of justification, whereby God forgiveth for the death and full satisfaction of Christ, all our sin both original and actual both in respect of the guilt and punishment, so as they shall never be imputed to our condemnation, neither in this life nor in the life to come. And of this the psalmist speaketh, Psal. 32:1. Blessed is the man whose wickedness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. So the Apostle saith that God was in Christ, and reconciled the world to himself not imputing their sins unto them. 2 Cor. 5:19.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness is the other part of our justification, whereby God imputeth unto every believer the righteousness of the mediator Jesus Christ as if it were properly their own and performed by them, that being clothed therewith they may be perfectly righteous in God's sight, and so obtain the right unto everlasting life and happiness. And

of this the apostle speaketh, Rom. 4:6. Even as (saith he) David declareth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. And Rom. 9:30. The Gentiles which followed not righteousness have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. So, Phil. 3:8,9. The Apostle saith that he accounted all things loss and judged them to be dung, that he might win Christ, and might be found in him not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God through faith. Jer. 23:6.

Now this righteousness of Christ is twofold, his habitual and inherent holiness and innocence, whereby he was free from all corruption and sin both original and actual; and endued with all holiness and purity of nature, from the first moment of his conception. And of this the Apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. 5:21. He that knew no sin, was made sin for us. And 1 Pet. 2:22. Who did no sin neither was there any guile found in his mouth. So, Heb. 4:15. He is said to be without sin. And 1 Pet. 1:19. He is called the lamb undefiled and without spot. And himself challengeth the Jews, John. 8:46. Which of you can rebuke me of sin. And this holiness being imputed unto us, is opposed to our original sin and natural corruption. The other is his actual righteousness, whereby he performed perfect obedience unto the law in all his thoughts, words, and deeds, through the whole course of his life. And this being imputed unto us, and becoming ours by reason of that union which is between Christ and us, is opposed unto our actual transgression, whereby we have broken the whole law of God both in omitting the duties which are commanded, and in committing the vices and sins which are forbidden.

The persons who are thus justified are all the faithful, and they only who do apply the righteousness of Jesus Christ unto themselves by a true and lively faith. And thus the Apostle doth limit and restrain it. Rom. 3:21,22. Where he saith that the righteousness of God is made manifest without the law; to wit, the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe. And 4:5. To him that worketh not but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. And our Savior hath promised, that whosoever believeth in him shall not come into judgment, but hath passed from death to life. John. 5:24.

The time when we are thus justified is first in this life as soon as true faith is begot in us by the ministry of the word, whereby we particularly apply unto ourselves Christ Jesus and all his benefits, resting and relying upon him alone for our justification and salvation; the which shall be fully perfected at the day of judgment, when as our Savior Christ shall pronounce the sentence of absolution saying Come ye blessed of my father, take the inheritance of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matth. 25:34.

CHAP. XLIX. THAT WE ARE NOT JUSTIFIED BY OUR WORKS AND MERITS.

And so much briefly of the doctrine of Justification. Now we are to speak of and to answer such temptations as are suggested by our spiritual enemy, to the end that he may persuade us that we are not justified, or that he may move us to seek for justification where it is not to be had, and so in the meantime neglect it where only it is to be found, and the alone means whereby it is to be enjoyed. In speaking whereof I shall not need to handle things so largely as those points which went before, partly because our justification doth inseparably follow our effectual calling, and therefore he that is assured of the one needs not to doubt of the other, partly because the most of those temptations which Satan suggesteth to impugn and make void our assurance that we are justified are already answered, namely those which concern the remission of our sins, and true faith in Jesus Christ, and partly because those temptations which Satan suggesteth into the minds of afflicted Christians are the self-same which the limbs of Satan the antichrist of Rome and all his apostatical synagogue do hold and defend; and therefore I shall not need to entreat hereof at large because these points in

controversy have been already and will be hereafter so copiously, learnedly, and religiously handled by others of greater abilities, and far more excellent gifts.

But let us come to the matter in hand. The temptations of Satan concerning this point are of two sorts; the first tend to persuade us to labor after and to rest upon an imperfect and maimed righteousness for our justification, whereby we can never be justified in God's sight, and so in the meantime he causeth us to neglect the all-sufficient and most perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ by which alone we are justified before God and eternally saved; the other tend to make us doubt of our true justification, that so he may either make this gracious work of God frustrate in us, or else at least deprive our souls of that true consolation and peace of conscience, which dependeth upon the assurance of our justification.

For the first, he will labor to persuade us that it is not the righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed unto us by God and apprehended and applied unto us by faith, whereby we are justified in God's sight, for this imputative righteousness is but merely putative and imaginary but by that inherent righteousness which is in our selves; for Christ (will he say) did not fulfil the law and died, that this his righteousness and obedience should become ours by imputation, but he died for us to the end he might merit for us the spirit of God, which should infuse into us an inherent righteousness, and he shed his blood to the end that our good works being dipped and died therein, might become perfect and so justify us in God's sight; and therefore that we are not justified by faith alone, but by our other graces and virtues also, and our good works proceeding from them; neither by faith at all as it is, an instrument which applieth Christ and his benefits unto us, but as it is, a grace or virtue infused into our selves. Against which temptation it

behooveth us most carefully to arm ourselves as being most dangerous and pernicious, for it robbeth God and our savior Christ of the whole glory of our justification and salvation, and deriveth some, yea the greatest portion unto ourselves, as being chiefly justified by our own means; and also it depriveth our souls of all true comfort and full assurance that we are justified and saved, by taking out of our hands the strong staff of our salvation, the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ and by putting into them the weak reed of our own works, which will presently break and fail us, when we most rest upon it, and so we shall unrecoverably fall into the horrible pit of deep desperation, when as we are abandoned of our chief hope, that is, when on the one side the huge weight of our grievous sins, and on the other side the great imperfection of our most perfect righteousness, and the filthy pollution of our most glorious works appear unto us.

And to the end that we may be the better enabled to resist this dangerous and damnable temptation, I will first show that we cannot be justified before the tribunal of God's judgment by our inherent righteousness and good works; and secondly that we are justified by faith alone as it only applieth unto us Christ Jesus his righteousness and obedience.

That we are not justified by our own works and righteousness, it manifestly appeareth both by plain testimonies of holy Scripture, and strong arguments which are grounded upon them. For the first, the Apostle plainly saith, that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law cometh the knowledge of sin: but now is the righteousness of God made manifest without the law, having witness of the law and the Prophets; to wit the righteousness of God, by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe. Rom. 2:20,21,22. So Phil. 3:9. He disclaimeth

his own righteousness, and resteth upon the alone righteousness of Christ Jesus, which is made ours by faith for his justification and salvation. I have (saith he) counted all things loss and do judge them to be dung that I may win Christ, and might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God through faith. Phil. 3:9, and Gal. 3:10,11. He affirmeth that as many as rest in the works of the law are under the curse; and that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident because the just shall live by faith. So, Rom. 4:5. To him that worketh not but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness. And our Savior Christ teacheth us to say and acknowledge when we have done all to our uttermost power which is commanded us that we are still unprofitable servants, Luk. 17:10.

But unto these and such like manifest places it is answered, that the Apostle speaketh not of the works of the moral law, but of the ceremonies only, to which again we reply that no such frivolous distinction can be gathered out of the Apostles words, nay the plain contrary evidently appeareth, by his main scope and drift in his whole discourse of our justification, and also by some particular places. His chief scope is to beat down the pride of all, both Jews and Gentiles to the end that the whole glory and praise of our justification and salvation might be ascribed to the free mercy, grace, and goodness of God alone; now it is most certain that the moral duties are in themselves far more excellent then the ceremonial, and consequently more fit to puff us up with a spiritual pride, and to make us to rest in ourselves for our justification, ascribing at least some part of the praise unto our own works and virtues; so that if the Apostle had only spoken of the works of the ceremonial law, man's pride should not be

beaten down, neither should God have the whole praise of our salvation, and so his discourse should be vain, as not tending to prove and enforce that, for which end and purpose he chiefly undertakes it. Again this should nothing concern neither the Gentiles in former times, nor any true Christians since the coming of Christ, forasmuch as they did not nor do not, neither were nor are bound to observe the ceremonial law, and consequently could never once dream of obtaining righteousness by fulfilling the ceremonies; but they would rather ascribe the glory of their justification to their moral duties, to which they found themselves bound by the law of nature written in their hearts, or do find themselves bound by the moral law of God written in his word; and therefore it was necessary for the beating down of their pride, and that they might ascribe the whole glory unto God of their justification and salvation, that the Apostle in this discourse should prove that they were not justified neither by observing the law of nature written in their hearts, nor yet the moral law of God revealed in his word. Whereby it manifestly appeareth that howsoever the Apostle excludeth the works of the ceremonial law from being causes of justification, yet not them alone but the works of the moral law also.

But this may more manifestly appear by particular places wherein the Apostle plainly showeth that he speaketh not only of the ceremonial law, but of the moral law also. In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he plainly disputeth as well of the law of nature, to the obedience whereof the Gentiles were obliged as of the law given by Moses. Chap. 3:19,20. He saith that all the world are made culpable before God, and therefore by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Now if this consequence be good he speaketh not only of the ceremonial but of the moral duties, for the former belonged not to the gentiles, and

therefore the neglect of them did not make them culpable, nor debar them of being justified by their own works.

Secondly Rom. 10:5,6, and Gal. 3:11,12,21,22,24. The Apostle putteth a plain difference between the righteousness which is by the law, and the righteousness which is by faith, and maketh a flat opposition in the act of justification not between moral and ceremonial duties, but between doing and believing, faith and works.

Thirdly he saith, Eph. 2:8,9, that we are saved by grace through faith not of ourselves, nor of works least any man should boast himself. If he had spoken only of works they might (though foolishly) have wrested it to ceremonies only seeing the Ephesians were not bound to the ceremonial law, as being strangers to the common wealth of Israel, as himself speaketh, ver. 12, but when he saith also not of ourselves, he excludeth all whatsoever is in us from being the cause of our salvation, not only ceremonial but also moral duties. So writing to Titus he saith, Tit. 3:5. Not by the works of righteousness which we had done but according to his mercy, he saved us, in which place we are necessarily to understand the works of the moral law; for Titus being a Grecian was not bound to observe the ceremonial law, and therefore he was not so much as circumcised as the apostle plainly affirmeth, Gal. 2:3.

Fourthly, Paul speaketh of that law by which we come to the knowledge of sin, as appeareth, Rom. 3:20, and 7:7,8,9. But the knowledge of sin came especially by the moral law, and therefore of this law the Apostle speaketh.

Lastly the Apostle speaking of the works of the law allegeth these sentences. Gal. 3:10. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written cursed is every man that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. So that he speaketh not

of the ceremonial law alone but of the whole law of Moses and of all things contained in it, and ver. 12. And the law is not of faith, but the man that shall do those things shall live in them. Which cannot be understood of the ceremonial law alone, but of the works of the moral law yea of them especially.

Secondly it is answered that the apostle speaketh only of the works of those who are not regenerate nor endued with faith, and not of the regenerate and faithful. Which shifting cavil the apostle clearly taketh away, not only by applying his speeches unto all men without any limitation; but especially in that example of Abraham which he bringeth for this purpose; who though he were long before regenerate, endued with faith and exceeding plentiful in good works, yet he flatly excludeth all his works from being any causes of his justification. So, Rom. 4:2. If Abraham were justified by works he had wherein to rejoice but not with God. And ver. 3. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4. Now to him that worketh, the wages is not counted by favor but by debt. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness.

And so much concerning the testimonies of scripture which manifestly prove that we are not justified by our works. The reasons which may be brought to the same purpose are exceeding many, but I will briefly touch, some few only. First justification is manifestly opposed to condemnation: and they are both judicial words used in civil courts, and therefore to be understood both judicially and not after a diverse manner. But to condemn signifieth not to infuse any fault or crime in to the person condemned; but to pronounce him guilty and faulty: And therefore to justify signifieth not to infuse righteousness into the person justified; but to declare, pronounce, and

repute him as just and righteous. Secondly, by the same means whereby we obtain the remission of our sins, we are also justified and made righteous; but we obtain the remission of our sins not for our works or inherent righteousness, or any virtue that is in ourselves, but by and for the alone merits, obedience, and full satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied unto us by a lively faith, as appeareth, Rom. 3:25. And therefore by this means alone we are also justified.

Thirdly, whosoever are justified freely by grace they are not justified by their own merits, works, or inherent righteousness: but the scriptures testify that all the faithful are justified freely by God's grace, as appeareth, Rom. 3:23,24. All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. And are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So, Eph. 1:7. By whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to his rich grace. And 2:8. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. And Tit. 3, not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us &c. 7. That we being justified by his grace should be made heirs according to hope of eternal life. And therefore none are justified by their own merits, works, or inherent righteousness.

Lastly, the apostle Paul himself gathereth many absurdities which would follow this doctrine of justification by works: first that our faith should be vain, and the promise of God void, Rom. 4:14. Secondly that Christ Jesus should die in vain if we have righteousness by the law. Gal. 2:21. Thirdly that we should have cause of boasting and glorying in our selves. Eph. 2:9, for if a man were justified by his own inherent righteousness, he should have whereof to glory, and so God should be robbed of the whole praise of our salvation. Rom. 4:2. But the Lord of purpose hath justified us freely of

his grace, and not for our works and inherent righteousness, that all glorying in ourselves might be excluded: as appeareth, Rom. 3:27, Eph 2:9. Fourthly it would follow hereupon that we should still be under the curse of the law, which is denounced against all who continue not in all that is written in the book of the law to do them, as the Apostle reasoneth, Gal. 3:10. Fifthly that the obedience and satisfaction of Christ should be maimed and imperfect, unless it were patched up with our own righteousness: the contrary whereof the Apostle affirmeth, Heb. 7:25, namely that he is able perfectly to save all them who come unto God by him. Lastly, hereupon it would follow that we should continually waver in doubting, in respect of our manifold corruptions and imperfect righteousness, and should have our souls deprived of that peace of conscience which followeth justification by faith, as it is, Rom. 5:1. Lastly with the Jews we shall bring ourselves into most certain danger of being rejected and cast of, from being the people and Church of God, if with them we go about to stablish our own righteousness, in the meantime not submitting ourselves to the righteousness of God, which is of faith in Jesus Christ, as it is, Rom. 10:4,6.

CHAP. L. THAT FAITH ALONE JUSTIFIETH.

And thus much concerning the first point, namely that we are not justified by works: the second is that we are justified by faith alone: whereby we are not to understand that faith by its own virtue, or as it is a faculty, habit, work or action in us, doth justify us, but as it is the alone instrument whereby we do apprehend and apply unto us Christ Jesus, his righteousness and obedience, by which only righteousness which is out of ourselves in Christ as the proper subject thereof, being offered in the word and Sacraments, and applied by faith we are justified in God's sight, as appeareth, Phil. 2:9. Secondly whereas we say that faith alone justifieth, we do not understand such a faith, as is alone without works, charity, and other sanctifying graces, which were nothing else but imaginary dead, and but as it were a carcass of faith which breatheth not; but that amongst all other graces, virtues and faculties of the soul faith alone, and not any of them is the instrument whereby we apply Christ Jesus unto us, who being thus applied doth justify us.

Otherwise, we affirm that other graces of God's spirit and even good works which is a fruit of them all, do necessarily accompany our justification, not as instruments or causes thereof, but as inseparable effects and fruits thereof. So that howsoever we exclude works from the act of justifying, yet we necessarily require them in the subject or person justified; we affirm that faith alone justifieth, but we deny that such a faith which is alone doth justify us; we maintain that we are justified by faith alone without works, but with all we affirm that faith which is without works doth not justify us as being dead, false and imaginary. This may be made plain by some similitudes: to the being of an honest man there is necessarily required honest actions, not as causes but as effects, neither are his honest actions the cause of his honesty, but his honesty the cause of his honest actions; to a living man there is necessarily required as well breathing which is an action or effect of life, as the soul which is the cause thereof, and so to a justified man there is necessarily required, as well good works which are the effects of justification, as faith which is the instrumental cause thereof; for faith and works are never severed in the subject or party justified, although they are disjoined in the act of justifying. So the eye only seeth and not the forehead, but yet the eye severed from the forehead seeth not, because it is but a dead eye, the hand writeth and not the body, but the hand severed from the body writeth not, because it is a dead hand. The foot goeth and not the head or heart, but the foot which is severed from the head or heart goeth not, and so faith only justifieth, and not hope, not charity, not works, but the faith that is severed from hope, charity, and works, justifieth not, because it is but a dead faith; as therefore when we say the eye only seeth, the hand only writeth, the foot only walketh, our meaning is not that these parts being alone, and severed from the rest, see, write, and walk, but

that amongst all other parts, the action or function of seeing belongeth peculiarly unto the eye, writing to the hand, walking to the foot: so when we say that only faith justifieth, our meaning is not that the faith which is alone, and severed from other graces and the fruits of them good works, justifieth; but that amongst all other graces this act of justifying peculiarly and properly belongeth unto faith, and not to any other grace, virtue; or works.

Now that that faith alone, in this sense understood, justifieth, appeareth plainly, both by testimonies of scripture and apparent reasons. For the first, it is manifest, Rom. 3:28, where after long disputation concerning this point, the Apostle expressly concludeth thus. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. And chap. 4, ver. 5. To him that worketh not, but believeth in him, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. So, Gal. 2:16. Know that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ: even we I say have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified. And chap. 3:11. And that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. 12. And the law is not of faith. And hence it is that the righteousness of Christ, whereby we are justified is called the righteousness of faith, because faith is the only instrument, which apprehendeth and applieth this righteousness unto us, for our justification.

The reasons to prove that faith alone justifieth are divers. First, that which alone applieth unto us Christ Jesus and his righteousness, that only justifieth us: but faith alone applieth unto us Christ Jesus and his righteousness, and not hope, charity, or any other grace: and therefore faith alone justifieth.

Secondly, that which only maketh the promises of the Gospel firm and sure unto us, that alone justifieth us; but faith alone resting upon God's mercy and Christ's merits, maketh the promises of the Gospel firm and sure unto us (which would be most uncertain if they should depend on the condition of our works and worthiness; seeing they are most imperfect, and we most corrupt and unworthy of God's least mercy; as the Apostle plainly showeth, Rom. 4:16. Therefore it is (namely the covenant of grace) by faith, that it might come by grace, and the promise might be sure to all the seed: and therefore faith alone justifieth us.

Lastly, our Savior Christ John. 3:14,15, maketh this comparison. As Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lift up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. From which we may thus reason; As the Israelites who were stung with fiery serpents, were cured not by any outward means of physic and surgery, or anything in themselves, save only by looking upon the brazen serpent, which for this purpose was set up by God's commandment; so we being stung of the old serpent, with the sting of sin cannot be cured by any means without or within ourselves, but by beholding the true substance Christ Jesus, signified by this shadow, with the eye of faith.

And thus have I proved, first that we are not justified by our works, and inherent righteousness; and secondly that we are justified by faith alone: not as it is the chief and principal cause, for in this respect God justifieth; not as it is the matter or meritorious cause of our justification, for in this respect the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ justifieth us; but as it is the alone instrument and only cause in us which applieth that meritorious cause unto us, whereby alone we are justified in God's sight.

Secondly, the tempter will object, that this imputed righteousness we speak of, is but imaginary, and a vain fantasy; as if a man who were defiled with dirt should be reputed clean by the imputation of another's cleanness, or as if a beggar should be esteemed rich, by imputation of another's wealth. To which we are to answer, that the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto us, is no imaginary dream, but a matter plainly expressed in God's word, as also the not imputation of our sins is therein specified. In the fourth of the Romans this word is used by the holy Ghost, an eleven times. So, ver. 3. Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And ver. 4. To him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness. And ver. 6. Even as David declared the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. And ver. 8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, &c.

Yea will the tempter say, it is true that we are justified by imputed righteousness; but not by the righteousness of Christ, which is out of our selves; but our faith, which is formed and perfected with charity, and other graces, and good works is imputed for righteousness: or more plainly, God accepteth of the works of the faithful, and their inherent righteousness, though imperfect and unworthy in themselves, for and through Christ, for such righteousness which may justify us in his sight. For the answering of which objection we are to know, that this word imputing, or imputation, is taken two ways in the Scriptures: first when as the thing imputed is in ourselves, and so it is said Psal. 106:31, that the fact of Phinehas was imputed unto him for righteousness; so Rom. 5:13, But sin is not imputed while there is no law. Secondly, when as the thing imputed is out of our selves; and of this, mention is made Lev. 17:4, and Num. 18:27. And in this

latter sense the word is to be understood in the doctrine of justification, and not in the former. For our sins were imputed unto Christ, when he offered himself to stand in our place, to pay our debt and to make full satisfaction to his fathers justice, by suffering those punishments which we by our sins had deserved; in which respect the Scriptures say that he was reputed amongst the wicked, Mar. 15:28, and that he was made sin for us, 2 Cor. 5:21, not by infusion of our sins and corruptions into his most holy nature, but by imputation only. And contrariwise, we are made just or justified not by infusion of inherent righteousness into us, but by imputation of Christ's righteousness, when as believing in him, notwithstanding that our nature is still defiled with sin and manifold corruptions, through the mere mercy and free grace of God for the merits and obedience of Christ we are reputed just, as though we had never committed sin, and had performed perfect obedience unto God's commandments, and so adjudged heirs of everlasting life.

So that this imputation consisteth not in God's reputed of us just, in respect of our inherent righteousness infused into us; but in the free mercy and grace of God, which for Christ his sake covereth our sins, which are indeed inherent in us, so as they shall never be imputed unto us for our condemnation, and imputeth unto us the righteousness which is not in us but in Christ, wherewith being fully possessed, he reputed of us as most innocent and perfectly righteous.

Now, that imputation is to be understood in this latter sense, it is most manifest where the Apostle Paul setteth down the word in both these senses, denying that in this doctrine of justification it is to be understood of the former, and affirming it of the latter. To him (saith he) that worketh, the wages is not imputed by favor, but by debt (namely, because he hath

merited it by his own righteousness) 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted or imputed for righteousness; even as David declareth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. In which words he plainly showeth, that there is a kind of imputation which hath his ground or foundation in works and inherent righteousness, and this he affirmeth is not of grace. And that there is another kind of imputation, which hath not its ground and foundation in him to whom it is made, but in the free mercy of God justifying the wicked without his works, and therefore not only destitute of inherent righteousness whereby he might be justified, but also guilty of inherent corruption and actual transgression, whereby he might be condemned if God should enter into judgment with him. So also he plainly affirmeth, Eph. 2:8, that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of our selves; it is the gift of God. 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast himself.

Secondly, this may be proved by the example of Abraham, upon which the Apostle in the former place insisteth; for by that imputed righteousness whereby he was justified, we are also justified: but the Apostle plainly affirmeth that this imputation was not of Abraham's inherent righteousness, with the which notwithstanding he was plentifully endued; for (as he saith) if Abraham were justified by works, he had wherein to rejoice, but not in God; but that Abraham believed in God, and this was counted to him for righteousness, as it is, Rom. 4:2,3: and therefore we are not justified by our works and inherent righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us.

Thirdly, that righteousness which justifieth us, must consist in perfect obedience and fulfilling of the law of God, in that exact manner and

measure which God's justice doth require: but this cannot possibly be done by any righteousness which is in us, which is most imperfect and mingled with many sins and corruptions, for in many things we sin all, as it is, Jam. 3:2, and he that saith he hath no sin is a liar, as John speaketh, 1 John. 1:8, and our best righteousness is like a polluted cloth, as it is, Isa. 64:6, but by the alone righteousness of Jesus Christ, which being imputed unto us is sufficient to answer and satisfy God's exact and most perfect justice. That our righteousness whereby we are to be justified must be perfect, and such as the law and exact justice of God requireth, it appeareth, Rom. 3:31, whereas the Apostle plainly affirmeth, that when faith is imputed unto righteousness, the law is not made void, but rather confirmed and fulfilled. Do we then (saith he) make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid. Yea we establish the law. But this cannot be done by our righteousness, which is imperfect and mingled with innumerable sins, but by the alone most perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed unto us. Again, the Lord hath commanded and straitly charged, that in our civil judgments the righteous shall be justified, and the wicked condemned, Deut. 25:1. And the wise man saith, that he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination unto the Lord, Prov. 17:15. And the Prophet Isaiah denounceth a woe against them which commit this sin, chap. 5, ver. 23. Now, shall the Lord require this of us, and shall we think that he whose will is the rule of justice, will justify any whose righteousness is imperfect, and not according to his law? No, he hath told us, that it is more easy that heaven and earth should pass away, than that one title of the law should fall unaccomplished, Luk. 16:17. And therefore let us not trust unto our own imperfect righteousness, but wholly rest upon the alone righteousness of Jesus Christ by a lively faith for our

justification. For he is the Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23:6. In him we have righteousness and strength, Isa. 45:24. He is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. 1:30. By his obedience many are made righteous, Rom. 5:19. And that which was impossible to the law, in as much as it was weak because of the flesh, God sending his son in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us; as it is, Rom. 8:3,4. In a word, in him alone we have all our righteousness, in him we shine gloriously in the sight of God, and he is that bright shining Sun of righteousness, from whom we borrow all our light, without whose rays of holiness we should remain in the darkness of our sins and corruptions.

Lastly, the Apostle setteth down the form of our justification, namely, the imputation of our sins unto Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness unto us. 2 Cor. 5:21. He which knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. As therefore Christ was made a sinner for us, so we are made righteous before God in him; but Christ Jesus was not made a sinner for us by infusion of our sins and corruptions into his nature (for he was always most holy, pure, undefiled and without sin, as the Apostle witnesseth of him) but by imputation only, as being our surety who had taken upon him to discharge all our debt: and therefore in like manner we are made righteous, not by infusion of righteousness, but by imputation only.

Now whereas they object, that to be justified by imputation is but an imaginary mockery, as if a poor man should be reputed rich; to this we are to answer, that it is but a frivolous cavil: for we do not teach that God esteemeth and reputeth us righteous, being wholly defiled with sin and quite destitute of all righteousness; but that he maketh us perfectly righteous, by

washing away our sins with the precious blood of Christ, and by applying and appropriating unto us his perfect righteousness and obedience by virtue of his spirit principally, and a lively faith instrumentally, whereby we are united unto Christ and become members of his body, and consequently have right and full interest unto all that which this our head hath done for us; and so being made partakers of his righteousness and merits, God reputeth us as we are in truth perfectly just and righteous. If a man being poor and far in debt should be accounted and reputed exceeding rich and nothing indebted, it were indeed but a mere imagination. But if another of great sufficiency should take upon him to be his surety, and not only discharge all his debts, but should bestow upon him great sums of money and much treasure, this man whatsoever he was before time in himself, may now be esteemed rich and out of debt. So if we (as we are far indebted to the justice of God and exceeding beggarly, yea stark naked of all righteousness) should be reputed as we are thus in ourselves righteous and nothing indebted, it were but a mere mockery; but seeing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ hath taken upon him to be our surety who is himself all-sufficient, and seeing he hath perfectly and fully answered all our debts wherein we were engaged to God's justice; and not only so, but also hath communicated and bestowed upon us the infinite rich treasures of his righteousness and obedience, giving unto us full interest and possession hereof, outwardly by his handwriting of the Gospel, and his Sacraments as seals annexed thereunto, and inwardly by the virtue and cooperation of his spirit applying them unto us: and lastly, seeing we also have received the full assurance of all this heavenly and spiritual rich treasure by the hand of faith, we are in truth quite out of debt, and exceeding rich with his righteousness which is now become ours, and therefore are so reputed and esteemed in the sight of God.

CHAP. LI. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS MOVING THE WEAK CHRISTIAN TO DOUBT OF HIS JUSTIFICATION, ANSWERED.

And so much for answering Satan's temptations, whereby he laboreth to persuade us to rest upon a false and imperfect righteousness for our justification: now we are briefly to speak of those which he suggesteth into the minds of weak Christians, to the end that he may make them doubt of their justification, that so he might (if it were possible) make frustrate this work of God, or at least rob their souls of all comfort and peace of conscience, which always accompanieth the assurance of our justification; for being justified by faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 5:1. First therefore he suggesteth that our justification is an action of God, and therefore unknown to us; so that we cannot possibly attain unto any certain knowledge that we are justified of God, unless he assure us hereof by some special and extraordinary revelation.

For the answering whereof, we are to understand that this act of God in justifying a sinner, is as clearly revealed ordinarily in the Scriptures, as any other thing concerning our salvation, and that every true believer may as

certainly conclude by undoubted arguments grounded on God's infallible truth, that he is justified before God, as by natural reason he can prove that he liveth and breatheth. For first our effectual vocation and justification are inseparably linked together by the Apostle, Rom. 8:30. So that whosoever can prove that he is effectually called, he may also most certainly infer that he is justified. But every true believer may come to the certain knowledge that he is effectually called (as before I have shown at large) and that not by any special revelation, but by the will of God, revealed in his word by the inward testimony of God's spirit, and the undoubted signs of effectual calling, which he observeth in himself; and therefore without any particular revelation we may attain unto the assurance also that we are justified, that is, that our sins are pardoned for the merits and full satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and we clothed with his righteousness.

Secondly, whosoever can come to the assurance that he hath a true and lively faith, he may also be assured that he is justified; for it is the nature and an inseparable property of true faith, to apply unto the believer Christ Jesus and his righteousness, whereby he is justified before God; and hence it is that the Scriptures plainly affirm that we are justified by faith and not by anything else which is in us, as before I have sufficiently shown. But we may come to the certain assurance that we have a true faith, by the undoubted signs and inseparable fruits thereof, which we may discern in ourselves (as hath been already plainly proved) though we never have any special revelation: And therefore without any such particular revelation we may attain unto the certain assurance that we are justified in God's sight.

Thirdly, that which the Gospel assureth us of, we need not to make any doubt thereof, or once call it into question: but the Gospel assureth us, that whosoever believeth in Christ Jesus, and truly repent them of their sins,

shall be made partakers of all the gracious promises of life and salvation therein contained; So, John. 3:16. God so loved the world that he hath given his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And, chap. 5:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life. And Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are laden, and I will ease you. And therefore whosoever believe in Jesus Christ, approving their faith to the world and their own consciences, to be true and unfeigned, by the fruit thereof, unfeigned repentance, he may assure himself of all the gracious promises of the Gospel, and consequently of the remission of his sins, and his justification for the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the Lord hath not only after a general manner propounded these promises unto us, and left us to our own liberty to believe or not to believe them, but he hath bound us to the performance of this duty by his express commandment, Mark. 1:15. Repent and believe the Gospel. And, 1 John. 3:23. This is his commandment that we believe in his son Jesus Christ, that is, that we do not only after a general manner believe that he is the savior of mankind, but that we believe that he is our savior, who hath redeemed, justified, and will most perfectly save us, and rest wholly upon him alone for our salvation. And he that thus believeth, needeth no other arguments to assure him that he is justified and shall be saved; for he hath the witness in himself, even the testimony of God's spirit, crying in his heart Abba father, and bearing witness unto his spirit that he is the child of God: and not to believe this is to make God a liar, because we will not believe the record that he hath witnessed of that his son, as the Apostle speaketh. 1 John. 5:10. Yea (as before I have shown at large) he hath added unto the hand writing

of his word, which containeth also his oath for our better confirmation, his sacraments; whereby he particularly conveyeth and giveth unto every believer, as it were proper possession of Christ Jesus and all his benefits, to the end that there should be no place left to doubting, nor any need of any particular revelation, for our further assurance.

Secondly, Satan will suggest that those who are justified are made just, and those who are made just do continually the works of righteousness; but thou, will he say to the humbled sinner, continuest still in thy corruptions, and thy wickedness cleaveth fast to thee, and compasseth thee about; and instead of doing the works of righteousness, thou continually heapest up the full measure of thy sins; yea thy best actions are so stained with imperfections and so full of infirmities, that they justly provoke God's wrath against thee.

To which we must answer, that indeed whosoever is justified is made just, but not by infusion of inherent righteousness into our selves, but by imputation of Christ's most perfect righteousness, as before I have shown; for hereby our sins are pardoned, he having taken them upon himself, and satisfied God's justice by suffering those punishments which we had deserved; and also he hath perfectly fulfilled the law, that he might make us partakers of his active obedience; and so imputing both unto us, hath made us perfectly just and righteous in God's sight.

So that now the Lord doth not require obedience to his law at our hands, to the end that we should be justified in whole or in part, by our own righteousness; neither are we to this end to observe God's commandments, that we may offer unto God our works and inherent righteousness, desiring thereby to be justified; for, as I have shown, our best righteousness is imperfect, and mingled with manifold corruptions, so as it would rather

condemn us, then justify us, if the Lord should examine it according to the exact rule of his most perfect justice: but we offer unto God for our justification, the most perfect righteousness and full satisfaction of Jesus Christ, which by his merits and sufferings he hath once made for us, desiring thereby wholly and only to be justified and saved.

As for our works and inherent righteousness, they are not causes but effects and fruits of our justification; neither is it possible that we should do any good work acceptable in God's sight, till we are justified, and reconciled unto God in Jesus Christ, for our works cannot please him, till our persons please him, and whatsoever we do, before faith hath purified the heart, it is sin and odious in the sight of God: but as soon as we have faith begotten in us, presently it apprehendeth, Christ and his righteousness, whereby we are justified, and then being justified, faith worketh by love and bringeth forth in us the fruits of sanctification; which though they be mingled with much corruption, and manifold imperfections, yet God in Christ accepteth of them as perfect, and will crown them with glory, and immortality.

Neither doth the Lord now require of us, that we perfectly at once shake off all our corruptions, but that we labor as much as in us lieth, to mortify and subdue them according to the measure of his grace, and holy spirit, which he hath bestowed on us; he doth not straightly command that we should instantly banish and expel sin from dwelling in us, but that we do not suffer it to reign in us, nor willingly obey the flesh in the lusts thereof, submitting ourselves unto sin, as servants and vassals to their Lord and master; he doth not enjoin us that we should wholly vanquish our corruptions, and obtain a full victory over them, but that we proclaim open wars against them, and manfully fight and strive under the conduct of his

spirit, against the flesh, and the sinful lusts thereof; and when we are taken captive of sin, that we labor to attain unto our former freedom, in the meantime sorrowing and groaning under the heavy weight of our corruptions, and crying out with the Apostle, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death; and that we confess our miserable estate unto our captain and leader Jesus Christ, desiring him to assist us with the power of his holy spirit, that thereby we may be freed out of the hands of these our spiritual enemies, whose bondage and captivity is so irksome and grievous unto us. Neither doth the Lord now require that we perform absolute and perfect obedience to his commandments, but that to will be present in us, that we consent and approve his law to be good and delighting in it concerning the inner man, that we desire and endeavor to perform that good we cannot, and forgetting that which is behind, endeavor ourselves to that which is before, and follow hard towards the mark, though we cannot attain unto the end of our race, till we come to the end of our lives. Finally, the Lord doth not require of us a whole harvest of goodness and righteousness, but the first fruits thereof; he doth not stand so much upon our actions, as upon our affections, upon the perfection of our works, as upon the alacrity of our wills, and integrity of our hearts; the righteousness which he requireth is an humble confession of our unrighteousness, a sincere hatred of our sins, a holy endeavor in the use of the means to mortify our corruptions, and to rise from the death of sin, to holiness and newness of life; which whosoever can offer unto God, they may assure themselves that they shall be accepted through Christ, as righteous in God's sight, notwithstanding their manifold imperfections and corruptions.

The end of the second Book.

APPENDIX II. – BOOK. II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

In the original facsimile edition of this book, there were a considerable amount of scripture references in the margins. They have been listed here by Chapter in the order they appeared.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Gal. 2:20; Joh. 3:16; 1 Joh. 5:10; 1 Joh. 4:19; Rom. 13:8; Act. 5:14; Phil. 1:23; Rom. 8:28.

CHAP. II.

Hos. 14:5; 1 Joh. 4:10; Rom. 5:8,10; 1 Joh. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; Joh. 13:1; Rom. 11:5,6; Jer. 31:31; Rom. 4:13; Eph. 1:7,8; Eph. 2:1,5; Eph. 2:3,4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Deut. 7:7,8; Rom. 3:24; Tit. 3:7; Rom. 4:3,5; Tit. 2:14; Eph. 2:1,3; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:25,26; 1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8; Tit. 2:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5; Jer. 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:30,31; 1 Cor. 1:4,5; Rom. 5:21; Eph. 2:7; Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:16; Eph. 1:9,10; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 5:18,19; Isa. 53:5; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:20,21; Eph. 1:6; Eph. 2:12,13; Gal. 4:4,5; Eph. 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Joh. 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 4:16; Eph. 1:6.

CHAP. III.

2 Tim. 3:12; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 12:6,8; Prov. 17:12; Prov. 18:14; Rev. 3:19; Heb. 12:6; Jer. 4:4; Matth. 12:20; Psalm. 51:17; Isa. 61:1,2,3; Job. 1:8; Job. 6:4; Job. 9:17,18; Job. 13:24,26; Job. 16:9; Job. 19:11; Psalm. 6:3; Psalm. 38:2,3; Psalm. 88:7,14,15,16; Psalm. 77:7,8,9,10; Act. 9:15; Gal. 1:15; 2 Cor. 6:4,5,6,7,8; 2 Cor. 12:7, 8; Rom. 7:24; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 5:9; Isa. 53:3; Matth. 3:17; Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:22; Isa. 53:5; 1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 5:10; Rom. 5:3; Prov. 28:14; Jam. 5:11; Job. 10:18; Psalm. 88:14; Psalm. 32:3,4; Jer. 20:14,15,18; Eccl. 9:1; Eccl. 3:19; Rom. 8; Joh. 3:16; Rom. 8:38.

CHAP. IIII.

N/A

CHAP. V.

1 Tim. 2:4; Matth. 22:14; Matth. 7:13; Matth. 25:34,41; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; Rev. 21:8; Eph. 1:5,6; Matth. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:21; Eph. 1:4.

CHAP. VI.

1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 4:16; Heb. 6:17,18; Matth. 5:18; Rom. 5:1; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:16; Heb. 10:22; Heb. 6:19; 1 Pet. 1:13; 1 Joh. 3:14; 2 Tim. 1:12; Joh. 3:16; Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Cor. 11:28; Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6.

CHAP. VII.

Mar. 1:15; 1 Joh. 3:23; Mar. 16:16; Joh. 6:63; Joh. 6:40; Joh. 3:36; 1 Joh. 5:10; Rom. 8:30; Matth. 25:34; Act. 13:48; Heb. 4:16; Heb. 10:22; Rom. 4:20; Jam. 1:5; Matth. 21:21; Matth. 14:31; Luk. 12:29; Jam. 1:7; Rom. 14:23; Act. 15:9; Gal. 5:6; Heb. 11:1; 1 Joh. 5:13; Heb. 11:1; Heb. 10:22; Eph. 3:12; 1 Joh. 3:14; Rom. 5:2; Rom. 8:33,34,35,38; Heb. 6:18; Phil. 3:12; Joh. 10:28; Isa. 63:1; 1 Pet. 1:13; Rom. 4:18,19,20,21,22,23; Gal.

3:16; Gen. 22:18; Psalm. 23:4; Psalm. 27:1; Psalm. 125:1; Job. 13:15; Job. 19:25,26; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 4:5; Luk. 7:48,50; Matth. 9:2; Matth. 16:19; Joh. 20:23; Eph. 3:12; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:27; Joh. 1:12; Joh. 6:54; 1 Joh. 5:14,15; Jam. 1:5; Matth. 6:12; Rom. 8:30; Rom. 8:8,13; 1 Cor. 6:9; Matth. 7:23; Rev. 21:27; Joh. 3:18; Joh. 16:8,9.

CHAP. VIII.

Eph. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:10,12; Joh. 16:13; Psalm. 145:17; 1 Cor. 1:9; Psalm. 19:7; Rom. 8:15,16; Gal. 4:6; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 5:5; Rom. 4:11; Esth. 8:8; Joh. 6:27; Gen. 38:17,18 2 Kings. 14:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:17,18; Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 16:9; Matth. 3:11; Act. 2:3; 1 Joh. 2:20,27; Gal. 5:17; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 3:5; Joh. 6:63; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 1:17,18; 1 Joh. 3:24; Rom. 8:38,39.

CHAP. IX.

Rom. 8:15,16; Jam. 1:17; Matth. 7:7; Luk. 11:13; Joh. 6:56; Rom. 8:1; Joh. 10:14; 1 Joh. 4:19; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 8:1; 1 Pet. 4:2,3; Joh. 10:4; Joh. 15:4,5; Phil. 3:20; Joh. 15:5; Rom. 6:56; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 12:14; Rom. 8:1; Matth. 7:17; Joh. 15:4,5; Isa. 29:13; 2 Tim. 3:5; Eph. 4:14; Luk. 1:74,75.

CHAP. X.

Joh. 10:3,4; Matth. 13:45; Rom. 8:26; Rom. 10:13; Isa. 29:13; Rom. 8:14; Rev. 3:17; 2 Cor. 7:10; Joh. 7:37; Rev. 21:6; Phil. 3:8; Rom. 8:35; Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17; Joh. 1:12; 1 Joh. 2:5; Mal. 3:17; Psalm. 119:6; Jam. 2:10; Gal. 3:3; Matth. 24:13; Luk. 9:62; 2 Cor. 6:8; 1 Joh. 3:14; 1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 6:10; 1 Joh. 3:17; Matth. 25:34,35; 1 Cor. 13:5,7; Rom. 12:19,21; Rom. 12:14; Isa. 11:6,8; Matth. 6:14; Matth. 10:41; Dan. 12:3; Matth. 10:43; Gal. 4:15; Rom. 10:15; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:27,28; Rev. 22:20;

Matth. 6:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:53; Luk. 21:28; Matth. 24:30; Rev. 6:16; 1 Cor. 2:9.

CHAP. XI.

1 Cor. 10:12; Prov. 28:14; Rom. 11:20; Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 Cor. 10:12; Prov. 28:14; Rom. 11:20; Phil. 2:12; Psalm. 2:11; Psalm. 5:7; 1 Joh. 4:18; Mal. 1:6; Psalm. 34:9; Psalm. 112:1; 1 Pet. 1:17; Job. 9:21; Job. 9:2; 1 Cor. 4:3,4; Jam. 2:10; Rom. 5:1,2; Rom. 8:33; Joel. 2:14; Amos 5:15; Jon. 3:9; 1 Kings. 21:29; 2 Sam. 12:22; 2 Sam. 16:12; Psalm. 16:11; Act. 8:22; Ezek. 33:11; Eccl. 5:5.

CHAP. XII.

Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:20; Jer. 9:24; 1 Joh. 5:10; Eph. 3:12; Rom. 5:2; Psalm. 143:2; 1 Cor. 4:4; 2 Cor. 4:8,9; Rom. 7:18; Rom. 4:20; 1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:10,12; 2 Cor. 2:16; 1 Cor. 1:18.

CHAP. XIII.

Matth. 1:21; Act. 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 1:7; Luk. 1:68; 1 Pet. 1:18.

CHAP. XIII.

Joh. 10:28; Matth. 20:2; Matth. 26:28; Luk. 2:34; Joh. 10:15; Joh. 15:14; Rom. 8:32,33; Matth. 1:21; Eph. 5:25; Joh. 11:52; Rom. 3:22,25,26; Heb. 5:9; Joh. 3:18; Rom. 2:9; 1 Joh. 3:8; 2 Tim. 2:26; Matth. 7:23; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Rom. 8:35; Joh. 17:9; Heb. 7:25; Mar. 16:16; Joh. 3:36; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Psalm. 32:1; Act. 2:47; Eph. 5:25; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 Joh. 2:2; Joh. 11:52; Rev. 5:9; Gal. 3:26,28; Joh. 3:16; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 3:22; Act. 10:43; Mar. 1:5; Matth. 4:23; Act. 10:38; Joh. 12:32; Isa. 54:13; Jer. 31:34; Joel. 2:28; Phil. 2:21; Joh. 3:32; Matth. 26:28; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rom. 14:15; Heb. 10:29; 1 Cor. 15:22.

CHAP. XV.

Rom. 6:5,6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Tit. 2:14; Luk. 1:74,75; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 6:18; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:10,14; Act. 5:31; Eph. 5:25,26; 1 Joh. 1:7; Heb. 10:22; 1 Joh. 3:8; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:20; Luk. 21:28; Joh. 8:34; 1 Joh. 3:8; Rom. 6:16; Eph. 4:17,18; Luk. 1:77,78; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 7:18,22; Rom. 1:24,26; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:19; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Rom. 6:29.

CHAP. XVI.

Ezek. 18:20; Joh. 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 2:11,12; Joh. 20:17; Lev. 25:25; Act. 20:28; Heb. 9:26; Eph. 5:25,27; Col. 1:14; Rom. 6:12; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:3,4; 1 Joh. 5:3; Matth. 11:30; Col. 1:20,21; Psalm. 103:9; Heb. 2:14; Col. 1:13; Col. 2:15; Joh. 12:31; Luk. 11:21; 1 Pet. 5:9; Gen. 3:19; Heb. 9:27; Psalm. 120:5; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 1:23; Joh. 8:21; Joh. 10:28; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:12.

CHAP. XVII.

Matth. 22:3,8; Rom 8:30; Act. 13:48; Joh. 6:45; Act. 16:14; Joh. 15:19; Eph. 2:19; Isa. 65:1; Eph. 2:1,3,12; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Pet. 4:3; Isa. 53:6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Isa. 9:6; Joh. 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Joh. 17:6; Eph. 4:15; Joh. 15:1; Eph. 2:20,21; Eph. 2:22; 1 Joh. 4:13.

CHAP. XVIII.

Eph. 5:23,25; Act. 2:47; Rom. 8:30; Psalm. 95:7,8; Rev. 3:20; Matth. 8:21; Eph. 4:11,12; Act. 9:6,17; Act. 10:5,6; 2 Cor. 5:20; 2 Cor. 4:7; Jer. 1:9; Luk. 10:16; 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 6:15; Act. 14:3; Phil. 2:16; Act. 13:26; Matth. 13:44; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12; Deut. 5:32; Psalm. 119:105; Eph. 6:17; Eph. 4:11,12; Act. 2:41; 1 Cor. 4:15; Joh. 3:5; Luk. 1:79; Matth. 5:14; Act. 13:47; Eph. 2:8; Joh. 1:12; Joh. 3:16,18; Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; 1 Tim. 4:16; Joh. 8:47; Joh. 10:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Amos. 8:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:3; Psalm. 27:4.

CHAP. XIX.

Gen. 49:5,6.

CHAP. XX.

1 Cor. 2:14; Jos. 6:26; 1 Kings. 16:34; 1 Kings. 13:1,2; 2 Kings. 22-23;
Isa. 44:26,27,28.

CHAP. XXI.

Matth. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:8; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Cor. 2:15; 1 Joh.
2:27; 1 Cor. 2:10,12; Joh. 16:7,13.

CHAP. XXII.

N/A

CHAP. XXIII.

Rom. 7:8,15,23; 1 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 1:15,18; Rom. 1:16.

CHAP. XXIII.

1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Joh. 4:1; Act. 17; Jam.
3:2; Jam. 2:10; 1 Kings. 8:46; Psalm. 143:2; Luk. 17 10; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Tim.
4:1,3,4; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:2; Matth. 28:6; Act. 1:11; Acts 3:21; 1 Cor.
14:19; Matth. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:28; Luke 11:13; Joh. 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10,12;
Rev. 3:18; 1 Joh. 2:27.

CHAP. XXV.

Rom. 10:14,17; 2 Tim. 1:9.

CHAP. XXVI.

Eccl. 4:17; Exod. 19:10; Jam. 1:19; 1 Pet. 2:1; Psalm. 119:18; Amos. 8:11.

CHAP. XXVII.

Rev. 2:21,22; Rev. 3:20.

CHAP. XXVIII.

N/A

CHAP. XXIX. Prov. 15:15; Rom. 2:4; Exod. 9:27; Exod. 10:16,17; 1
Kings. 13:6; 1 Kings. 21:27; Eph 4:11,12; John 6:44; Eph. 4:11,12.

CHAP. XXX. Ezek. 13:32; Ezek. 33:11; Matth. 9:13; Matth. 11:28; 1 Tim. 2:4.

CHAP. XXXI.

Psalm. 51:17; Isa. 66:2; Isa. 53:6; 2 Kings. 22:19; Act. 2:37; Zech. 12:10; Rev. 3:17,18; Job. 4:18; Job. 15:15; Isa. 64:6; Gal. 3:10; Rev. 21:6; Rev. 22:17; Matth. 11:27; Jer. 2:13.

CHAP. XXXII.

Isa. 28:21; 1 Chron. 14; 1 Cor. 11:32; Luke 7:41; Psalm. 36:6; Psalm. 104:21,27; Psalm. 147:9; Psalm. 145:9.

CHAP. XXXIII.

N/A

CHAP. XXXIII.

2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 1:7; 1 Cor. 11:25; 1 Joh. 17:9.

CHAP. XXXV.

1 Pet. 2:24; Matth. 11:25.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Matth. 16; Joh. 8:44; Isa. 1:5-16; Act. 2:38.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Ezek. 16:6; Eph. 2:1,3,12,13; Rom. 7:7; Psalm. 40:6; Joh. 6:44; Act. 16:14; 1 Joh. 2:20,27; 1 Joh. 2:15; Jam. 4:4; Phil. 3:29; Gal. 5:22; Joh. 15:4; Joh. 10:28.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Isa. 28:15; Zech. 7:11.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Psalm. 51:10; Ezek. 11:19; Psalm. 119:88; Isa. 63:17; Phil. 1:6; Psalm. 77:2; Cant. 3:1; Cant. 5:6; Luk. 12:47; Rom. 7:9,10.

CHAP. XL.

Psalm. 53:4; Rom. 11:29; Rom. 8:26; Psalm. 32:3; Isa. 38:14; Luke 18:13,14; Psalm. 51:17; Rom. 8:26; Rom. 8:26; Psalm. 139:2; Exod. 14:15; Psalm. 38:9; Psalm. 10:17; Psalm. 145:19; Joh. 16:23; Rev. 5:8; Psalm. 50:15; Matth. 7:7; Joh. 16:23,24; 1 Thess. 5:17; Psalm. 53:4; Rom. 11:29; Joh. 13:1; Psalm. 77:2,3,4.

CHAP. XLI.

Act. 2:27; 2 Cor. 7:11; Jam. 4:8; Psalm. 66:18; Rom. 14:23; Gen. 27:41; Num. 14:1,2.

CHAP. XLII.

Joh. 8:44; 1 Tim. 2:4; Luke 1:53; Joh. 7:37; Psalm. 145:19; Psalm. 10:17; Psalm. 38:9; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 4:16; Psalm. 32:5; Luk. 15:18,19; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 11:1; Joh. 20 29; Matth. 15:27; Rom. 8:15,26; Gal. 5:22; 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; Matth. 12:25; Job. 13:15; Jam. 3:11; Matth. 7:16; Rom. 7:18; Joh. 1:12.

CHAP. XLIII.

N/A

CHAP. XLIIII.

Rom. 11:29; Phil. 1:6; Psalm. 77; Heb. 11:1; 1 Cor. 2:9; Job. 13:15; Matth. 15; Jam. 1:17; Joh. 13:1; Job. 13:15; Psalm. 51:10; Psalm. 22:1; Psalm. 77:7; Psalm. 88:14; Jer. 20:14,15; Luke 22:32.

CHAP. XLV.

Joh. 5:39; Psalm. 119:50; Job. 4:3,4; Rom. 14:1; Eph. 2:8; Joh. 6:65; Luk. 17:5; Mar. 9:24; Rom. 8:38,39; Matth. 11:28; Joh. 3:16; Matth. 9:13; Mar. 1:15; 1 Joh. 3:23; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 6:18; 1 Joh. 2:2; 1 Joh. 5:10.

CHAP. XLVI.

Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:22; Joh. 1:12; Joh. 3:18; Joh. 4:39,41; Matth. 16:18; Matth. 20:18; Luk. 9:45; Mar. 9:32; Luk. 24:11; Joh. 13:38; Joh. 14:5; Acts.

1:6; Mar. 10:37; Matth. 8:26; Phil. 3:12; Matth. 12:20; Matth. 25:29; Mar. 9:24; Joh. 3:14.

CHAP. XLVII.

1 Cor. 13:12; Num. 20:10,11; Psalm. 22:1; Psalm. 77:8,9; Jer. 20; Jon. 4:9; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 11:29; Phil. 1:26; Rom. 8:30; Isa. 66:13; Isa. 49:15; Matth. 12:20; Psalm. 37:24; Matth. 13:12; Psalm. 145:14; 2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 8:26; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 5:2; Luk. 4:18.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Rom. 8:30; Isa. 43:25; Ezek. 16:8; Rom. 4:5; Rom. 8:33; Psalm. 51:4; Rom. 3:24; Tit. 3:5,7; Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:23,24; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 5:21; Eph. 2:5,6,7; Rom. 4:16; Rom. 4:6,7; Rom. 3:22; Psalm. 32:1; 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 4:6; Rom. 9:30; Phil. 3:8,9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:19; Joh. 8:46; Rom. 3:21,22; Rom. 4:5; Joh. 4:24; Matth. 25:34.

CHAP. XLIX.

Rom. 3:20,21,22; Phil. 3:9; Gal. 3:10,11; Rom. 4:5; Luk. 17:10; Rom. 3:19,20; Rom. 10:5,6; Gal. 3:11,12,21,22,24; Eph. 2:8,9; Titus. 3:5; Gal. 2:3; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 7:7,8,9; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 4:2; Rom. 8:1,33,34; Rom. 3:23,24,25; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 2:8; Tit. 3:5,7; Rom. 4:14; Gal. 2:21; Eph. 2:9; Rom. 4:2; Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:9; Gal. 3:10; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 5:1; Rom. 10:4,6.

CHAP. L.

Phil. 2:9; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:11; Rom. 9:30; Rom. 4:16; Joh. 3:14,15; Rom. 4:3,4; Psalm. 106:31; Rom. 5:13; Lev. 17:4; Num. 18:27; Mar. 15:28; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:4,5; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:2,3; Jam. 3:2; 1 Joh. 1:8; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:31; Jam. 2:10; Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Isa. 5:23;

Luk. 16:17; Jer. 23:6; Isa. 45:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 5:19; Rom. 8:3,4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; 1 Pet. 2:21.

CHAP. LI.

Rom. 5:1; Rom. 8:30; Joh. 3:16; Joh. 5:24; Matth. 11:28; Mar. 1:15; 1 Joh. 3:23; 1 Joh. 5:10; Rom. 7; Phil. 3:13,14.

BOOK III.

**IN TREATING OF SANCTIFICATION AND
PERSEVERANCE, AS ALSO OF SATAN'S
TEMPTATIONS WHICH HE SUGGESTETH AGAINST
THEM BOTH, AND OF SUCH ANSWERS
WHEREWITH THE CHRISTIAN MAY REFUTE AND
REPEL THEM.**

CHAP. I. OF SANCTIFICATION, AND THE CAUSES THEREOF.

And so much for the answering of such temptations of Satan as concern our justification. Now we are to speak of our sanctification, which is the next effect of God's election, and inseparably joined with our justification: wherein I will observe my former order, first setting down the doctrine of sanctification, and then answering those temptations of Satan which do most impugn it.

For the first, Sanctification is an action of the whole Trinity, whereby the believer already justified, is by little and little renewed according to God's image in holiness and righteousness, by the mortification of the flesh, with the corruptions thereof, and the quickening of the spirit.

And this is our sanctification, which is expressed in the Scriptures by diverse names and phrases; for it is called regeneration, the new birth, renovation, the putting off or mortifying of the old man, and the putting on or quickening of the new man and such like.

The efficient cause of our sanctification is God himself, who as he alone justifieth us and freeth us from the guilt and punishment of sin, so he only

sanctifieth us and delivereth us from the tyranny of sin, so that it shall no longer reign in our mortal bodies, freeing us in such measure as pleaseth him from our natural corruptions, which heretofore wholly over-swayed us. And this appeareth by plain testimonies of holy Scriptures. John. 1:13. It is said that the faithful are borne, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. So, Eph. 2:10, we are said to be God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works: which phrase the Apostle useth to note unto us, that as God only did create us, so he only doth renew and regenerate us. The Lord likewise doth appropriate this work unto himself as belonging to another. Ezek. 36:26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your body, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And hence it is that the Apostle desiring the sanctification of the Thessalonians beggeth it at God's hand, 1 Thess. 5:23. The very God of peace sanctify you throughout. And David finding the want hereof in himself, hath his recourse unto God. Psalm. 51:10. Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me. So that as God doth begin in us this work of sanctification, so likewise he doth accomplish and finish it. And therefore as we are wholly to ascribe unto God our election, vocation and justification, so also our sanctification, that he may be all in all in the work of our salvation. For as he only formed us, so he only can reform us, as he is the author of our natural generation, for by his blessing we have our being, so also of our spiritual regeneration, for by his spirit only we are renewed. Neither must we imagine that it is in man's power to renew himself, no more than to beget himself: for as well may the Blackmoore change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, as we do good who are accustomed to do evil, Jer. 13:23, yea, as easily may the dead man raise himself, as we may raise ourselves

from the death of sin to newness of life, Eph. 2:1. It is only the water of God's spirit that can wash away our Ethiopian blackness, and turn our spotted uncleanness into snowy whiteness; it is only the God of life that can make us rise from the death of sin to newness of life.

But here it may be demanded, that if sanctification be wholly the work of God, and not in our own power, why do the Scriptures exhort us to sanctify ourselves, to mortify our sins, and to walk in newness of life? I answer, that though sanctification be wholly from God, yet these exhortations are necessary; for he worketh this work in us, not as in stocks and stones, but as in reasonable creatures, of whom he requireth consent of will, desire and endeavor in the use of the means ordained of God, for the beginning and perfecting of this work of sanctification in us. And although this will, desire, and endeavor, be his work likewise, yet these exhortations to godliness are to good purpose; for with the exhortation God joineth the operation of his spirit, and whilst he commandeth us, he giveth power also to perform that which he commandeth; whilst he exhorteth us to sanctification, he himself sanctifieth us with his spirit.

Now further we are to know, that as all other works of God which he exerciseth towards his creatures, so this work of sanctification likewise is common unto the three persons in the Trinity: for first God the Father sanctifieth us by giving us his son and sending his spirit, and therefore this work is ascribed unto him, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 2:4,5. God the son sanctifieth us, by mortifying our sins by virtue of his blood, purging our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God, and by virtue of his resurrection raising us also from the death of sin to newness of life: and lastly, by his death hath merited for us God's spirit, and rising again hath sent him unto us, whereby we are regenerate: and therefore he also is said to

have sanctified us, and God is said to have sanctified us in him, Eph. 5:26, 1 Cor. 2:11. God the holy Ghost also sanctifieth us, by applying the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection unto us, and so immediately beginneth, continueth, and perfecteth this work in us, and therefore most usually in the Scriptures this work is ascribed unto him, John. 3:5,6, Act. 11:16, Tit. 3:5.

And thus it appeareth that God himself is the principal and only efficient cause of our sanctification; upon which point I have the longer insisted, to the end that we should not in this work rest upon our own strength, for then we shall be subject to many discouragements, and lie open to innumerable temptations, grounded upon our small measure and slow progress in our sanctification, as also upon the great difficulties and manifold discouragements, which both stay us in the birth, and hinder our full growth in true godliness; all which in respect of our own power prove this work not only hard, but even impossible for us to be perfected and accomplished. But rather that we rely ourselves upon the Lord's infinite power and gracious promises, whereby we are assured, notwithstanding our own exceeding weakness, that he will not only begin, but also finish and perfect this good work in us.

And thus much concerning the principal efficient cause of our sanctification: the motive cause which moved the Lord to sanctify us, was his own mercy and Christ's merits. The first is expressed by the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1:3, whereas it is said, that God according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again, &c. The other is implied by Paul, Eph. 2:5, where he saith, that God hath quickened us in Christ; who by his death merited not only the remission of sin for us, but also God's spirit, whereby we are sanctified. So that it was not any good inclination unto holiness in us, or anything else wherein we excelled others, which moved God to sanctify us,

for we were all alike the children of wrath and dead in our sins, but only his own boundless mercy and the all-sufficient merits of Christ our Savior, were the only causes which moved the Lord to give us his spirit, whereby we are regenerate and raised from the death of sin to holiness and newness of life. And therefore let us not arrogate the praise of our sanctification in whole or in part unto ourselves, but ascribe all the glory to God who is the sole author and finisher of it.

The instrumental causes of our sanctification, are either external or internal; the external are first the word of God, of which our Savior speaketh, John. 15:3. Now are you clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. And chap. 17:17. Sanctify them with thy truth: thy word is truth. So the Apostle James, chap. 1:18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, &c. And the Apostle Peter affirmeth, that we are borne anew not of mortal seed, but of immortal by the word of God, &c. The word of God therefore is an instrumental cause of our sanctification. In which respect also the Ministers, by whose ministry we are converted and regenerate, are said to be our spiritual fathers who have begotten us unto God: as appeareth, 1 Cor. 4:15, and Phil. ver. 10, in both which places Paul challengeth this title unto himself. Another external cause of our sanctification are the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Baptism; whereof it is that Ananias saith unto Paul, Act. 22:16. Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. So, Eph. 5:26, it is said that Christ gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify it and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word. The which places as they are to be understood principally of the washing of justification, whereby we are purged from the guilt and punishment of sin; so also of the washing of sanctification, whereby we are cleansed from the sins and corruptions themselves.

The internal instrument of our sanctification is a lively faith, without which the other outward instruments are ineffectual, in those who are of years; neither must we think that the bare action of hearing, or the outward washing, take away our sins and corruptions, unless the word and things signified in the Sacraments be applied unto us by a true faith. For the word which we hear profiteth not, unless it be mixed with faith in those that hear it, Heb. 4:2. And unless those that are capable of faith believe with all their heart, it is to no purpose to be baptized, Act. 8:37, and therefore unto the other we must join this instrument of a lively faith, if we would attain unto true sanctification. For faith purifieth the heart, and is fruitful in the works of love, as the Scripture speaketh.

And thus have I set down the efficient causes of our sanctification; in the next place let us consider of the manner how this work is wrought in us. For the understanding whereof we are to know, that we being united unto Christ, principally by God's spirit, and instrumentally by a lively faith, and so made members of his mystical body, do participate the virtue of his death, burial, and resurrection, whereby not only our justification but also our sanctification is derived unto us. For first, by virtue of his death our sins are mortified, and our corruptions crucified together with him: as appeareth, Rom. 6:6. 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. Secondly, by virtue of his burial, this death of sin is as it were further continued, and thereby our sins and corruptions are more and more subdued and kept under, that they cannot rise and rebel against the spirit. And of this the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 6:3, where he saith, that we are buried with Christ into his death. Thirdly, by virtue of his resurrection there is a quickening power derived into us, whereby we are revived and raised up

from the death of sin to holiness and newness of life. And of this mention is made Col. 2:12,13, where it is said, that as we are buried with Christ, so likewise we are raised up and quickened together with him: and Rom. 6:4, the Apostle saith, that we are buried with him by baptism into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, so we also should walk in newness of life.

And this is the manner according to which God worketh sanctification in us; now we are briefly to speak of the other causes, as they lie in order. The material and formal causes of our sanctification may best be considered in the parts thereof. The final cause is twofold: God's glory, which is the chief and principal cause of our sanctification; and the eternal salvation of those who are sanctified, which is subordinate to the other. For the first, that God's glory is the end of all our good actions and holy conversation, it appeareth, Matth. 5:16. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven. So, 1 Pet. 2:12. Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you as of evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see glorify God in the day of visitation. And the Apostle Paul willeth us, that we do all things whatsoever to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:31.

For the other, we are therefore sanctified that we may be saved, and also be assured of our salvation: and this we may gather out of the Apostles words, Tit. 3:5,7, where he saith, that God hath saved us by the washing of the new birth, and renewing of the holy Ghost, that we should be made heirs of eternal life. Neither can we ever enjoy everlasting happiness, unless we be regenerate, according to that, John. 3:3. Except a man be borne again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. So the Apostle saith, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit

uncorruption, 1 Cor. 15:50. And Rev. 21:27, it is said, that no unclean thing shall enter into God's kingdom: and therefore the Apostle, Heb. 12:14, useth this as an effectual argument to move us to embrace sanctification, because without this holiness no man shall see the Lord. On the other side, if we be regenerate and show the fruits thereof in a holy conversation, by dying to sin and rising again to newness of life, then may we be certainly assured of our salvation: and therefore the Apostle willeth us by these works of holiness to make our calling and election sure, affirming that if we do these things we shall never fall. 2 Pet. 1:10.

CHAP. II. OF THE EFFECTS, SUBJECT, OBJECT, AND TIME OF OUR SANCTIFICATION.

The principal effects of our sanctification, are a detestation of our former sins in which we have taken our pleasure and delight, and an hearty love of righteousness and holiness, which before our regeneration were loathsome and unpleasant unto us; when notwithstanding our infirmities and often falls we can say with the Apostle Paul, that we would fain do that good we cannot, and hate that evil which we do, and howsoever we cannot perform perfect obedience to all God's commandments, yet we delight in the law of God in the inner man, Rom. 7:15,19,22. Secondly, from these affections of loving good and hating evil, there ariseth an earnest desire to embrace the one and flee the other, and from this desire proceedeth a settled purpose of heart, and a careful endeavor to mortify our flesh with the corruptions thereof, and for the time to come to frame our lives according to the rule of God's word, the which purpose and endeavor is joined with the diligent use of all good means, whereby we may attain unto our desire. Thirdly, when as this desire and endeavor to lead a godly life is hindered by our spiritual enemies, the flesh, the world and the devil, there

followeth in the man regenerate a spiritual combat, wherein he struggleth and striveth to withstand their temptations, and to go forward in his course of holy obedience. And if he prevail and foil his spiritual enemies, then there followeth peace of conscience and joy in the holy Ghost; but if he be overcome and led captive unto sin, through the violence of their temptations, then doth he not lie still and suffer sin to reign in him, but he seeketh to rise again by unfeigned repentance, which is accompanied with these seven fruits: First, a care to leave that sin into which he is fallen. Secondly, an utter condemning of himself for it. Thirdly, a holy anger against himself for his fall. Fourthly, a fear lest again he should fall into the same sin. Fifthly, a desire ever after to please God. Sixthly, a zeal of the same. Seventhly, revenge upon himself for his former offense. And these are the effects of true sanctification, which whosoever can find in himself, he may be assured that he is sanctified and shall be saved.

The subject in which this work of sanctification is wrought, is all and everyone of God's elect, and them only: neither is there any sanctified but those only that are elected and shall be saved, as appeareth, Eph. 1:4. Neither is this work begun in any one part of them alone, but in all the parts, powers, and faculties of soul and body, as appeareth, 1 Thes. 5:23. The God of peace sanctify you throughout: The mind is enlightened with the true knowledge of God's will revealed in his word, which before was blinded with ignorance. The memory is enabled to retain those holy things which the understanding conceiveth. The will fleeth that which is evil, and embraceth that which is good. The affections are purged from their corruptions, and made serviceable to holy reason. The body also is sanctified, and made a fit temple for the holy Ghost: so that whereas heretofore the members thereof were the ready servants of unrighteousness

unto sin, they are now become the servants of righteousness unto holiness. Lastly, the actions and outward conversation which heretofore were sinful and scandalous, are now holy and righteous, serving both for the advancement of God's glory, and the edification of our Christian brethren. In a word, whosoever are truly sanctified, they are also wholly sanctified, that is, as the Apostle speaketh, sanctified throughout, in every part and faculty of body and soul. And therefore whosoever would be assured that he hath attained true sanctification, he is to labor to compose and frame the whole man, his mind and imagination, his will and affections, his outward actions, life and conversation, according to the exact rule of God's law: in all of them mortifying the old man, and his inbred corruption, and embracing the contrary duties of holiness and righteousness. Otherwise if our sanctification be not of the whole man, and every part in their several measure, it will in the end be vain and fruitless; for as it is to no purpose for citizens being besieged, to fortify one place of the wall, and leave another part unfortified, or to keep strait watch at some of the gates and leave others open; so it will not avail us to fortify some parts against the power of sin, and to leave others weak and naked, nor to guard some of the outward passages of the senses, and neglecting some other, suffer them to lie as an open entrance to let in our spiritual enemies, for so they will easily surprise us, and lead us captive unto sin; but if we would be in any safety in this strait siege, we must set a strong guard, and a careful watch, over every part and faculty of our bodies and souls.

The object of our sanctification about which it is exercised, is sin and corruption, and holiness and righteousness, that we may fly the one and embrace the other, mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof, and be quickened in the spirit that we may be conformable in all holy obedience unto the law

of God, avoiding that which he hath forbidden, and laboring to perform that which he hath commanded.

The time when sanctification is wrought in us, is presently after we are effectually called and justified; for as soon as the virtue and power of Christ's obedience, death, and resurrection, is applied unto us by a lively faith, it doth not only free us from the guilt and punishment of sin, but also mortify the flesh with the corruptions thereof, and quickeneth us in the inner man, enabling us to forsake our former sins, and to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life. But howsoever our sanctification be begun presently after our conversion, yet it is not so soon finished; but as the seed being cast into the ground, doth first take root, and then is scarcely discerned, afterwards shooteth forth into a blade, and so springeth up by little and little, till it bringeth forth an ear, and lastly it ripeneth and yieldeth to the sower plentiful increase: so when first the seeds of sanctification are sown in us, by virtue of God's spirit, they have a time to take rooting, when as they make little or no show to ourselves or others, but afterwards they send forth as it were a blade of a holy profession, and the ripe fruits of godliness. Notwithstanding these fruits in this life are not purely clean, and without mixture; but as in the fairest field there is amongst the cleanest wheat some tares and cockle: so in those that are most sanctified, there are many corruptions of the flesh, mixed with the good fruits of the spirit, the which the Christian is still in weeding and plucking up by the roots so long as he liveth, but yet can never overcome this great work, till the winter of death wholly nippeth and killeth these weeds of sin. We must not therefore presently after our conversion, dream of a perfection in sanctification; no nor yet at the first, estimate the trueness thereof by the greatness of the measure: for as it is in the natural generation and growth of the body, so

also in spiritual regeneration; all is not finished at the first, but perfected by degrees. As soon as we are converted, we are but babes in Christ, and, in respect of our infancy in knowledge faith and other graces, such as have need rather of milk than of strong meat: in the rest of our life we grow up from strength to strength, till we come to man's estate, unto which age we cannot properly be said to have attained, till by death we wholly lay aside the old man, and the corruptions thereof: and lastly we attain to our consummation and full perfection, when at the latter day we shall rise again, and both in body and soul be endued with perfect holiness, whereby we shall be enabled to perform obedience to God's will, in that degree which his justice requireth.

CHAP. III. OF THE PARTS OF SANCTIFICATION.

The parts of sanctification are two, mortification, and vivification, the which also are said to be the parts of true repentance, but in a diverse sense: for they are attributed unto sanctification, as they are the work and action of God, who by his holy spirit doth mortify and quicken us, and is the sole author and cause of our sanctification; and unto repentance as they have reference unto us, who being regenerate and endued with God's spirit, do labor in the mortification of our corruptions, and endeavor to serve the Lord in newness of life; for, *Spiritu sancto acti agimus*, we being first moved and set a work by God's spirit, do work together with him. This division hath it ground and warrant in many places of holy Scriptures, in which it is expressed in diverse phrases and forms of speech. Psal. 34:14, Eschew evil and do good. Isa. 1:16,17, Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Rom. 6:11, likewise, think ye also that ye are dead to sin, but are alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. And v. 18. Being free from sin ye are made the servants of righteousness. Eph. 4:22, That ye cast of concerning the conversation in time past the old man which is corrupt through the

deceivable lusts. 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. 24. And put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. So, Rom. 7:4,8:13, 1 Cor. 5:7, Col. 2:12, 3:9, Gal. 5:16, 1 Pet. 2:24, 3:11. By all which places and many others it is clear and manifest, that our sanctification consisteth of these two parts, the mortifying of the flesh, and the quickening of the spirit.

Mortification is the first part of sanctification, wherein the spirit of God applying unto us the virtue and power of Christ's death and burial, doth by little and little weaken, subdue, and kill in us our natural corruption, the flesh and the lusts thereof, so that they are not so powerful as in times past to stir up in our minds evil motions which are contrary to the will and word of God.

In this description is set down first the cause of our mortification, which is the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death and burial, communicated and applied unto us by the spirit of God, whereby we are engrafted into the body of Christ, and so made partakers of the power and virtue of Christ's death, which being derived unto us, doth not only take away the guilt and punishment of sin, but also doth mortify and kill our natural corruptions, which heretofore wholly ruled and over-swayed us. Secondly, the form manner and progress of this work is here expressed, namely, the weakening, subduing, and killing of our corruption by little and little; so that this work is not perfected at once, and in an instant, but by degrees: first it is weakened and the power thereof somewhat abated, so as though it bear sway in us, yet it doth not wholly overrule us without resistance, as it was used to do in the time of our ignorance: then being further enabled by virtue of God's spirit, working in us, we prevail against it, so that though it often rebel, yet do we subdue it and obtain victory. Lastly obtaining a greater

measure of the spirit, we mortify and kill it; that is, though we do not utterly deprive it of life and motion, yet we give it such a deadly wound that it never recovereth his former strength, but still pineth and languisheth, till with the death of the body it also dieth and is wholly abolished. Now whilst it is in this consumption and near unto death, having a long time before been weak, oftentimes it seemeth to recover strength, and to offer some violence unto the regenerate part: but this must not discourage us, as though now it were on the mending hand, and like to be restored to its former health and strength: for as it fareth with those that lie upon their deathbed; so it is with our sick flesh, and the corruptions thereof, after that nature seemeth spent, and the power thereof wholly decayed, oftentimes falling into some grievous fit, wherein there is a fight between life and death, their strength seemeth redoubled and far greater than ever it was: but be of good comfort, it is no sign of health, but a pang of death which near approacheth.

And thus you see the death of sin and our natural corruption. Now as in the death of the body there is a certain progress therein, namely, when the dead carcass is also buried; so also there is not only a death of sin, but also a burial, the which is wrought by the virtue of Christ's burial applied unto us by God's spirit, whereby it cometh to pass that sin which is already slain and dead, doth so remain and continue; so that this burial of sin is nothing else but the further progress and continuance of our mortification. Of this the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 6:4. We are buried then with him by baptism into his death, &c. So, Col. 2:12.

And thus have I shown what our mortification is, which as it is a work most hard, so also most necessary: the difficulty appeareth by the name which is borrowed from the practice of Surgeons, who before they cut off any member, do first mortify it, that after they may take it away with less

sense of pain. And this is implied by our Savior Christ, whereas he enjoineth us, if our right hand or eye offend us, to cut it off and pluck it out: and plainly expressed by the Apostle Paul, Col. 3:5. Mortify therefore your members which are in the earth, fornication, uncleanness, the inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, &c. where calling these sins by the name of members, he intimateth thus much, that they are as dear unto us as the members of our body, and also that it is as unpleasant and painful unto us to forsake our natural corruptions, as to be deprived of the hand, eye, or foot. But though this work be most hard, yet it is most necessary; for the best things that are in the flesh and unregenerate part, even the wisdom thereof is death and enmity against God, because it is not subject to the law of God, neither in deed can be, Rom. 8:6,7, neither can we do anything pleasing unto God so long as we are in the flesh, as it is, ver. 8. Lastly, if we live after the flesh, we shall die, even the everlasting death of body and soul; but if we mortify the deeds of the body by the spirit we shall live, even the life of holiness and righteousness upon earth, and the life of glory and eternal happiness in God's kingdom. And therefore if it be necessary to be in amity with God, whose loving kindness is better than life; or to perform obedience unto the law of God, or to do anything pleasing in his sight, or to escape death and damnation, or to enjoy life and eternal salvation, then is it also necessary to mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof, how hard and unpleasant soever this work seemeth unto us. So that the difficulty must not discourage us, but rather double our diligence; and because it is a pain intolerable to part with our sins, so long as they remain like lively members of the body of our flesh, therefore as Surgeons (to make the pain tolerable to the patient) do first use means to mortify the member which they purpose to cut off; so let us use all good means to weaken the

strength of sin, and to mortify our carnal affections, and then we shall suffer them to be quite cut off and taken from us without any extraordinary passion or sense of pain.

And so much concerning our mortification, wherein the spirit of God communicating and applying unto us the virtue and efficacy of Christ's resurrection, doth raise us up from the death of sin to holiness and newness of life.

The cause of our vivification is the virtue and efficacy of Christ's resurrection applied unto us by God's spirit; the which virtue flowing from his deity, was first powerful in his own flesh, raising it out of grave, and giving it victory over sin and death, and being derived from our head, and communicated unto us who are members of his body, it doth also revive us who were dead in our sins, and enableth us to lead a new life in holiness and righteousness, according to the rule of God's word. This appeareth, Rom. 6:4, where he saith that we are buried with him by baptism into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, so we also should walk in newness of life. So, Phil. 3:10,11, where Paul desireth not only to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ applied by faith for his justification, but also to know and feel the virtue of Christ's resurrection, that by this means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. And as Paul earnestly desired this, so also he attained unto it, as himself professeth. Gal. 2:20. Thus (saith he) I live, yet not I now but Christ liveth in me, and in that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God, who hath loved me and given himself for me. Now this efficacy and virtue of Christ's resurrection is applied unto us by God's spirit, which uniteth us unto Christ our head, and therefore usually in the Scriptures this work is ascribed unto him. So, Rom. 8:11. But 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, because his spirit dwelleth in you.

And thus have I shown the author of our vivification: the manner how it is wrought followeth to be spoken of. First, the spirit of God dispelleth the clouds of ignorance, and illuminateth the eyes of our understanding with the beams of true saving knowledge, wherewith being enlightened, we rightly judge that folly and madness, in which we thought formerly our chief wisdom consisted, and approve that as only wise, which before we condemned as extreme foolishness. Of this the Apostle speaketh, Eph. 1:17, where he prayeth that God would bestow upon them the spirit of wisdom and revelation through the knowledge of him, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, &c. After the understanding is thus enlightened, then also the will is changed; and whereas before regeneration it was corrupt, perverse, and rebellious, now being sanctified, it beginneth to hate and avoid that evil which in former times it loved and embraced, and to like and delight in that good which formerly it loathed and abhorred: so that the regenerate man saith with the Apostle, that to will is present with him, though he find no means to perform that which is good; and that he is delighted in the law of God concerning the inner man, though the law of his members rebelling against the law of his mind, lead him captive to the law of sin. Finally, the understanding being enlightened, and the will reformed, there followeth the renewing of all the affections, the thoughts, imaginations, powers and faculties of the soul: and lastly, the internal parts being quickened, there ensueth the renewing of the body, the outward actions, life and conversation.

And thus have I set down the manner and form of our spiritual renewing: now as the work of mortification, so this of vivification, is not perfected and

finished in an instant, but in continuance of time and by degrees; neither do we so long as we continue in this life, receive any great measure thereof, but only the first fruits, which is but as it were a little handful in respect of that large harvest of godliness which we shall attain unto in God's kingdom, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 8:23. Whereas therefore the Church is said to be perfectly purged from all spots of sin, Eph. 5:26,27, it is to be understood of our justification, whereby the faithful are delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin, and adorned with Christ's perfect righteousness; and not of our sanctification, which is only begun in this life, but not perfected till the life to come, as it is notably set down, 2 Cor. 5:1-4.

CHAP. III. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS, WHEREBY HE LABORETH TO ENTICE US TO COMMIT SIN, ANSWERED.

And so much for the doctrine of sanctification, the right understanding whereof serveth much for the answering of all contrary cavils and objections, which are suggested into our minds by our spiritual enemies. Now, having shown the truth of this doctrine, let us in the next place propound Satan's temptations, which he commonly useth to hinder this work of sanctification: to the end that the weak Christian may be the better enabled to answer them in the day of trial.

The temptations which Satan suggesteth to hinder our progress in godliness are of two sorts: either allurements to entice us to go aside out of the narrow path of holiness, into the broad way of sin and wickedness; or discouragements to dishearten and weary us, in travailing this spiritual journey. By the first, he sweeteneth the bitter pill of sin that it may seem pleasant to our carnal appetites, to the end that we may greedily swallow it to our everlasting bane; by the other he laboreth to make wholesome godliness loathsome and altogether unpleasant to our sensual taste. Those he commonly useth before we have sinned, to cause us presumptuously to

fall into it: and these after we have sinned and wounded our consciences, to the end he may move us desperately to surcease our labor in the works of sanctification, as being not only difficult, but altogether impossible.

The first sort of his temptations whereby he laboreth to draw us into sin, he enforceth by extenuating the sin unto which he allureth us, by putting us in mind of the mercies of God, and merits of Christ, and by hiding from us the curse of the law, and the punishments threatened against sin both in this life and the life to come. Why (will he say) makest thou such scruple of committing this sin which is so pleasant or profitable unto thee; seeing it is in its own nature but very small, and almost no offense at all, being compared with the great transgressions which others have committed, who notwithstanding are said even in the Scriptures to have been most godly and righteous, yea, and highly in God's love and favor; why therefore shouldest thou who art far inferior unto them, stumble at this small straw, seeing these great blocks could not hinder even the most religious from enjoying the pleasures of sin? Consider also the common frailty of mankind, and the natural corruptions of the best, whereby they are ready to fall when the least occasions are offered, into sins far greater than this which so much pleaseth thee. Remember that thou canst not be a saint in this life, nor freed from that corruption which so fast cleaveth unto thee; and therefore seeing thou must needs sin; now sin, when thereby thou mayest have pleasure or profit, for do what thou canst, yet thou shalt often fall. And why wilt thou not rather be lead with delight, then be drawn with necessity? Consider likewise that thy God is most merciful, and therefore still ready to pardon thy sins; and the rather, because he knoweth thy frail weakness in resisting sin, and inability to perform obedience to his law: and also that Christ died, not for the just but the unjust, not for the righteous, but for the sinner: and therefore

be thy sins never so many, yet applying the merits of Christ by faith, neither their guilt nor punishment shall be imputed unto thee. Call to mind also the gracious promises of pardon and forgiveness, which are made unto thee in the Gospel; for the obtaining whereof, nothing is required of thee but faith and repentance: now this faith thou hast already, and this repentance thou mayest have hereafter when thou hast enjoyed the pleasure or profit of this sin. Neither doth repentance go before, but followeth the committing of sin; so that unless thou first sin, thou hast no cause of repentance nor need to repent.

And these and such like are Satan's baits, wherewith he allureth us to entangle ourselves in the snares of sin: into which we are more ready to fall through the corruption of the flesh, which naturally loving sin, doth, with the evil motions and desires thereof, further Satan's temptations; and the instigation of the world which pricketh us forward and draweth us on into the steep descending way of wickedness, into which we are ready to run headlong of our own accord; partly alluring us with pleasures, riches and worldly glory, the desired objects of our carnal desires; and partly drawing us with evil examples, first to a liking, and then to the practicing of those sins, which we see committed by others.

Against all which temptations that we may be the better armed, let us in the next place propound some arguments whereby we may be withheld from falling into Satan's snares of sin, into which his suggestions, the worlds allurements, and our own corruptions lead and draw us: and then being hereby moved to a true detestation of our sins, and an earnest desire of having a divorce sued betwixt us and them, I will afterwards set down some means, by the careful use whereof we may be enabled to stand in the

day of temptation, and preserved from falling into those sins which we already condemn in our judgments and dislike in our affections.

The reasons whereby we may be persuaded to resist sin are of two sorts: the first, tying us to holy obedience in the bands of love: the other, binding us from falling into sin with the cords of fear. Of the former rank are these and such like holy considerations.

First, we are to set before us the infinite love of God towards us base and vile creatures, altogether unworthy of his least favor by reason of our sins; the which his love as it plainly appeareth in all other his mercies and manifold benefits bestowed on us, so especially in sending his only begotten and dearly beloved son, not only to suffer some small misery, but even death itself, yea that cursed ignominious and cruel death of the cross for us, who were not his loving friends or faithful servants, but opposed enemies and rebellious traitors, who had renounced his service and yielded ourselves as slaves to Satan ready to do his will. Seeing therefore our good God hath so dearly loved us, who were altogether unworthy his love, and most worthy of his anger and heavy judgments, O why should not this flame of his love towards us, kindle some sparkles of love towards him again, who is in himself the chief goodness, and to us most kind and gracious? If for our sakes who were his abject enemies, he hath not spared his own son but gave him to die for us; should we not for his sake, who is our chiefest friend, be as willing to part with our sins, and to kill and crucify all our carnal corruptions? Neither can we by any other means so clearly show our love to God as by hating sin, which above all things in the world is most hateful and odious unto him, and the only cause which maketh him abhor even his excellent creatures, so that though he loved them as being his own works, yet he detested them being defiled with the filthy spots of

sin; yea so odious is sin unto our righteous God, that he could not choose but punish it in his dearly beloved son, who bare our transgressions and sustained our persons, and when there was no other way to subdue the power of sin, he gave it a mortal wound even through the body of our blessed Savior, and delivered him to be crucified, that by this means he might also kill and crucify our corruptions. Seeing therefore sin is most odious and detestable in the eyes of God, we cannot better show our love towards him, which his love towards us hath so well deserved, than by hating and flying that which he so much abhorreth.

Secondly, let us call to our remembrance his innumerable benefits, which are the undoubted signs of his love towards us. First he hath elected us unto eternal life that we should be holy. Seeing therefore he hath made special choice of us amongst many who are rejected, therefore let us exceed others in a holy care of serving him, and avoiding those things which are displeasing in his sight; he also hath created us to the end we should worship and serve him our Lord and Creator: and therefore seeing we have our being from him, let us in all our actions seek his glory and avoid sin, whereby he is dishonored. Yea he hath not made us the vilest of his creatures, but reasonable men according to his own image and likeness, and therefore let us not deface this glorious workmanship with the filthy spots of sin. He hath redeemed us out of the cruel bondage of our spiritual enemies, by giving his son to be the price of our redemption, and therefore seeing we are bought with a price so inestimable, let us not willfully again make ourselves the bondslaves of sin and Satan, but glorify our redeemer in our bodies and in our souls, serving him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. He hath effectually called us and selected us out of the corrupt mass of mankind, and therefore let us walk worthy our vocation, for

God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness. He hath freely justified us, imputing unto us Christ's righteousness, and pardoning all our sins, both in respect of the guilt and punishment; and therefore being made free from sin, let us no longer live therein, but now become the servants of righteousness; and seeing he hath forgiven much, let us also love much, laboring to manifest our love by the fruits of holy obedience. He hath reconciled us unto himself in his son, and therefore let us not by our sins make him our enemy, nor again build up this wall of separation which Christ our Savior hath broken down. He hath adopted us in Christ to be his sons and heirs of everlasting life, and therefore seeing we are the sons of God, let us yield obedience to our heavenly father, and not live in our sins like the slaves of Satan, least provoking his just displeasure against us by our rebellious wickedness, we should be disinherited of our heavenly patrimony. He hath granted unto us the peace of conscience and joys in the holy Ghost, and therefore let us not by our sins disturb our peace and wound our consciences, turning our sweet joy and comfort into grief and bitter heaviness. Finally, he hath added unto these spiritual gifts, innumerable temporary benefits, health, wealth, liberty, food, apparel, and therefore let us not abuse his gifts by profaning them with our sins, but rather use them as encouragements whereby we may be moved with all cheerfulness to serve so bountiful a master. In a word, as the gifts of God are infinite which concern this life and the life to come; so are the reasons drawn from them infinite, which may serve to restrain us from sin, and contain us in the course of holy obedience: the which if we continually retain in memory (even those benefits which are common to all true Christians, and those which everyone receiveth in his particular place and calling) we will not (unless our ungratefulness be intolerable) easily

hearken to Satan's temptations, nor for the vain pleasures, uncertain riches and momentary honors of this wicked world be hired to commit sin, which we know to be displeasing and odious in the sight of God, who in his endless love hath bestowed upon us such innumerable benefits.

Thirdly, when we are tempted unto sin, let us call to mind the death and suffering of our Savior Christ, and say unto our own souls, Hath Christ my redeemer paid for my redemption even his dearest blood, and shall I sell my soul to sin again for this vain pleasure or base commodity? Hath he not spared to pour out the full streams of his most precious blood, that in this pure laver I might be purged and cleansed from the filthy spots of sin; and shall the world cause me with her Sirens songs to leap again into this filthy puddle? Should he suffer himself to be crucified that by his death he might kill sin, and shall I now put life into it again, reviving that which he hath mortified? Did he in his infinite love give himself for me, and shall I trample this precious gift under foot, preferring before it the trifling vanities of this wicked world? Should honor allure me to commit sin, seeing the glorious son of God hath abased himself and undergone ignominious shame to free me from it? Should pleasures entice me to break God's commandments, seeing my Savior Christ left the bosom of his father, at whose right hand there is fullness of pleasures and joys for evermore, and endured the grief and miseries of a wretched life and cursed death, that thereby he might satisfy God's justice for my transgressions? Should I be persuaded to commit sin, with the base hire of uncertain riches, seeing Christ hath redeemed me, not with silver or gold, or any other corruptible thing, but with the inestimable price of his most precious blood? Should my sensual taste and curious palate, move me to sin in drunkenness and gluttony, seeing Christ to redeem me hath hungered and thirsted, and in

stead of drink had offered unto him gall and vinegar? Shall I be moved to sin by anger, and to seek unjust revenge, seeing Christ being injured opened not his mouth, but like an innocent lamb suffered himself to be led to the slaughter? Far be from me such a desire; nay rather because my Savior Christ hath suffered all this for me, to redeem me out of my spiritual bondage, I will resolve rather to be deprived of all worldly benefits, and endure patiently the greatest miseries and afflictions, than by willful falling into sin make myself again the slave of Satan. And thus have I shown how the remembrance of Christ's death and passion is a notable corrosive to kill our corruptions: and as men are accustomed to show unto Elephants the juice of the Grape or Mulberry, to make them more fierce and encourage them to a more courageous fight; so have I by offering to our view the precious blood of this immaculate Lamb, endeavored to redouble our valor in fighting this battle of temptations against our spiritual enemies.

Fourthly, let us remember the union that is between Christ and us, whereby he is become our husband, we his spouse, he our head, and we his members. The consideration whereof may serve as a forcible argument to restrain us from falling willingly into any sin; for if we be the spouse of Christ, far be it from us to behave ourselves like Satan's strumpets, prostituting our souls to sin that we may receive the gain of some worldly vanities, and to incur the grievous displeasure of our most loving husband, for the pleasing of our carnal lusts and sensual appetites; if we be the members of Christ's body, far be it from us to make his members the instruments of sin and servants of unrighteousness; for what were this but as much as in us doth lie, to draw our holy head into the communion of our sins and wickedness, and to make our Savior who in himself hath wholly vanquished and gloriously triumphed over sin and Satan, in his members to

receive a foil? Nay rather seeing we are the spouse of Christ, let us labor to adorn ourselves with the glorious golden garment of holiness and righteousness; and though we have some spots of our natural infirmities in our outward parts, yet let us in a glorious manner deck ourselves within with integrity and uprightness of heart; and so the King our heavenly husband shall take pleasure in our beauty, and place us at his right hand in his kingdom of eternal glory. Seeing also we are the members of Christ's body, therefore let us endeavor to conform ourselves to the holiness of our head, and by our righteous lives and conversations make it manifest, that we are quickened and led by the same spirit.

Lastly, let us call to mind that our bodies are the temples of the holy Ghost, which once were polluted and unclean, but now sanctified and purged by this our holy guest, that they may be fit habitations for himself to dwell in. And then let us consider that it is a most horrible indignity against the majesty of God, to profane with our filthy sins the holy temples of his most holy spirit, and to make them more fit to be sties for filthy swine and unclean spirits, than mansion houses for God to dwell in; that by our sins we vex and grieve the good spirit of God, and make his lodging loathsome unto him, and so as much as in us lieth, we drive him away, and as it were thrust him out of doors, if not by violence, yet at least by our hard and uncivil entertainment: yea that by our sins we do not only defile, but even destroy the temple of God, and thereby also cast ourselves headlong into eternal destruction. For if any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy, as it is, 1 Cor. 3:16. If therefore we would not profane God's temple, abuse his glorious presence, vex our holy guest, destroy his mansion and ourselves also, let us most carefully avoid sin, and nourish all the good motions of God's spirit, wholly submitting ourselves with cheerful

alacrity to be guided and governed by his directions, and so we shall perfume these holy temples with the odors and incense of holy obedience, which smelling sweetly in God's nostrils will move him to dwell in us with pleasure and delight, all the days of this our pilgrimage, and afterwards to transport us into those eternal mansions of his kingdom of glory, where we shall continue in all joy and happiness for evermore.

CHAP. V. OF THE SECOND SORT OF PRESERVATIVES TO KEEP US FROM SIN.

And so much concerning the first sort of arguments grounded upon love; the second sort whereby we may be withdrawn from committing sin, may be taken from that fear and reverence of God, which ought to be in every one of us: unto which we may be moved by diverse effectual reasons. As first by the consideration of God's all-seeing wisdom, and all-filling presence, whereby he seeth even our most secret thoughts, and is a present witness of all our hidden actions. For this being remembered, who dare in such a glorious presence commit that wickedness, which he knoweth hateful unto him, before whom he committeth it? He is counted an ungracious child, who will wittingly break his fathers commandment even before his face; and he is esteemed a desperate malefactor who dare presumptuously offend against the law in presence of his judge; how then can our ungracious impudency and desperate presumption be excused, who dare offend and sin in the sight and presence of a father so gracious, and of a judge so just?

Secondly, let us call to mind God's justice, which is so exact, that rather than he would let sin go unpunished, he punished it in his dearly beloved son. If therefore thou sin, thou canst not corrupt him with bribes, nor pacify him with fair words, nor overcome him by entreaty, nor stop the course of justice, with the intercession of friends. For, hath he not spared his son, and will he spare his servants? Hath he punished sin in his own child, and will he wink at it in a common subject? Could neither the entreaty, nor tears, nor groans, nor strong cries, nor bloody sweat of his best beloved son, appease his wrath and satisfy his justice, but that standing in our place he must needs bear our punishment, and being surety for sinners he must die for sin? And shall they who are the principals escape, who instead of pleading his payment, do contemptuously refuse it, and as it were tread it under foot? It is true indeed that Christ suffered for us that we might escape, and paid our debt that it might not be required at our hand; but seeing all sinners have not their part of Christ and his merits, but only those that are in Christ; and those only are in Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; seeing also those only are partakers of all the gracious promises made in him, who approve their faith by the lively fruit thereof unfeigned repentance; and those only do truly repent, who sorrow for their sins past, hate their present corruptions, and desire and endeavor to serve God in newness of life; how can we have any assurance that God's justice is satisfied for us, and that we have escaped condemnation, if we quench the good motions of God's spirit, and obey the flesh in the lusts thereof, and if still being in love with our sins, we resolve to go forward in our course of wickedness?

Thirdly, let us call to our remembrance God's fierce wrath conceived against sin, and his fearful judgments which he hath executed upon sinners,

and that not only particular men, but also whole states and commonwealths. Let us call to mind the general deluge in which all mankind saving eight persons were drowned; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone; the rooting out of the whole nation of the Canaanites; the rejection of the Jews; the overthrow and utter defacing of those famous Churches of the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians; and the rest mentioned in the Revelation. And to the examples of former times add those which every man observeth in his own experience; and then consider withal that the cause which moved the Lord to execute in his just displeasure these heavy judgments upon mankind, was nothing else but sin, and it will be a forcible reason to withdraw us from it. For the Lord is immutable and unchangeable in his course of justice, and he hateth sin now as deadly as in former ages; neither will he spare us more than others, if we live in our sins without repentance: nay certainly as our sins being aggravated by many circumstances are more odious unto him, so will the Lord proportionably inflict more heavy judgments upon us than he hath upon others, whose sins have not been so great and presumptuous. For if the Lord give us now extraordinary knowledge, or at least the means thereof, and we sin against this knowledge and against our own consciences; if he hath in most abundant measure, multiplied his mercies upon us, and we hereby be made more unkind and ungrateful; if he hath given us warning by innumerable examples of his heavy judgments executed upon others in former times, and in our own days, yea even in our own sight, layeth heavy punishments upon such as have committed no other sins then we ourselves are guilty of, and yet we continue in our sins without repentance, how is it possible but that we should provoke God's fierce wrath against us, and draw down violently upon ourselves with these caltrop's of

iniquity, God's fearful plagues and heavy judgments. It is true indeed that God is long suffering and slow to anger, but if hereby we take occasion to continue in our sins, and do delay our repentance, what do we else but treasure up against ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the declaration of the just judgment of God? It is most certain that God is not easily provoked to wrath and anger, but let not this encourage us to continue in our sins; for if it be once inflamed, it is so fierce and terrible, that with the heat thereof it drieth up the seas; and so powerful that he maketh therewith the earth to tremble and the mountains to melt like wax in his presence, and the voice of his fury doth break and rent in sunder the cedars, yea the mighty strong cedars of Libanus, as the scripture speaketh. As therefore fire doth burn more hotly in such solid matter as is long in kindling, then in flax or straw which is soon inflamed, and soon extinguished; so the anger of God is not easily inflamed, but if it be once kindled, it burneth so furiously that nothing will quench it, but the blood of Christ applied by faith, and the streaming tears of unfeigned repentance. Seeing then God's judgments are so fearful, and his anger so terrible, let us carefully take heed of provoking his wrath against us by our sins, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Fourthly, let us meditate upon the day of judgment, when as we must give an account not only of our words and works, but also of our secret thoughts, before a most just judge, who with the all-seeing eye of his divine knowledge searcheth and beholdeth the very heart and reins, in the presence also of men and Angels. And this will restrain us from falling into sin, though it may be so secretly acted that we need not to fear in this life, either shame or punishment. For let it be supposed that we can hide our sins from the sight of all men, yet what will this benefit us if God against whom we

sin, and before whom as our supreme judge, we must give an account do look upon us? What will it profit us though time wear our offenses out of man's remembrance, if God keep a faithful register of them, and engrave our reckoning with a pen of iron? What will it help us if by our cunning conveyances, we can hide our sins and avoid shame, or with an impudent forehead can face them out without blushing, if our nakedness be discovered, and our shame proclaimed in the presence of God and all his Saints and Angels? What will it avail us to be exempted from punishment in this life, through our great power and uncontrollable authority, or to escape the penalty of human laws by the intercession of friends, or by corrupting the judge, or by procuring the princes pardon; if again we must be arraigned before such an upright judge, as respecteth no persons, receiveth no rewards, and being found guilty, be condemned unto the eternal torments of hell fire? When therefore we hear the voice of Satan's temptations alluring us to commit sin, let us also have the voice of the Archangel sounding in our ears, Arise ye dead and come unto judgment: when the world tempteth us unto sin on the one side by enticing promises of honors, pleasures, and riches, and on the other side, by terrifying threatening's of loss, danger, or punishment, let us call to mind the day of judgment, when either we must hear the sentence of salvation, Come ye blessed of my father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you &c, or the sentence of condemnation, Depart ye cursed into hell fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: and then shall not the momentary vanities of the world so forcibly draw us into the snares of sin, as the remembrance of the heavenly joys prepared for us in God's kingdom will retain us in holy obedience; then will not the worlds threats of temporary miseries so strongly urged us to wound our

consciences with the sting of sin, as the fear to hear the definitive sentence of eternal condemnation will restrain us from it.

Lastly, let us call to mind the manifold evils, which sin causeth both to body and soul, in this life and the life to come; and so though the ugliness of itself will not make us to flee from it, yet the miserable effects which it produceth may move us to abhor it. Consider therefore that there is no evil under the sun, in this life or afterwards, which is not a fruit of this cursed root: it subjecteth the body to sickness and diseases, hunger and thirst, cold and weariness; the mind to ignorance and blindness, the will to perverseness, the affections to all preposterous disorder; it ruinateth the estate, and bringeth a man to poverty and extreme misery; it maketh the whole man obnoxious to the curse of the law, the anger of God, and all those innumerable evils, which ever accompany them. In this world it bringeth the body to death and corruption, and in the world to come both body and soul to condemnation, and endless destruction; it depriveth us of our heavenly inheritance, and the everlasting joys of God's kingdom, and plungeth us into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. In a word there is no evil which can be imagined which doth not proceed from this evil of sin, and therefore though it seem never so sweet to our carnal appetites, yet being mixed with this gall and wormwood of innumerable evils, let us loath and abhor it; when the vain and uncertain benefits which it promiseth move us to embrace it, let the miserable evils which accompany it, and the most assured and surpassing joys which it depriveth us of, make us to avoid it as a deadly stinging serpent.

CHAP. VI. OF SOME SPECIAL MEANS WHEREBY WE MAY BE PRESERVED FROM FALLING INTO SIN.

And these are the reasons whereby everyone may be armed against Satan's suggestions, tempting him unto sin; and be moved unto a Christian resolution, of possessing body and soul in holiness and purity: now we are to speak of some special means, whereby the Christian thus resolved may be preserved from falling into such grievous sins, as wound the conscience, and hinder him in the course of sanctification. First, he that would avoid sin, must carefully also avoid the occasions thereof, which are strong inducements to draw him unto sin; for as it is, great folly for a man who dreads burning to be always meddling with fire and gunpowder; so is it no less madness to think that we can preserve ourselves from sin, and yet entertain all occasions thereof, continually suffering the sparks of Satan's temptations to fall as it were into the tinder of our corrupt affections. It is not possible that he who is inclined to gluttony and drunkenness should contain himself from these sins, if he give himself to company keeping, and take his chief delight in pleasing his taste with the daintiest meats and drinks: or that he who is choleric, should refrain from anger, and yet thrust

himself into needless controversies and hot contentions: or for him that is lascivious to abstain from uncleanness, and yet frequent unchaste company, read wanton books, view obscure spectacles, use filthy communication, and pamper himself in gluttony, and drunkenness. In a word we cannot avoid any sin, unless we also flee and shun the occasions and means thereof; and therefore let us be as careful and watchful in the one as the other, or else we shall most certainly loose our labors.

Secondly, if we would not fall into greater sins, we must also make conscience of those which are less; and think with ourselves that no sin is small, seeing the least deserveth the anger of God and everlasting death: otherwise if we willingly entertain even small corruptions, we shall at length make no conscience of heinous transgressions; and these little thieves being let in, will in time set wide open the door of our hearts, that the greatest and grossest may easily enter, and so rob and spoil us of all grace and goodness.

Thirdly, let us continually stand upon our guard, carefully watching over our own hearts, that we be not surprised at unawares; for thousands are the baits which are laid to entrap us, and ten thousand snares doth Satan lay to entangle us; and therefore it behooveth us to look narrowly to our ways, and to be always as ready to give Satan the repulse, as he to make the encounter. And considering that if we do not assault sin, it will most surely set upon us, and at one time or other will give us the foil if we only lie at ward and never offer blow against this our enemy; therefore it behooveth every Christian soldier, not only to give sin a repulse, but also to wound it in the head, and beat it down, that it may not again assault him, or at least not with wonted power and violence: and for as much as he hath many enemies which cannot at once be overcome, therefore he is to labor to get every day

the mastery of some sin, and to bring it in subjection, that so in continuance of time he may vanquish all, and obtain a full and final victory over all his corruptions.

Fourthly, if we would not fall into grievous sins, we must not stand in our own power, nor trust in our own strength, but wholly rest and rely upon God's promised assistance. For if once we rob God of his glory, and arrogate the praise of our victory over sin and Satan unto ourselves, the Lord will withdraw his helping hand, and leave us unto ourselves, till by our grievous falls we have learned to acknowledge our own weakness, and to rest wholly in the power of his might. For as all other sins are odious unto God, so especially the sin of pride, because it maketh vile man rival with God in his praise and glory, of which he is most jealous; and therefore the Lord suffereth, even his own children, to fall into grievous sins, that hereby they may be humbled; and so useth other sins as a counterpoison to cure pride.

Lastly, seeing we stand not by our own strength but by the power of God's might, let us as often as we see our own weakness and aptness to fall, have our recourse unto God, by fervent and effectual prayer; craving his aid and assistance that thereby we may be enabled to stand in the day of temptation. And when by virtue thereof we have given sin the foil, and repelled Satan's suggestions; let us remember to return praise and thanksgiving to the Lord by whose help we have beaten back our spiritual enemies: and then we may be assured that the Lord will uphold us by the power of his spirit from falling into sin; or if we do fall, he will speedily raise us up by unfeigned repentance.

CHAP. VII. THAT IN THE MOST SANCTIFIED, REMAIN SOME RELICS OF SIN, AND THE CAUSES THEREOF.

And so much for the answering of Satan's first sort of temptations, wherewith he laboreth to hinder our sanctification by alluring us to commit sin: now we are to speak of the other sort, whereby he seeketh to discourage us in this work, as being not only hard and difficult, but even impossible. And these also are of two kinds; the first taken from the great mass of our natural corruptions and small measure of our sanctification; the other from some actual sins which we have committed. Concerning the first, he thus frameth his temptations: Thou laborest much (will he say) and tirest thyself in attaining unto sanctification, but all in vain; for doest thou not see on the one side the irresistible violence of thy natural corruptions, which continually choke in thee all the good motions of God's spirit, and forcibly draw thee into all sin and wickedness; and on the other side, thy small measure of grace and sanctification, which is exceedingly stained with thy manifold imperfections? How therefore can such weakness withstand such power? And how is it possible that thy feeble spirit should overcome thy strong flesh, especially seeing it is assisted with the strong

aides of the puissant world, and the mighty power of innumerable devils? Neither art thou vainly to imagine that God will enable thee to overcome all these difficulties, for he hath given thee over to thine own weakness, otherwise if it were his will to make thee one of his holy ones, he could with the powerful operation of his spirit, long ago have perfectly purged thee from all thy corruptions, and given unto thee a great measure of sanctification. Seeing then it is impossible, in respect of thy weakness and thine enemies power, to accomplish this work which thou hast taken in hand, and seeing thou hast no assurance that God will strengthen thee with his spirit, which thou hast a long time resisted and vexed, by quenching the good motions thereof; thou hast now no show of hope to effect that which thou desirest; and therefore it were much better for thee to cease striving against the stream of thy corruptions, and to follow the natural current of thy desires: for when thou takest all the pains thou canst, thou art in one day carried further backward toward thine old conversation, than thou canst in many months get forward in the course of sanctification.

And thus doth Satan discourage the weak Christian with his false suggestions, to the end he may hinder him from travailing this way of holiness which leadeth to God's kingdom; for the answering whereof we are to know, that the sanctification of the most holy is imperfect, both in respect of the relics of sin, and corruptions which continually cleave to them, and in respect of the manifold wants and defects of their best actions. Neither are we so washed in the laver of regeneration, but that there remain in us some stains of that scarlet ingrained die of our corruptions; we have not so clearly escaped out of our old captivity of sin, but that we retain still some galls and bruises, which make us to go haltingly in the ways of righteousness; we have not so vanquished this spiritual enemies, but that still it will assault us,

yea and often foil us, though it cannot subdue us; we have indeed overcome these cursed Canaanites, so that they cannot rule and reign in us as in former times, but we have not utterly expelled them from dwelling amongst us; so that do we what we can, yet still they will be as thorns in our sides to vex and grieve us. Heretofore the lusts of our flesh like tyrannical Lord's did against all law and justice overrule us; but now by virtue of God's spirit assisting us, we have weakened their force and brought them under, yet not so but that still they will rebel against the spirit, and continually exercise us in the spiritual warfare. So that the regenerate man is not wholly spirit, as the carnal man is wholly flesh, but is divided into two factions or parts, and always is at civil wars within himself: for so far forth as he is regenerate he is holy, pure, and undefiled, but so far forth as he is carnal, he is sinful, corrupt and full of all pollution: as he is regenerate he wholly loveth and embraceth true holiness and righteousness, and abhorreth and fleeth sin and wickedness; but as he is unregenerate he loveth sin and the vain pleasures thereof, and loatheth righteousness as irksome and unpleasant. In the spiritual part he contemneth the world, and having his conversation above he mindeth heavenly things; but in the carnal part he loveth the world, and is pressed down with the cares and pleasures thereof, so that his mind cannot as it would mount aloft in divine meditations; in the spirit he serveth the law of God, in the flesh the law of sin.

We must not therefore imagine, that to be sanctified is to be wholly purged from all corruption, to be endued with perfect righteousness, and to have the spirit in full measure; but to have the corruptions of sin lessened and their power abated, so that they cannot wholly over-sway us as in former times; to have some holy desires and good endeavors of serving God in holiness and righteousness, which also we express in our actions,

although in great weakness and imperfection; to have the first fruits of the spirit in this life, expecting the whole harvest in the life to come: neither let us yield to Satan, suggesting unto us, that we are not at all sanctified, because we have some relics of our old corruptions and manifold imperfections in our best actions; or that therefore our holiness which we have, is so small that it is to no purpose, and that which we want so great and hardly come by, that it is not possible we should ever attain unto it; seeing these suggestions are sufficiently confuted both by the Scriptures and examples of all God's children. For the Scriptures teach us, that in many things we sin all; that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us: and therefore because we continually offend, our Savior requireth that as we ask our daily bread, so also we should pray daily for the forgiveness of our sins. The Apostle also telleth us, that there is a continual fight in every Christian, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, the one tempting us unto sin, the other stirring us up to holy obedience. Moreover, the examples of God's saints are pregnant for this purpose, neither was there ever any so perfectly sanctified, but there remained in them some relics of their natural corruptions, which also shown themselves in actual sins and grievous transgressions; as appeareth plainly in the examples of the Patriarchs, David, Peter, and all others. But most clearly doth the Apostle Paul show this in his own person, propounding himself as a true pattern of a man regenerate; for though he had attained unto a great measure of sanctification, yet he complaineth of the great force and violence of his inbred corruptions, Rom. 7: for so great strength thereof remained in him, that it forced him to abuse the law of God, taking occasion thereby to work in him all manner of concupiscence, and so in stead of killing sin did revive it in him, ver. 8,9; that it made him to omit the good he

would, and to do the evil that he hated, ver. 15,19; that it rebelled against the law of his mind, and led him captive to the law of sin, ver. 23; that he saw no possible means in himself to subdue utterly these corruptions, and therefore seeketh for help elsewhere, crying out, Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Ver. 24.

Seeing therefore this is the state of all God's children, let not Satan persuade us that we are not yet sanctified, or that it is lost labor to go forward in this work, because of the great power of our corruptions and small measure of sanctification, which is stained also with manifold imperfections; but rather let the strength of our corruptions redouble our care and diligence that we may subdue them: and considering that there are diverse degrees of holiness, let us as soon as we have ascended one step, never rest striving till we have ascended a higher, until at length we come to the top of perfection and the highest step of true holiness; according to the exhortation of the Apostle, Rev. 22:11. He that is righteous let him be righteous still, he that is holy let him be holy still, that is, let him continue and daily increase in righteousness and holiness.

And to the end that we may not be discouraged in these our holy endeavors, with Satan's temptations drawn from the relics of our sins, the strength of our corruptions, and the imperfections and small measure of our sanctification; let us further consider, first, that these relics of sin shall not be imputed unto us, nor come in judgment before God to our condemnation, because by faith we are united unto Christ, and so made partakers of the virtue and merits of his death and passion, whereby he hath satisfied God's justice for our sins, so that they cannot now condemn us, nor draw upon us any punishment; and likewise we are made partakers of his perfect righteousness and obedience to the law, which as a rich robe doth cover and

hide our patched rags of imperfection. So then though we see the relics of sin and our manifold imperfections, let us not be discouraged hereby from laboring in the work of sanctification, but rather strive and endeavor to mortify our sins, and aspire to more and more perfection. And if besides our purpose we be led captive of sin, let us remember that we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the just, and that he is the reconciliation for our sins; so that though they make us condemn ourselves in our own consciences, yet they shall never condemn us before God. And this the Apostle Paul showeth unto us: for having in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans declared, that the faithful have remaining in them the flesh and relics of their old corruptions, which powerfully hinder them from doing the good they would, and move them to commit the evil which they would not, least any hereby should be discouraged in the sight and sense of his corruptions, he presently addeth in the beginning of the eighth chapter, that notwithstanding the flesh and the corruptions thereof, which before he had spoken of, remained in us, yet there was no condemnation to those who were in Christ Jesus: and he yieldeth this reason, because the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, had freed them from the law of sin and of death, that is, because the power and virtue of the spirit of God (which is the author of life, by uniting us as members unto the body of Christ in whom we live, and by sprinkling our consciences with his precious blood) had delivered them from the force and power of sin and death, so that now it could not condemn them, nor oblige and bind them to guilt and punishment as in former times. Seeing therefore the sting of sin is taken away that it cannot condemn us, let us not so fear it as that it should move us desperately to cast away our weapons not daring to encounter it; for though this our enemy may assault us, yet it cannot overcome us; though it

may wound us, yet it cannot kill us; though it may give us a foil, yet in the end we are sure of victory, if we manfully resist and labor to subdue it.

Secondly, let us consider that the Lord doth not require of us under the Gospel such exact and perfect righteousness, as was required under the Law, which is altogether impossible to our corrupt nature, and was never to be found in any man (our Savior Christ excepted) but only that we strive and labor to attain unto it; he doth not require of us that we should at once free ourselves from the flesh and the corruptions thereof, but that we endeavor to mortify it, according to the measure of grace and strength which we have received from him; he doth not require of us that we be without sin, but that sin do not rule in our mortal bodies, that we should like slaves obey it willingly in the lusts thereof, and that also we hating and abhorring it do continually make war against it, and subdue it by little and little, seeing we cannot at once wholly vanquish it. He doth not now require of us that we should perform perfect obedience to the law, which Christ hath performed for us, but that we do our best endeavor, and though we cannot attain to our desire, yet at least that we be delighted in the law of God concerning the inner man and consent unto it that it is good, holy and just. In a word, this is the Christian man's righteousness which God requireth, that he hate sin, and love godliness, that he desire and endeavor to mortify the flesh and corruptions thereof, and labor to lead a new life in holy obedience; and if contrary to his desire and purpose he do the evil which he hateth, or leave undone the good which he loveth; that he sorrow and grieve for his sins and imperfections, and making confession hereof before the throne of grace, do implore mercy and forgiveness in Christ Jesus. And if we offer unto God this righteousness, it will be acceptable unto him, notwithstanding our manifold imperfections; for he measureth

our deed by our will, and esteemeth more of our affections than of our actions; *Nec intuetur Deus quantum quilibet valeat, sed quantum velit, & quicquid vis & non potes Deus factum computat*: He respecteth not what we can do, but what we would do, and that which we could perform and cannot, he esteemeth it as though it were performed. So that he reputeth him righteous who earnestly desireth and laboreth to be righteous, and him perfect who acknowledging and bewailing his imperfections striveth to attain to more perfection. Wherein he fitly may be compared unto a tender loving father, who esteemeth of the least endeavors of his beloved son, more than of the best actions of a servant, because he regardeth not so much the excellency of the action, as the person and cheerful will of the agent.

Now the reasons why the Lord being perfectly just, will notwithstanding accept of our imperfect righteousness, is first because (we being made members of Christ's body) our persons are acceptable unto him, and therefore our works also (not in their own worthiness, or for their own merit, but in and for Christ) are accepted; the corruptions and stains of them being washed away in his blood, and the imperfections of them being covered with Christ's perfect righteousness. And thus being adorned in the garment of our elder brother Christ Jesus, we obtain the blessing of our heavenly father. Secondly, our righteousness and holiness doth proceed from the spirit of God dwelling in us; and from hence our works being imperfect in themselves, do receive their dignity, excellency, and estimation in God's sight, as being the fruits of his own spirit, howsoever mingled with our corruptions.

Thirdly, let us remember that our sins and corruptions which we hate and labor to mortify, will never move the Lord to reject and cast us out of his love and favor; for we are the Lord's children, and he our gracious father:

now we know that a loving father will not reject his child, because he is sick, lame, or in miserable estate, but rather he is more tender over him, till he be recovered of his infirmities: but what are our sins but the sickness, wounds and misery of the soul, with which we are vexed and turmoiled whilst we continue in this life? And will our heavenly father, whose love infinitely surpasseth the love of the most tender mother, cast us out of his favor, because our souls are sick in sin, and molested with many miseries which do accompany it? It is impossible; especially considering that we desire nothing more than to be cured of these diseases, and to be restored to perfect health. The Lord is our heavenly husbandman, and we his husbandry; now we know that the good husbandman doth not forsake his land, because it bringeth forth thorns and thistles, but rather is so much the more diligent and painful in weeding and tilling it, that it may be fitted for good seed and bring unto him plentiful increase; and so the Lord will not cast us off, because we naturally bring forth the weeds and thistles of sin and corruption, but in his infinite love he will with the operation of his holy spirit, plow up the fallow grounds of our hearts, and weed out our corruptions, that so we may like good ground well husbanded, bring forth the ripe fruits of holiness and righteousness.

Fourthly, let us consider that the Lord our God, who could easily if it had pleased him, have thoroughly purged us from all sin and corruption, and endued us with perfect righteousness and holiness, hath notwithstanding left remaining in us some relics of sin, and many imperfections in our sanctification, both for the manifestation of his own glory, and for the furthering of our own eternal salvation. For first hereby it cometh to pass, that the Lord hath the whole praise of our salvation, seeing he saveth us of his mere mercy, and not for our works and worthiness. Whereas if our

righteousness and sanctification were perfect, we would be ready to share with God, ascribing part in the work of our salvation unto ourselves, and not wholly attribute it to God's mercy and Christ's only and all-sufficient merits: and therefore the Lord hath left in us the relics of sin and manifold imperfections, that hereby it may appear that we are not saved for our own worthiness and deserts, but of his free grace and undeserved love.

Secondly, he hath left in us these relics of sin and manifold imperfections, to the end that there might be continual matter and a fit object, wherein he might exercise, and by exercising manifest, to the praise of his grace, his patience, long suffering, love, goodness, and infinite mercy, in the pardoning and forgiving of them, which would not so plainly appear if at once he had endued us with perfect righteousness.

Thirdly, that hereby he might make way for the manifestation of his power in our weakness and imperfections. If we were perfectly righteous and endued with all grace, it were no wonder if we should withstand Satan's temptations and get the upper hand in the spiritual combat; but seeing we are of ourselves sinful, exceeding weak and full of all imperfections, hereby is the infinite power of God manifested, in that we are notwithstanding enabled, to withstand Satan and all the power of hell which oppose themselves against us, seeing nothing else could uphold such feeble weakness against such puissant might. Of this the Apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. 12:8,9: for having oftentimes besought the Lord to be freed from the corruptions of his flesh, he receiveth this answer, that God's grace was sufficient for him, and that his power was made perfect through weakness.

Fourthly, hereby the Lord continually putteth us in mind of his mercy and manifold benefits, to the end that we daily tasting of them, may also daily return unto him thanks and praise. If he should at once free us from sin, and

indue us with a full measure of grace and perfect righteousness, we would soon be forgetful of his abundant mercies, and this forgetfulness would work in us unthankfulness, and this unthankfulness would make us neglect his worship and service. And therefore he doth not at once enrich us, but lets us continue in our poverty, that so we may continually depend upon him: and like a wise householder he doth not suddenly advance us to our highest preferments, for then we would leave his service and betake us to our ease and pleasure; but he bestoweth his benefits by little and little, and so keeping us still in expectation of receiving more, he retaineth us still in his service, and every day increasing his bounty, he putteth also into our mouths new songs of thanksgiving, and giveth us daily new occasion of praising his magnificence.

Secondly, as the Lord hereby advanceth his own glory, so also he worketh our good, and furthereth our eternal salvation. For first by leaving in us these relics of sin and manifold imperfections, he worketh in us true humility, which of all other graces is most acceptable unto him, and mortifieth our pride, which of all other vices is most odious and abominable in his sight. For when we see our manifold infirmities and corruptions of sin, all cause of pride and self-conceit is taken away, and we in all humility are moved to confess, that it is God's mercy that we are not consumed; how much more that notwithstanding our vileness and unworthiness, he hath made us his sons and heirs of everlasting glory. And thus, of the flesh of this Viper sin, doth the Lord make a sovereign antidote against the deadly poison of pride. And as good Surgeons do not suddenly heal up the wound, but keep it open till they have drawn out the core and healed it to the bottom, for otherwise it would putrefy and become more dangerous; so the Lord will not at once heal the wounds of our sins, but leaveth them as it

were open and uncured till he have drawn out the core of pride, which being left in us (though we were healed of all our other sins) would more endanger us than all the rest. Wherein the Lord confirmeth and furthereth us in the way of salvation; for nothing more weakeneth and disableth us than pride, nothing more strengtheneth and upholdeth us than humility, because the strength whereby we stand and repel our spiritual enemies is not our own ability, but the power of God's might, and the Lord withdraweth his assisting hand from the proud, to the end that he may learn to be more humble by his grievous falls; yea he resisteth him, and therefore how is it possible that he should stand? But contrariwise he giveth grace to the humble, and filleth him who acknowledgeth his own emptiness with good things, but the proud who is full in his own conceit he sendeth empty away.

Secondly, he leaveth in us corruptions and imperfections, to the end that we should not rest in our own righteousness for our justification and salvation (which though it were as great as Adams in the state of innocence, yet it were no sure ground to rest upon) but in the alone righteousness of Christ Jesus, which is all-sufficient and a foundation so unremovable, that all the power of hell cannot overturn it, nor any that are built upon it. Upon which sure pillar we would hardly rely, so long as we have in our hand the reed of our own righteousness, we being naturally inclined rather to seek for salvation in ourselves than elsewhere.

Thirdly, he leaveth in us these spiritual enemies, that we may exercise ourselves in fighting against them, and so be kept from idleness the mother and nurse of all evil; and as he would not at once cast out the Canaanites before the Israelites, but by little and little; lest the land should grow unto a wilderness, and the wild beasts should multiply against them: so he would not suddenly cast out our spiritual enemies, but suffereth us to prevail

against them by little and little, least giving ourselves unto idleness when there is no opposition made against us, there grow in us as in a wilderness the noisome weeds and thorns of sin, and the wild beasts of all outrageous wickedness, which would devour and utterly destroy us. Whereas contrariwise when we are assaulted outwardly with the forces of Satan and the world, and inwardly with the flesh and our natural corruptions, we have enemies against whom we may exercise our faith, affiance, hope, patience, courage, and all other graces which we have received, and by exercise increase them: we fight the Lord's battles like his valiant soldiers, and being assisted by his holy spirit we obtain victory, and with our conquest a more excellent crown of eternal glory: as appeareth, Rev. 2:26,27, and 3:21.

Lastly, he suffereth us to be molested and vexed with the relics of our sins, that hereby he may make us to loath this world and vale of misery, wherein we can do nothing but break the commandments of our dear loving father; and may be moved to desire that heavenly life in God's kingdom, when having laid aside all corruption, we shall be endued with all perfection, and be fully enabled to perform such obedience unto God as he requireth. For seeing sin is not fully vanquished till it be subdued by our death, nor we ever at rest and free from the assaults thereof, till we rest in the grave; therefore the children of God are content to forsake the world, because they can no otherwise forsake their sins; and desire rather to endure death, than they would have sin to live with them, as appeareth in the example of the Apostle Paul, Phil. 1:22,23.

And thus have I shown the wisdom and power of God, who turneth even the sins of his children to their good, which are in their own nature evil; and therefore though we are continually to bewail them, and to desire by all means to be freed from them, yet we are not desperately to sink under them,

not daring to encounter them, seeing now they cannot condemn us, nay not so much as hurt us, but rather are so ordered by God's all-wise providence, that they serve for the manifestation of his glory, and furthering of our salvation, so that we do not with willing delight nor slavish fear yield unto them, but to the uttermost of our power make resistance, and desire and endeavor to overcome them.

Now in the first and last place let us consider, that though our flesh be never so strong, and the innumerable corruptions thereof seem irresistible, and though on the other side our spiritual man seem never so weak and feeble, yet we are not hereby to be discouraged, seeing the regenerate part shall most certainly obtain the victory in the end, though in the conflict it receiveth many foils. And though this little David seem in the eyes of a carnal Saul, to be far too weak, and altogether unable to encounter that great Goliath, the flesh with the powerful lusts thereof, yet in the end it will most certainly prevail and get the conquest; because the spirit is the Lord's champion which goeth out in the name of the Lord to sight against his enemies; the flesh the devils soldier who is God's enemy: That, is strengthened and supported with the power of God which being in sin it is irresistible; this by the power of Satan, and the world, whose power is finite, and so restrained and overruled by God's might, that they cannot stir without his leave and permission. Unless therefore we would blasphemously imagine, that the flesh and his assistants are of greater power than God himself, or that God will suffer this disgrace that his champion should be overthrown by his professed enemies; we may most certainly assure ourselves that we shall get the day and obtain a famous victory. And therefore let not Satan discourage us, by setting before our eyes our own weakness, and the mighty oppositions which are made against

us; but arming ourselves with the Christian armor, and trusting wholly in the power of God's might, let us valiantly encounter our spiritual enemies, and never give over fighting till by death we have given unto them a final overthrow, and so shall we be crowned with an invaluable crown of immortal glory.

CHAP. VIII. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS
DRAWN FROM OUR SLOW
PROGRESS IN SANCTIFICATION,
ANSWERED.

And so much for answering Satan's temptations, drawn from the relics of sin which remain in us, and the small measure of our sanctification: the second temptation whereby he laboreth to discourage the weak Christian, from going forward in his course of true godliness, he taketh from his slow progress and slack proceedings in sanctification, upon which occasion he thus assaulteth him. Thou laborest much (will he say) and toilest thyself with intolerable pains that thou mayest become a sanctified man, but all in vain; for though thou hearest the word often, and readest much, and prayest continually, and beatest thy brains with daily care, to the end that thou mayest attain unto some perfection in Christianity; yet, dost thou not see how little thou profitest by all thy labors, seeing thy knowledge is still small, thy faith weak, thy charity cold, thy heart dull and hard, thy good works few and imperfect, and all thy zealous resolutions easily hindered and quite overthrown with every small temptation? Why then dost thou strive against the stream, and undertake a task which is to thee not only hard but even impossible? For do what thou canst, yet all will

be to little purpose, seeing this work is full of great difficulties, thyself disabled with manifold corruptions, and thy enemies which oppose against thee exceeding strong and mighty, as thyself findest by lamentable experience, and thy much laboring and little profiting do clearly prove. Cease therefore thy bootless travail, and rather embrace thy pleasing delights, than turmoil thyself with vain labor.

For the answering of which temptation we are to know, that if we dislike our own dullness and backwardness in profiting and growing forward in sanctification, if we be truly sorrowful and bewail our great wants and imperfections, and labor earnestly in the use of the means whereby we may attain unto knowledge, faith, and all other sanctifying graces, and also be enabled to bring forth the fruits of holy obedience; then are we accepted of God and shall in the end most certainly obtain our desire, though yet we can see but small profit of all our labors; neither shall all the power of our spiritual enemies so far prevail against us, as utterly to hinder us in this work, but that we shall undoubtedly go forward although not so speedily as we desire. For this holy desire of profiting in godliness, this endeavor and careful use of those means which are ordained by God for this purpose, are not natural, but the work of God's spirit begun in us; and we are with the Apostle to be persuaded of this same thing; that he that hath begun this good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1:6. We are to assure ourselves with the Prophet David, that the Lord will fulfill these holy desires of those that fear him, Psal. 145:19. We are undoubtedly to believe that the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will give a good issue with the temptation, 1 Cor. 10:13. We are not to imagine that he will break this bruised reed, nor quench this smoking flax seeing he hath promised the contrary, Matth. 12:20. And though this little

grain of mustard seed for a time lie hidden in the earth, and when it sprouteth up springeth so slowly that we cannot sensibly discern the growing thereof; yet in God's good time being watered with the dew of his holy spirit, it will become one of the greatest trees in the Lord's garden. For seeing the Lord hath given us this grace, not to be wanting in the use of all good means, we may most certainly assure ourselves that the Lord for his part will not be wanting, in giving his blessing and granting the assistance of his holy spirit, which he hath promised to those that desire it.

Secondly, let us consider that these small beginnings of grace and first fruits of the spirit, are most undoubted signs that he dwelleth in us: now wheresoever he dwelleth, he sanctifieth his own lodging, and is not idle till he have effected this work which he hath undertaken and begun. Though therefore this work in regard of thy slow proceedings seem hard, yea, even impossible, yet consider that that which is possible to man, is impossible to God; though thou seest many difficulties and mighty oppositions by thy powerful enemies, yet let not this discourage thee, seeing the Lord who is with thee is almighty, and therefore able to repel the violence of all opposers, and to make the most heavy and pinching yoke light and easy. Though in thyself thou art most weak and feeble, yet thou art strong in the power of God's might, and enabled to do all things through the help of Christ which strengtheneth thee.

Thirdly, let us consider, that as the Lord hath decreed our salvation, and promised unto us eternal life: so he hath also as certainly decreed and promised the means tending thereunto, which are the effects of his election and the forerunners of our salvation; but one especial effect of his election is our sanctification, and the way to salvation is the path of righteousness and holiness; and therefore this is no less certainly assured unto us, that we

shall be sanctified, and enabled to walk in this way of righteousness and holiness, then that we are elected and shall be saved. Though then we are weak and unstable, yet the foundation of God remaineth ever sure; though in regard of our own feebleness, and manifold imperfections, the work of sanctification seem altogether impossible, yet this should not move us to doubting nor discourage us in our course, seeing it hath not any ground upon our own strength, but upon God's immutable decree, and never failing promises. When then our small progress in true godliness, caused through the violence of our corruptions and oppositions of our spiritual enemies, discourageth us making this work of sanctification seem impossible, let us call to mind that the Lord hath as certainly decreed, that we should be his saints here upon earth as his saints in heaven, that he hath most faithfully promised, that he will direct us with his holy spirit, take away from us our stony hearts and give us fleshy hearts, illuminate our blind understandings with true saving knowledge, indue us with a lively faith, and with all other sanctifying graces, enable us to perform in some measure holy obedience to his heavenly will, mortifying our corruptions and enabling us to serve him in newness of life; all which gracious promises we are as undoubtedly to believe, as those which concern either the remission of our sins, or everlasting happiness. And therefore though our own dullness, backwardness, and little profiting in sanctification, should work in us true sorrow, yet this should not discourage us doubting of the issue of all our labors, but knowing that God is alike true in all his promises, let us, setting aside all difficulties, beleene against belief, and undoubtedly persuade ourselves that the Lord will finish that good work which he hath begun in us, though as yet it hath but small proceedings, if we hunger after more

perfection, and carefully use the means whereby we may attain to true holiness.

CHAP. IX. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS WHEREBY HE AGGRAVATETH OUR SINS IN GENERAL, ANSWERED.

And so much concerning those temptations of Satan, which he groundeth upon our natural corruptions and our small measure of sanctification. Now we are to speak of such as he suggesteth after we have committed some actual sins: and these are either in respect of our sins in general, or else some special sin into which we have fallen. Concerning the first, when the weak Christian (who hath a tender conscience, and therefore cannot be persuaded to lie securely in his sin) hath through the strength of his own corruptions, and violence of his temptations, committed any sin against his knowledge and conscience, then doth the tempter (who before his fall exceedingly extenuated and minced his sin, now after that he is fallen into it) out of measure aggravate the grievousness and heinousness of his offense, partly in respect of the nature and quality of the sin itself, and partly in respect of the circumstances, as being committed after his calling, against his knowledge, in such a time or place, and by such a person, as God is thereby most dishonored, and his brethren offended by his bad example. And thus having as it were stretched out his sin upon the tentars of

his temptations, and with the blasts of his false suggestions made of every small drop a great bubble, then doth he also set before him the curse of the law, God's fearful judgments, the plagues and punishments of this life, and everlasting death and condemnation in the life to come, continually accusing and terrifying him as being guilty of all these fearful evils, by reason of his sins, to the end that hereby being utterly discouraged, he may desperately cast off all care of continuing in his former course of godliness, as if now it were altogether in vain and to no purpose.

The which temptation if we would withstand in the day of trial, it behooveth us not to rest in the remembrance of our former faith and repentance, but as we have renewed our sin, so also must we renew our sorrow for it, bewailing our corruptions, which have so prevailed against us as to move us to transgress God's commandments, hating and detesting our sin into which we have fallen, and purposing for the time to come to leave and forsake it, and to serve the Lord in holiness and newness of life. And this our repentance we must approve to be unfeigned by those fruits thereof which the Apostle mentioneth, 2 Cor. 7:9,10,11, that is, we must study and endeavor to amend, confess our sin unto God in all humility, and most earnestly crave remission both of the fault and punishment, have a godly indignation against ourselves because we have sinned, and a son-like fear not so much in respect of the punishment, as of offending and displeasing God our most gracious loving father; and an earnest desire that we may be so renewed, that we be not again so overtaken; a more fervent zeal in loving God and keeping his commandments than before our fall; and lastly, we must take a holy revenge of ourselves, that thereby we may so tame our flesh, that it may not hereafter be so powerful in us, as to overcome and lead us captive unto sin.

And thus having renewed our repentance, we must also renew our faith, by applying unto ourselves all the gracious promises of the Gospel, concerning life and salvation in Christ Jesus, made unto all repentant sinners; and by calling to our remembrance that Christ the just hath borne the punishment due unto us who were unjust; that with his death and merits he hath fully satisfied God's justice, appeased his wrath, and washed away our sins with his blood; that he hath fulfilled the law for us, and taken upon him our curse, that we in him might be blessed; that by suffering for us, he hath freed us from all punishments of this life and the life to come, that he ever liveth to make intercession for us; so that though we sin, yet there is no fear of condemnation, seeing we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the just, who is the reconciliation for our sins, 1 John. 2:1,2.

But here the tempter will object unto the weak Christian, that these promises of the Gospel can yield unto him no sound comfort, seeing they are restrained to those only who are members of Christ Jesus, in which number are none but those who are regenerate, renewed, and governed by God's spirit, according to that Rom. 8:1. There is no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus, which walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. But thou (will he say) art not in Christ, for being engrafted in this vine thou wouldest bring forth the grapes of godliness, whereas there springeth nothing from thee but the briars and brambles of iniquity; neither walkest thou after the spirit, for then in thy life thou wouldest show the fruits thereof, but after the flesh, which wholly over-ruleth thee and casteth thee headlong into all sin and wickedness.

For the answering of which temptation we are to know, that it is not the committing of a sin or of many sins, which proveth that we walk not after the spirit but after the flesh, (for so should all the children of God be carnal

and not spiritual, yea even the Apostle Paul himself who complained that he did the evil which he hated, and found no means to do that which was good, but when he would do good, evil was present with him: and that there was a law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, which led him captive unto the law of sin) but to walk after the flesh is willingly to obey it in the lusts thereof; to commit sin with pleasure and delight; to embrace that which is evil with full consent of will cheerfully and with all readiness; to run headlong into wickedness stubbornly, presumptuously and securely; to have sin not only dwelling but also reigning in our mortal bodies; to live therein without repentance, never grieving for it, nor endeavoring to forsake it, nay rather greatly loving and making such high account of it, that we had rather part with our lives than be divorced from our sins. Whosoever therefore through his weakness and infirmity is led captive unto sin, and being enthralled by this tyrant earnestly desireth liberty, and doth not willingly run, but is violently drawn by Satan's temptations and his own corruptions, and having sinned is not therewith delighted, but exceedingly grieved that by his sin he hath displeased God; and seeing his own weakness and infirmities doth bewail them, and fleeth unto God by fervent prayer, desiring the assistance of his holy spirit, whereby he may be enabled to mortify his flesh and the corruptions thereof which he deadly hateth, and to serve God in holiness and newness of life; such a one may assure himself that he walketh not after the flesh but after the spirit, and that he is in Christ Jesus, and hath escaped condemnation, though through his infirmity and strength of his inbred corruptions he falleth often into sin.

Though therefore the sanctified man sinneth, yet this doth not prove that he is still in the flesh and unregenerate; seeing there is great difference between his sins into which he now falleth, and those which he committed

before he was sanctified, or those which they commit which still live in the flesh. For first the unregenerate man doth continually sin, heaping up one wickedness upon another, the man regenerate but sometimes, when he is overcome by his corruptions; the wicked man committeth sin with greediness, the godly man with some kind of irksomeness and after a sort unwillingly; the one draws sin unto him as it were with cart ropes, the other is violently drawn to sin with the strength of his corruptions; the one hunteth after sin and the occasions thereof, the other is hunted by sin and Satan's temptations, till being out of breath and fainting for weariness he is overtaken and led prisoner. The carnal man sinneth with full consent of will, and with pleasure and delight, the spiritual man doth not yield without some resistance of the regenerate part, and as it were grudgingly and with the misliking of the spirit; he that is unregenerate suffereth sin to reign in him, and yieldeth unto it such willing and hearty obedience as the loyal subject doth to his lawful King, but the sanctified man obeyeth it as though it were an usurping tyrant, repiningly and by constraint, rather drawn with force than moved by any love or liking. The wicked man committeth sin upon deliberation, advisedly and of set purpose; but the regenerate man for the most part suddenly, besides his purpose and contrary to his resolution. The ungodly man's heart and conscience seldom or never controls him for his sin, or if it do, yet it suddenly vanisheth like a flash of lightning; but there is a fight in the heart of the godly man, the carnal part drawing one way and the spiritual part another. When the carnal worldling offendeth he is in his common way, for he maketh an occupation of committing sin; but when the regenerate man sinneth he is out of his course, and is never at rest till he cometh into his way of righteousness again: when the wicked man hath committed one sin, that is an argument to move him to commit another,

because judgment is deferred, and he hath escaped punishment; but the true Christian (like one who runneth a race for some great wager) if he stumble and fall, when he riseth again he doth more carefully look to his feet, and striveth to run the more swiftly in the way of righteousness, that so he may redeem with more than usual speed the lost time wherein he was hindered by his fall. Finally, the unregenerate man being fallen into the puddle of sin, doth wallow therein with pleasure and delight, and never strives to rise again by amendment of life, but the man regenerate though he fall, yet he riseth up again by true repentance, and never resteth till he have thoroughly washed his polluted soul with the blood of Christ applied unto him by a lively faith. The one remembereth his sins which he hath committed, with gladness and rejoicing, yea bragging and boasting of his outrageous wickedness; the other never thinketh upon them but with grief and sorrow, neither is there anything in the world whereof he is more ashamed than of his sins. Seeing therefore there is such great and manifold differences, between the sins of the sanctified and those who are unsanctified, let not Satan persuade us that we are still in the flesh and unregenerate, because will we, nill we, we often fall into sin, if in our manner of sinning we can find these differences which we never discerned in former times.

CHAP. X. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS TAKEN FROM PARTICULAR SINS INTO WHICH WE HAVE FALLEN ANSWERED.

And so much concerning those temptations which Satan suggesteth in respect of our sins in general: now we are to speak of such as concern particular sins, and these are of two sorts; for either Satan seeketh to overthrow our faith, and to discourage us from going forward in our course of godliness, by setting before us and exceedingly aggravating those sins which indeed we have committed, or by persuading us falsely that we have committed such sins, as being unpardonable are not incident to the child of God. The former sort of temptations are taken either from some heinous sin once committed, or from the often falling into the same sin. Concerning the first, he aggravateth the sins of the faithful two especial ways, either because they have been committed after repentance, or voluntarily against knowledge and conscience. In the former respect he is ready to suggest, that the children of God do not commit any sin after they have truly repented of it; and if any do, either he never truly repented, or if he did, yet after his fall there is no place to a second repentance, nor hope of God's mercy. For answering whereof we are to know, that howsoever the

state of those who thus sin is somewhat dangerous, and they more hardly recovered than others (even as those diseases are perilous and hardly cured, into which we fall by a relapse after the recovery of health) yet this is incident to the children of God who have truly repented, and notwithstanding this grievous kind of falling they are not debarred of God's mercy in Christ Jesus. And this appeareth partly by reasons, and partly by examples. For first, the gracious promises of the Gospel concerning the remission of sins, are indefinite and without limitation, of time, or sins, whether committed before or after repentance. So Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will ease you: and 1 John 2:1,2. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, &c. In which and in many other places, the Lord assureth us that he will receive to mercy all repentant sinners, of what nature and quality soever their sins are. Secondly, in the law were sacrifices appointed for the sins of the people, not only those who were newly received into the Lord's covenant for their sins past, but also for those sins which were daily committed, after that they had long been therein. Thirdly, the Lord enjoineth us that we forgive our brother seventy times seven times, if so often he offend us and repent of his fault; and therefore himself much more, whose mercy is infinite, and more exceedeth ours than the whole sea a little drop, will pardon us if as we often sin, so also we often turn unto him by unfeigned repentance. This also manifestly appeareth by examples, for did not the Prophet David after his true conversion fall grievously by committing murder and adultery, the Apostle Peter by denying his Lord and Savior, Noah by drunkenness, Lot by incest, and yet afterwards they truly repented again and were received to mercy? So that this point is clear and manifest, that the dear child of God, after his true conversion and unfeigned repentance may fall into grievous

sins, and yet truly repenting of them, may have them remitted, and be received again into God's wonted love and favor.

But here the tempter will object that the Apostle affirmeth Heb. 6:4,5,6. That it is impossible that those who have been once enlightened, &c. if they fall away, should be renewed by repentance: seeing by so sinning, they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and make a mock of him. And therefore whosoever sinneth after his true conversion, can neither repent nor receive mercy. To which we must answer, that the Apostle in this place doth not speak of every falling into to sin, for so he should be contrary to the other Scriptures before alleged, but of a general falling away by apostasy, and of a malicious persecuting of the known truth, which is the sin against the holy Ghost, the which is joined with continual impenitency, and therefore cannot be pardoned. And this appeareth manifestly by the words of the text; for he doth not simply say if he fall into sin, but if he fall away, namely by a general and malicious apostasy: and again, he showeth of what manner of falling he meaneth in the words following, whereas he saith, that such as thus fall away, crucify unto themselves the son of God, and make a mock of him. Now they are said to crucify Christ again, who with a unplaceable hatred do scorn and deride Christ crucified, renouncing all part and hope in his death and sufferings, as did some of the malicious Jews, and as some apostates do in these days. And therefore this place maketh nothing against the repentance and receiving to mercy of such as fall through infirmity into some particular sins, though never so heinous.

And so much for answering Satan's temptations drawn from our sins committed after repentance. The second sort are taken from sins committed voluntarily against our knowledge and conscience; which if we have fallen into, he presently suggesteth that we have sinned presumptuously against

God, and therefore cannot be reckoned in the number of God's children, nor conceive any hope of pardon and forgiveness. For the answering unto which temptation, we are to know these two things; first, that all sins committed against knowledge and conscience are not presumptuous: secondly, that though we should fall into presumptuous sins, yet we may be the children of God, who are neither debarred of true repentance nor of God's mercy. For the first, we are to know that not the heinousness of the sin committed maketh it to be presumptuous, but the manner of the fact, and the mind of the offender; for howsoever Peter fell grievously, yet we cannot say that he fell presumptuously, because he sinned through infirmity and fear of danger, whereas to sin presumptuously, is to sin of a stubborn willfulness, either through the neglect of God's justice and judgments, or through the abuse of his mercy and benefits. In the first respect they offend, who having diverse times themselves sinned, and yet escaped punishment, or having seen others in the like case, do take occasion hereby to sin again, hoping to escape as in former times: and of such the wise man speaketh, Eccl. 8:11, Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set in them to do evil. In the other respect, such offend as take occasion upon God's mercy and long suffering to fall into sin, presuming before they commit it, that God upon their repentance will in his infinite mercy forgive them: and thus they abuse God's mercy and goodness which should lead them to repentance, as an argument to make them more desperately to run into all wickedness. So that to sin presumptuously, is not to sin upon knowledge, and against a man's conscience only, unless there be joined therewith a presumptuous hope to escape punishment, or that notwithstanding the sin committed, he shall receive pardon in respect of God's infinite mercy. Now many of God's

children may fall against their knowledge and conscience, and yet not presume either to escape God's judgments or to be partakers of his mercy, as namely those who are carried headlong into a sin without any time of deliberation through the violence of their corruptions, or overcome by fear of some present danger, or some other unruly passion.

But here the tempter will object, that though these sins against knowledge and conscience be not presumptuous, yet they are unpardonable, seeing the committers of them have no part in Christ's sacrifice, and consequently can hope for no mercy at God's hands: and this he will endeavor to prove by that saying of the Apostle, Heb. 10:26. For if we sin willingly after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment &c. For the answering whereof, we are to know, that the Apostle in his doctrine is not contrary to our Savior Christ: but he hath taught us, that not only sins against knowledge are pardonable upon true repentance, but even horrible blasphemies against the majesty of God, yea, all sins whatsoever saving the sin against the holy Ghost. Matth. 12:31,32. Secondly, we know by experience, that both David and Peter fell grievously against their knowledge and conscience, wittingly, and in a sort willingly, and yet they both repented and were received to mercy: and therefore the Apostle speaketh not of all kind of voluntary falling, but first of sin committed with full consent of will, pleasure, and delight: the which kind of sins are never committed by God's children after their true conversion; for as they are in part carnal and unregenerate, so are they in part spiritual and regenerate, which is to be understood; not only of the understanding part, but also of the will and affections. So far forth therefore as their will is regenerate, they do not will nor yield unto sin; and though they consent unto sin, yet this

consent is not absolute and entire, but with some dislike, grudging, and resistance of the spiritual part; the which dislike and resistance, though sometimes it cannot easily be discerned in the very act of sin, whereas the weak motions of the spirit are violently overborne, through the violent strength of their natural corruptions, and so overshadowed by the cloudy mists which their unruly passions cast before their understanding, that they cannot at all perceive any dislike or resistance against the temptation: yet after the sin is committed, and the good motions of the spirit are again revived out of their deadly swoond, then do they hate and detest that sin which before seemed pleasant unto them and earnestly desire with the Apostle to be freed from it. Lastly, the Apostle in that place doth not speak of every particular sin committed with full consent of will, for so also the elect offend before their conversion, but of a general and malicious apostasy from the known truth, and a scornful rejecting of the sacrifice of Christ once offered for sin: so that the sense is thus much, that if we willfully and maliciously sin, by renouncing the sacrifice of Christ offered for sin, we cannot hope to be saved by any other sacrifice, but are to expect judgment and condemnation, seeing such tread underfoot the son of God, and count the blood of the testament an unholy thing, and even despite the spirit of grace, as he explaineth himself in the verses following.

And so much concerning the first question; the second is whether the Christian man may fall into presumptuous sins, and if he do, whether they be pardonable or no. For the first, though it must needs be confessed that it is a fearful case, to neglect God's justice and judgments because of his long suffering, or to take occasion upon the abundance of God's mercies and readiness to forgive, to provoke him continually by our sins; yet it cannot be denied, but that a true Christian, through the strength of his inbred

corruptions, may fall into these presumptuous sins; neither is there any privilege in the holy Scriptures to exempt them from any sin whatsoever, but that either before or after their conversion they may fall into it, saving only that unpardonable sin which is committed against the holy Ghost. Moreover, David prayeth the Lord to keep him from presumptuous sins, and that he would not suffer them to reign over him, Psalm. 19:13, where first he showeth that of himself he was apt to fall into such sins, if the Lord did not preserve him from them; and secondly he implieth, that the Lord might for good causes known unto himself, suffer him to commit these sins of presumption, and therefore he further prayeth that if he should fall into such sins, it would please the Lord to raise him by true repentance, and not suffer them to rule and reign in him. So that it appeareth that a true Christian may fall into these sins: now, that having fallen he may rise again by true repentance, and receive pardon and forgiveness, it is likewise manifest. For if once the Lord receive us into the covenant of grace, and acknowledge us for his children, then nothing in the world, no not the most grievous sins which we can fall into, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 8:38,29. Secondly, our Savior telleth us, that every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men upon true repentance, saving only the blasphemy against the spirit which is always joined with final impenitence. Matth. 12:31,32. Thirdly, the promises of the Gospel are general and indefinite, excluding no fortes of sins whatsoever, so they perform the condition of faith and repentance. And therefore also presumptuous sinners, repenting and believing, are assured of mercy and forgiveness. Lastly, if David might fall into these sins, then David also might repent and receive pardon, seeing he

was truly justified, sanctified, and a chosen vessel of the Lord elected to everlasting life.

And so much concerning the temptations which are taken from those sins which are once committed; now we are to speak of them which he suggesteth unto the weak conscience, after the committing of one and the same sin diverse times; upon which occasion he is ready to persuade the weak Christian, that he never truly repented, otherwise he would never again fall into the same sin; and the howsoever the child of God may fall into diverse sins, through want of care and experience, yet it is not incident to any of this number to fall again and again into the same wickedness, after they have had warning and sufficient knowledge of the evils thereof. For the answering whereof we are to know, that in truth it is a grievous and fearful case to be thus overtaken, and to be so besotted with the pleasures of sin, that neither instruction nor our own experience can make us to see the evils of sin, and work in us a care to avoid and shun it. The burnt child (as the proverb is) dreadeth the fire; he that hath been deceived and thereby much indamaged, is afterwards more wary; he that hath cast himself into any grievous disease through some unwholesome meats, is ever after more careful of his diet; he that hath once been assaulted by his enemy at unawares, and hath received grisly wounds, will after he is cured go better armed and furnished, that he may not again be overtaken of the like danger. And therefore seeing experience of all other evils doth teach us to avoid them, what a lamentable thing is this, that no warning will make us take heed of sin, which is the greatest evil and cause of all the rest? That having drunk this deadly poison and been grievously sick thereof in our consciences, we should being recovered be enticed with the pleasant taste thereof to swallow it down again? And that having received grievous

wounds, we should after take no better heed, and go no better armed and prepared to make resistance, but for want of care and watchfulness expose ourselves again to the like danger of our spiritual enemies? But yet we are to know that this sometimes, through our great frailty and corruption, may be the estate of a true Christian and faithful servant of God, to fall again and again into the same sin, neither doth anything privilege them from committing that sin again which they have once committed. For first the same inbred corruption still dwelleth in them and is ready again to give them the foil and to lead them captive into the same sin, if the Lord uphold them not, so that in respect of their own strength they may fall again as in former times. Secondly, the same causes still remain which may move the Lord to leave them to themselves, and suffer them to fall, namely that hereby they may be more humbled, and more seriously bewail their corruptions, that they may more earnestly implore his mercy, and he more manifest it in pardoning their sins to the praise of his glory. Thirdly, howsoever this is not usual with the children of God, to fall diverse times into, a sin which is great and grievous, yet everyone findeth in his own experience that he often committeth such sins as are not so heinous, through infirmity and weakness; as to hear the word negligently and carelessly, to be distracted with wandering thoughts in prayer, to fall into unjust anger, to lie and use idle communication and such like, of which notwithstanding repenting he is received unto mercy. So that it is not the often falling into the same sin, that excludeth us out of the number of God's children, or debarreth us of pardon, so that we often repent lay hold upon Christ with a lively faith. Neither do the scriptures limit and restrain God's mercy, and the virtue of Christ's merits, to the pardoning and taking away of diverse sins,

once committed, but extend them also to the same sin committed diverse times, yea to all sins whatsoever of which we truly repent.

CHAP. XI. SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS PERSUADING THE CHRISTIAN THAT HE HATH SINNED AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST, ANSWERED.

And thus have I answered Satan's temptations drawn from these sins which the weak Christian hath fallen into; but if he cannot so prevail, then he will falsely and maliciously accuse them of those sins which they never committed, and especially of that unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, taking advantage of their ignorance, that so he may plunge them into desperation, and utterly discourage them from going forward in the course of godliness. The which his temptation is so usual and common, that there is scarce any who are exercised in this spiritual warfare, if they be converted unto God out of their ignorance, whom he doth not encounter with this weapon. For as much therefore as ignorance is the chief ground of this temptation, therefore the best means to strengthen ourselves against it, is to know what this sin is, which if we once understand, there is no danger of being foiled in this assault.

The sin against the holy Ghost, is a general denial and oppugning of the truth and all religion, of which the understanding and conscience by the illumination of the spirit are persuaded and convicted, proceeding from an

obstinate will and purposed malice against God and his truth. The which sin is committed of two sorts of men; first, of those who have made profession of the truth, and afterwards become Apostates, not from some part only but from all religion, condemning, blaspheming, and persecuting as heretical and impious, that truth which before they professed, and of which they were persuaded. And thus did Hymenaeus and Alexander sin, of whom Paul speaketh, 1 Tim. 1:20. Secondly, of those who were never professors thereof, whose consciences notwithstanding are convicted of that truth which they do oppugn: an example whereof we have in the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. 12:24,31, and in many of the learned Papists in these days, who maliciously deny and persecute that truth which they know and are convicted of.

Hereby therefore it appeareth that not every grievous sin against knowledge and conscience is the sin against the holy Ghost, for thus David offended who was a man according to God's own heart; nor every denying of the known truth, if it proceed from fear and infirmity, and not from malice and obstinate rebellion, for thus Peter sinned in denying his master; nor all kind of opposing and persecuting of the truth, if it be not against knowledge and conscience, but upon blindness and ignorance, for thus Paul offended before his conversion, as appeareth, 1 Tim. 1:13, and many of the Jews who crucified Christ, as the Apostle Peter testifieth, Act. 3:17, nor all malicious opposing against every known truth, but of the truth in general and all true religion, for this sin is a universal apostasy from God and his truth, and not only a defection from some particular point thereof. So that though a man sin against knowledge and conscience, through infirmity and not of malice; though he deny the truth through fear and weakness, though he persecute it through blindness and ignorance; though he wittingly oppose

against and willingly persecute some particular point thereof, and yet hold and profess the general, howsoever he hath most heinously offended, yet he hath not committed this unpardonable sin against the holy spirit, and therefore is not excluded from repentance, nor upon his repentance from pardon and forgiveness. Whereby it manifestly appeareth that these poor Christians which labor under the burden of sin, are merely deluded by Satan's false suggestions, and grossly abused through their own ignorance, when as he maketh them believe that they have sinned against the holy Ghost. But let such know to their comfort that so long as they would not commit this sin, or fear least they have already fallen into it, they are as yet most free from it, seeing it is not done of infirmity or at unawares, but upon a malicious will, clear knowledge and settled resolution.

But here the poor Christian is ready to complain, that he is continually troubled with impious thoughts, and horrible blasphemies against God and his holy spirit, which he feareth to be the sin against the holy Ghost. I answer as before, that seeing these thoughts are a trouble unto him, and seeing he feareth to commit this sin, thereby it is manifest that he is not fallen into it, as appeareth by that which hath been said. Secondly, he is to know that his state is common with God's faithful children, who are thus vexed especially in the conflict of temptations, and before they have received a great measure of faith, and fullness of persuasion of God's love and favor, whereby they are moved entirely to love him again. Neither needs this to seem strange unto any who considereth of that mass of natural corruption which remaineth in us, even after regeneration, which continually boileth and foameth up the filthy scumming of wicked thoughts and blasphemous imaginations; and of the malice of our spiritual enemy Satan, who is still ready to tempt us by his suggestions to the most horrible

and outrageous sins; if not in hope to overcome us, yet at least to vex and trouble us. As we may see in the example of the holy man Job, whom he spared not to tempt unto fearful blasphemy.

But though we cannot keep the devil from assaulting us, let not this discourage us, hay rather let us be moved hereby with more care and watchfulness to withstand him, for if we resist him he will flee from us. Jam 4:7. But in this our resistance two things especially must be observed: the first is the means whereby we must give him the repulse; which is partly by the sword of the spirit, the word of God, whereby we beat back the temptation by proving the wickedness thereof by some testimony of scripture, according to our Saviors example; and partly by lifting up our minds unto God in prayer, desiring strength to withstand the temptation. Secondly, we must take heed that we do not revolve the temptation in our minds, but presently repel it, least these hellish sparks taking hold of the tinder of our corruptions, do at length inflame us with horrible wickedness, which at their first falling might easily have been extinguished. And if we thus speedily repel these horrible blasphemies suggested by Satan, they shall never be imputed unto us, but unto him from whom they proceed, and that both in respect of the fault and punishment.

CHAP. XII. ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THE CERTAINTY OF OUR PERSEVERANCE GROUNDED UPON GOD'S WILL AND IMMUTABILITY.

And thus have I answered Satan's temptations which concern our sanctification. Now in the last place we are to entreat of our perseverance which he impugne with no less subtlety and violence. For though the Christian man have attained to some assurance, that he is elected, called, justified, and sanctified, yet Satan will not give him over, but laboreth to persuade him, that notwithstanding all this he may finally fall away and become a reprobate. Let it be granted (will he say) that thy state now is such as thou supposest, yet thou art in no safety, neither canst thou promise unto thyself any assurance of attaining unto everlasting life and happiness, seeing those only which continue unto the end shall be saved: whereas thou hast no assurance of thy perseverance, nay contrariwise thou art in respect of thy frailty and mutability, certain of nothing more than thine uncertainty. Call to thy remembrance the example of thy first parents, who were perfectly righteous and holy, more accomplished in all graces than any of their posterity, more strong and able to endure and resist all temptations, as being endued with free-will, and

therefore able both to choose the good and refuse the evil, who notwithstanding all this were overcome, and of the children of God made the slaves of sin and Satan. Did they therefore fall who were perfectly righteous, and canst thou who are most imperfect hope to stand? Were not they who were full of all graces able to endure the encounter in the day of trial, and canst thou hope to make resistance who art full of sin and corruption? Were they vanquished who were strong champions, and dost thou who art weak and feeble hope for victory? Were they allured by Satan's temptations, to commit sin, and fall from God, who could freely will the good and nill the evil; and canst thou hope to persevere and continue constant, whose will is captived and overruled by thy corruption? Consider further thy mutability and inconstancy, thy exceeding weakness and frailty, thy corruptions and imperfections; and on the other side set before thee, the mighty power, the subtle policy, the vigilant watchfulness, and unwearied diligence, of thy spiritual enemies who continually assault thee: and then think with thyself if there be any possibility, that thy weakness should withstand their power, thy ignorant simplicity their prudent wisdom, and thy careless negligence their careful diligence. Lastly, call to mind the manifold examples which thou hast both read and seen, of such as have been of greater gifts and graces, and made a much fairer show than thou, of holiness towards God and righteousness towards men, who notwithstanding have finally fallen away and become reprobates, and therefore why mayest not thou be one of this number? Seeing then the case thus standeth do not foolishly flatter thyself with a vain hope, that because thou art elected, called, justified, and sanctified, therefore thou shalt be saved; for though now thou art elected, yet hereafter thou mayest become a reprobate; though today thou art a child of God, and in his favor, yet tomorrow thou mayest

through thy sins, be a child of the devil, and in God's displeasure be rejected; though now thou art a member of Christ, thou mayest become a limb of Satan; and though now thou art endued with the spirit of God, and with all the graces and gifts thereof, yet by thy sin thou mayst easily loose both it and them; and be wholly and finally given over to run on thy former wickedness unto eternal death and condemnation.

And thus doth Satan persuade the Christian man to doubt of his perseverance; the which temptations, if we would withstand, it behooveth us not to ground the certainty of our perseverance upon our own resolution, strength and graces which we have received, for these are altogether insufficient to uphold us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies, who are far more stronger then we; but wholly distrusting in our own ability, let us rest and rely wholly upon the Lord, for as it is he alone who hath bestowed upon us all the gifts and graces which we have received, so also have we our growth and perseverance in them from him only. And so we may be assured of our perseverance, notwithstanding our own weakness and inconstancy, for it is God which establisheth us in Christ, as it is, 2 Cor. 1:21. Though in respect of anything that is in us we might every hour fall away; yet we are sure to continue in those graces which we have received, mauger the malice and power of all our enemies, for we stand not in our own strength but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Pet. 1:4. Though we should every day loose everlasting life and happiness through negligence, or sell it away for the vanities of the world and pleasures of sin if it were in our own hands, yet all this is not sufficient to disinherit us of our heavenly patrimony, for it is not at our own disposition but our life is hid with Christ in God, as it is, Col. 3:3. And therefore though in ourselves we are as weak as reeds, and as

unconstant and changeable as the wind and weather, yet are we ten thousand times more sure to persevere in that grace which we have received unto everlasting life, than Adam in the state of innocence; for he stood by his own strength, which though it were great, yet it was finite, but we by the almighty power of God; he by the virtue of his own free will, which was mutable and subject to alteration, but we by the will of God which being immutable admitteth of no change.

But let us come more specially to speak of this main controversy between the true Christian and the enemies of his salvation, the state whereof standeth thus; whether he that is elected in God's eternal counsel, and is effectually called, that is, severed from the world, given to Christ, and engrafted into Christ by the spirit of God and a lively faith, justified, sanctified, and endued with the sanctifying gifts and graces of God's spirit, may after all this fall away, lose the spirit of God and the graces thereof, and become as profane and wicked as ever he was before his conversion, lose also his justification, be cut off from the body of Christ, and finally become a reprobate. This the enemies of our salvation affirm, but we deny as being a thing impossible, not in regard of our own strength, constancy, or great measure of grace which we have received, but in respect of God's will and power who upholdeth us, Christ's intercession who prayeth for us, and God's holy spirit always dwelling in us, whereby we are so strengthened and confirmed, that all the power of hell cannot prevail against us.

This our assertion we will first confirm by infallible reasons, and afterwards answer the contrary objections which are made against this truth by the enemies of our salvation.

The reasons which may be alleged for this purpose are many; the first sort are taken from God's own nature, as it is described in his word and

exercised in his works towards us. As first we may be assured of our perseverance, because it is grounded upon God's will, which may be considered either in his secret counsel and decree of election, or in his will revealed in his word. From the first we may thus reason; Whomsoever the Lord in his eternal counsel hath elected to everlasting life, they shall most certainly be saved, and persevere in the means tending thereunto, which are no less contained in God's decree than our salvation itself. But the Lord in his eternal counsel hath elected all the faithful unto eternal life. And therefore nothing can hinder their salvation, nor yet their perseverance, without which it is impossible they should be saved. The first part of this reason is clear and manifest: for not to effect that which one hath decreed and purposed, argueth either impotency and want of power, or inconstancy, neither of which without blasphemy can be ascribed unto God; for there is nothing hard unto him, Jer. 32:17, but he doth whatsoever he will, Psal. 115:3, yea even those things which unto men are impossible are possible unto him, Matth. 19:26, for he can do all things, Job, 42:2. Neither is the will of God mutable, for this argueth a want of wisdom, whereas his wisdoms is infinite and knoweth no end, Psal. 145:5; and he perfectly seeth and knoweth all things in one view, past, present, and to come, Heb. 4:13: and therefore we may conclude with the Apostle, that the purpose of God in his election remaineth sure, Rom. 9:11, and the foundation of God (that is, his unchangeable decree) continueth firm, and hath this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his, 2 Tim. 2:19. Whosoever then are elected they shall most certainly be saved, neither is it possible that they should fall away: as our Savior implieth Matth. 24:24, whereas he saith, that the false Prophets should show such great signs, that if it were possible they should deceive

the very elect. Noting hereby that this is altogether a thing impossible, that they should be deceived and seduced with false Christ's and false Prophets.

The second part of this reason, namely, that all the faithful are elected, is also of most undoubted truth; for whosoever have a true faith they are justified, whosoever are justified are also effectually called, elected, and shall be glorified; What said I? Shall be? Nay are already glorified, as the Apostle affirmeth, to note the undoubted certainty of their salvation, Rom. 8:30. Moreover, the Apostle maketh faith an inseparable fruit of our election, and proper and peculiar unto the elect, calling it the faith of God's elect, Tit. 1:1. And Act. 13:48, it is said, that as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed, where he maketh God's election the cause of faith. And contrariwise our Savior telleth us, that they believe not, who are not his sheep, John. 10:26. So that it is manifest that those who believe are elected, and those who are elected shall be saved.

The second reason may be taken from his will revealed in his word; for whatsoever God thus willeth, that shall most certainly come to pass: but God willeth that all should have everlasting life whom he hath given to Christ, in which number are all those who are effectually called, as our Savior testifieth, John. 6:39. And this is the fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And he willeth likewise, that he that believeth in the son should be saved, as it is, ver. 40. And therefore those who are effectually called and believe in Christ, cannot possibly perish, but shall most certainly have eternal life.

The third reason may be taken from the constancy and immutability of God, both in his love towards us, and also in his gifts. In the former respect we may thus reason: Whomsoever the Lord loveth with a constant and

immutable love, those shall most certainly be saved, seeing it is the nature of love to desire the good of the party beloved, and to seek his welfare as much as it can; but the Lord loveth his faithful ones with a constant and perpetual love, as himself testifieth, Jer. 31:3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with mercy have I drawn thee. So, John. 13:1. Forasmuch as he loved his own which were in the world, unto the end he loved them. And therefore all the faithful may assure themselves that they shall be saved, and being once assured of God's love, they may with the Apostle be undoubtedly persuaded, that nothing in the world shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But against this it may be objected, that the sins of the faithful do provoke the Lord unto anger, and move him to cast them off in his just displeasure, and to withdraw from them his wonted love and favor: and therefore seeing sin separateth them from God's love, it may also plunge them into condemnation. To which I answer, that indeed the sins of the faithful do in themselves deserve the everlasting wrath of God and eternal death, if they were not taken away by Christ, who hath by his precious bloodshed satisfied his fathers justice; and that even now they so offend by their sins their gracious father, that they had need to renew their faith and repentance, before they can have any sensible assurance that they are reconciled unto him, and received into his love and favor. It is most true that God is displeased with the sins of his children, according to that, Isa. 64:5. Behold thou art angry, for we have sinned. But this anger doth not exclude them out of his love, seeing it is not the anger of an enemy but of a gracious father, who is not angry with their persons to destroy them, but with their sins to convert and save them. As therefore children with their faults provoke their parents to anger, and move them to turn their fatherly smiles into bitter

frowns, and the fruits of their love into the effects of hatred in outward show, as namely severe countenances, sharp reproofs, and rigorous chastisements; and in respect of these outward signs and effects of their anger they are usually said to be out of favor and in their fathers displeasure, howsoever in truth at the same time they entirely love them, and use all this wholesome severity not because they hate, but because they would reform them: So God's children when by their sins they do offend him and provoke his anger against them, are said to be out of his favor, not that God doth ever change his fatherly affection or purposeth utterly to reject them, but because he changeth the effects of his love into the effects of hatred in outward show, as when inwardly he suffereth them to be vexed with the terrors of conscience, and with the apprehension of his anger and displeasure, and outwardly whippeth and scourgeth them with temporary afflictions; all which he doth not for any hatred to their persons, for he never hateth those whom he hath once loved in Christ, but for the hatred of their sins, and love of the sinner, whom by this means he bringeth by the rough and unpleasant way of repentance, unto the eternal pleasures of his kingdom.

And thus it appeareth that God's love and anger may stand together, and that notwithstanding his momentary displeasure his love may be eternal. Now secondly we are to know, that as God is immutable in his love so also in his gifts, as faith, repentance, hope, affiance, charity, &c. according to that, Rom. 11:29, The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But yet this is to be understood with diverse cautions; for first it is not to be understood of all the gifts of God, not of temporary gifts, nor of the gifts of the spirit which are common to the wicked with the godly, for these being not essential to a Christian nor necessary to salvation, the Lord giveth or

taketh away, as in his infinite wisdom he thinketh best; neither yet are we to understand it of all gifts of the spirit which are proper to the elect, for some also of these being not of the essence of faith, but only effects and fruits thereof, he taketh away from his children for a time; as namely, the purity of their conscience, and the peace which doth accompany it, the sense and feeling of God's love and favor, cheerfulness of spirit, joy in the holy Ghost, patience, the gift of prayer and such like; because his love and the salvation of the faithful may stand with the want of these gifts for a time. Neither are we to understand this of the actions and sensible fruits of God's graces, for these also have their intermissions, the graces themselves notwithstanding remaining: for as the Sun doth always shine, and yet sometimes the beams thereof are not discerned, being hindered from spreading themselves by the interposition of the clouds or of the earth, and the fire doth continue light and hot in itself, and yet being covered with ashes doth give neither light nor heat to the standers by; so these graces of God's spirit, faith, hope, affiance, love and such like, may in respect of their substance habitually remain in us, and yet for a time not send forth the light and heat of joy, comfort, peace and the rest; and though they retain their nature still, yet they may be hindered from exercising their actions and functions; as namely, when as the conscience is wounded with some willful sin committed against the knowledge, or in the spiritual conflict of temptations, as before I have shown at large. Lastly, this is not to be understood of their measure and degree, for these graces have their full and wane, their ebb and tide, their perfect strength and their faint languishing; but of their substance and true being, in which respect they never utterly fail but continue without intermission unto the end, for as the gift of faith, so all other the like graces are the work of God, as our Savior teacheth us, John 6:29: and we may

assure ourselves of this, That he that hath begun this good work in us, will also finish and perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle speaketh, Phil. 1:6.

CHAP. XIII. OF THE FOURTH AND
FIFTH REASON TO PROVE THE
CERTAINTY OF OUR
PERSEVERANCE, GROUNDED UPON
GOD'S POWER AND TRUTH.

The fourth reason may be taken from God's omnipotency and almighty power: for if God in respect of his infinite love, be willing that we shall be saved, and persevere in the means of our salvation; and be immutable also and unchangeable in his love and will; and likewise in respect of his power infinite and almighty, able to effect whatsoever he willeth: then surely being assured that we are in the state of grace, and in God's love and favor, there is no doubt but we shall be saved, and persevere in the means which are inseparably joined with our salvation. But as the Lord in respect of his love is most willing, so in respect of his power he is able, continually to uphold us in the state of grace, and to frustrate and defeat all the malice and might of all our enemies, who labor to hinder our salvation; for he is omnipotent and mighty to save, as it is, Isa. 63:1. And though through our frailty and weakness we might continually be vanquished and drawn from God, yet now there is no doubt hereof, seeing we do not stand in our own strength, but are kept by the power of God

through faith unto salvation, as it is, 1 Pet. 1:5, though in ourselves we are impotent and feeble, yet we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and being armed with the armor of God, we are enabled to stand against the assaults of the devil, as the Apostle speaketh, Eph. 6:10,11. Though we are of little force in regard of our own strength and able to do nothing, yet are we able to do all things through the help of Christ which strengtheneth us, as it is, Phil. 4:13: though we be weak in faith, and unable to stand, yet being the servants of God we shall be established; for God is able to make us stand, Rom. 14:4. In a word, though our spiritual enemies are stronger than we, yet shall they not be able to pluck us from Christ; For the father which gave us to him is greater than all, and none is able to take us out of the fathers hand, as our Savior reasoneth, John 10:28,29. And therefore when we are discouraged and ready to faint, in the sight and sense of our own weakness, and our enemies mighty power, let us comfort ourselves in the Lord, saying with the Apostle, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day, as it is, 2 Tim. 1:12.

The fifth reason is grounded upon God's truth and fidelity, which is so infallible, that whatsoever he hath spoken, promised, or covenanted, that he will most certainly perform: for God is a faithful and true witness, Rev. 1:5, and all his promises in Christ are Yea and Amen, 2 Cor. 1:20. So that it is more easy that heaven and earth should pass away, than that one title of God's word should fall unaccomplished, Luke 16:17. But the Lord in his word hath assured all that believe, that he will uphold them and preserve them unto everlasting life, against all the fury of their enemies; as may appear both by his covenant which he hath made with his Church in general, and also by particular promises made to all the faithful. Concerning

the first, the Lord maketh this covenant with his Church, Isa. 59:21. I will (saith he) make this my covenant with them; my spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of the seed of thy seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth even forever. If therefore God's spirit never departeth from them, and they forever confess and profess his word and truth, then certainly they can never fall away nor loose their heavenly inheritance. For, if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, he shall also quicken our mortal bodies, because his spirit dwelleth in us, as it is, Rom. 8:11. And as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, ver. 14. And if we be children, we are also heirs, &c. ver. 17. So, Jer. 32:38. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Ver. 39. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the wealth of them and of their children after them. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will never turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, &c. If therefore the Church and people of God shall fear him forever, if his covenant be everlasting, if he will never depart from them, nor they from him, then certainly there is no doubt of their perseverance. And chap. 31:31,32, The Lord saith that he will make a new covenant with his Church, not according to the covenant which he made with their fathers. 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days (saith the Lord) I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, &c. And I will forgive their iniquity; and I will remember their sins no more. In which words the Lord covenanteth, that his law should ever remain so deeply engraven in their hearts, that nothing

should blot it out, and that they should continually meditate and delight themselves therein; for thus this phrase of writing in the heart is usually taken in the Scriptures. So likewise he assureth them of the perpetual pardon of their sins, so that their sins should never make frustrate that covenant which he had made with them. So, Hos. 2:19. And I will marry thee unto me forever, yea, I will marry thee unto me in righteousness and in judgement, and in mercy and compassion. 20. I will marry thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shall know the Lord. If therefore the Church of God shall be married unto him forever in righteousness and faithfulness, and in mercy and compassion, then can neither their faith and righteousness towards God, nor his mercy and compassion towards them fail, but both shall continue unto the end. Seeing then the covenant which is between God and us doth assure us of the continuance of his love and mercy, and of our perseverance in his fear and holy obedience we need not to doubt either of the ceasing of his love, or our falling away. For though the mountains remove and the hills fall down, yet shall not his mercy depart from his children, neither shall the covenant of his peace fall away. As the Lord himself protesteth, Isa. 54:10.

And thus have I proved the certainty of our perseverance, by the covenant of grace which God hath made with his Church; for whatsoever the Lord promiseth to the whole body of the Church, that he also promiseth to every particular member thereof, seeing the whole containeth all his parts: so that whatsoever belongeth to the whole body, that also belongeth to all the members. But it may be objected that howsoever this covenant on God's part is firm and eternal, yet by our fault and transgression it may be made void and frustrate. I answer that so likewise the covenant made with the Israelites was firm on God's part, but made frustrate by their sins, but the

Lord hath made a new covenant with us, not of works but of grace, upon the condition of faith and repentance, which being observed on our part our sins and unworthiness cannot make it frustrate and of none effect; as before I have shown more at large.

Secondly, we are assured of our perseverance, by God's particular promises made to his faithful ones. Psal. 1:3, it is said of the righteous man, that he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters that will bring forth her fruits in due season, whose leaf shall not fade, &c. As therefore the tree planted by the river side doth not wither, because continually it sucketh moisture, whereby it is quickened and refreshed: so the righteous man persevereth in his righteousness, because he is continually revived and quickened with that spiritual moisture, which he sucketh from Christ who is the lively root, whereof he is a branch. Psal. 15:5, He that doth these things shall never be moved. Psal. 37:24, Though (the righteous man) fall, he shall not be cast off; for the Lord putteth under his hand. Psal. 112:6, Surely he shall never be moved, but the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. And ver. 9. His righteousness remaineth forever. Psal. 125:1, They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but remaineth forever. John. 4:14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never be more a thirst, but the water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life. Where by this water we are to understand the holy Ghost, as appeareth, John. 7:38. He that believeth in me as saith the scripture, out of his belly shall flow rivers of the water of life. 39. This (saith the Evangelist) spake he of the spirit which they that believed in him should receive. So that to drink of this water is through faith in Christ to be made partakers of the holy Ghost, whom whosoever receiveth shall retain him unto the end. As

therefore he that hath a living fountain continually springing in him cannot be a thirst; so they who have this fountain of life perpetually springing in them, they shall never thirst anymore, but it shall continually refresh and quicken them, till they have attained unto everlasting life. I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. And ver. 37. All that the father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I cast not away. And ver. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever. And ver. 54. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day, &c. Now whosoever believe in Christ, they eat his flesh and drink his blood; for faith is the mouth of the soul whereby we feed on this heavenly food; and therefore all the faithful shall have everlasting life; nay as he saith they have it already and shall not come into condemnation, but have passed from death to life, as it is, John. 5:24, and John. 10:28. I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. 29. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to take them out of my fathers hand. In which words he both showeth his will in his promise, and his power to perform it, and therefore whosoever are the sheep of Christ, they cannot be taken from him, neither for a time nor eternally, for so it should follow if Christ's reason be of any force, that they who took them from him should be stronger than Christ and his father, which were a horrible blasphemy for any to imagine.

But here it is objected that these promises are made to all the faithful so long as they continue faithful, and to the sheep of Christ so long as they are his sheep, who abide in his word and follow him. But when they cease to believe and to be his sheep, they do not appertain unto him, for they only

remain the Disciples of Christ who abide in his word, and have his word abiding in them, John. 8:31, and 15:7. To which I answer that this is an idle trifling in a circular disputation, and a vain begging of the question in controversy. For the question is, whether the faithful may be assured of their perseverance in faith, whether a member of Christ may be assured to continue a member of Christ, whether a sheep of Christ may assure himself that he is to remain forever a sheep of Christ; we hold the affirmative part and prove it by diverse testimonies; they deny that these promises are absolute, but on this condition, that we are assured none can pluck us from Christ, so long as we continue and retain the nature of the members and sheep of Christ. But I would fain know what it is to be plucked from Christ, but to cease to be a member or sheep of Christ, and to lose their nature: and what it is to be a sheep of Christ but to hear his word and to follow him. When as then our Savior Christ promiseth that none shall pluck his sheep from him, he promiseth that none shall be able to make them cease to be his sheep, nor deprive them of their nature which is the essential form which maketh them to be sheep, rather than other who neither hear his word nor follow him. Whereas therefore they affirm, that these promises do assure us to persevere, so long as we continue and retain the nature of the sheep and members of Christ, what is it but idly to repeat the same thing? Namely that God's promises do assure us to persevere, so long as we do persevere; that we shall not be plucked from Christ so long as we remain with Christ; that we shall continue the members and sheep of Christ, so long as we continue to be his sheep and members; that we shall not lose our faith so long as we continue faithful. And what is it to say that the sheep of Christ shall so long continue to be his sheep as they retain their nature, but to grant also that

they may lose their nature, and consequently cease to be Christ's sheep, and so be plucked from him which is quite contrary to his promise?

CHAP. XIII. OF EIGHT OTHER REASONS WHICH PROVE THE CERTAINTY OF OUR PERSEVERANCE.

The sixth reason to assure us of our perseverance may be taken from the intercession of Christ for us to God the father. For whatsoever Christ himself maketh request for in the behalf of his faithful, that without doubt the father granteth unto him, for God heareth him always, John. 11:42. But he continually maketh request for them that their faith fail not, as appeareth Luk. 22:32. He prayeth for them, John. 17:9, that the father would keep them in his name whom he had given unto him; That they may be one, as he and the father are one, ver. 11; That he would preserve them from evil, ver. 15; and what greater evil than to fall from grace and God also? That they all may be one, as the father is in Christ and Christ in him, ver. 21. That they be with Christ where he is, and may behold his glory, ver. 24. He maketh also intercession for all those whom he hath redeemed, that they may be saved, notwithstanding their sins into which they fall through the strength of their corruptions, as appeareth, 1 John. 2:1,2. And therefore all these things are granted unto him by the father, for the faithful. So that now they may say with the Apostle Rom. 8:33. It is God that justifieth. 34.

Who shall condemn? It is Christ which is dead, yea or rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God and maketh request for us. 35. Who shall separate us from the love of God &c.? And though our corruptions be many and our weakness great yet we need not doubt of our perseverance to everlasting life. For we have a high priest who is able perfectly to save them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, as it is, Heb. 7:25.

The seventh reason may be taken from that union which is between Christ and the faithful, whereby he becometh their head, and they his members. For there is no head that will willingly permit any of its members to be rent and torn from it, because then it should have a maimed and imperfect body. But Christ Jesus is the head of all the faithful, and they the members of his body. Eph. 5:30. And therefore he will not suffer any of them to be pulled from him, and so perishing make a maim in his body, seeing he is also omnipotent and able to save all those who depend upon him. Moreover seeing our Savior Christ who is our head, hath past all dangers, and now liveth and reigneth with God his father, we are also assured that we shall live and reign with him. For he hath obtained this eternal glory, not for himself alone, but also for all the members of his body, as appeareth, John. 17:21,24, and therefore now there is no doubt of perishing, seeing our life is hid with Christ in God, as it is, Col. 3:3; and consequently no less safe than his who now reigneth and triumpheth over his enemies. Whereof it is that they are said in respect of the certainty of their assurance, to have already everlasting life, and to have passed from death to life, John. 5:24, 1 John. 3:14.

The eight reason may be taken from the spirit of God dwelling in us; for so long as it hath his abiding with us, we must needs persevere in grace;

neither is it possible we should fall away, seeing it is the fountain and root from which all graces flow and spring, and seeing it continually fighteth against and subdueth the flesh and the lusts thereof. But after we have received the spirit of God it continually dwelleth and abideth with us; for this is that spiritual water of which whosoever drinketh shall never be more a thirst, but it shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life, as it may appear by comparing John. 4:14, with chap. 7:39. So John. 14:16. I will pray the father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. 17. Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. And, 1 John. 3:9. Whosoever is borne of God sinneth not, (that is, with full consent of will) for his seed remaineth in him; neither can he sin, because he is borne of God: where the spirit is called the seed of God, because by virtue thereof we are begotten unto God. If therefore by virtue of this spirit we are so preserved that we cannot sin with full consent of will, nor have it reigning in us as it did before our regeneration, then certainly we shall be preserved thereby from falling away, and notwithstanding our sins we shall persevere in grace to everlasting life.

The ninth argument may be taken from the effects of the spirit dwelling in us; for first it teacheth and guideth us in the way of God's truth, as appeareth, 1 John. 2:20,27. And as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, Rom. 8:14, and those that are sons are also heirs, even the heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ, ver. 17. Neither is it possible that those who are guided with the spirit should sin with full consent of will, much less fall away. For whosoever is borne of God sinneth not, namely after this manner, neither can ever their spiritual enemies finally prevail

against them; for he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not, as it is, 1 John. 5:18. Secondly, the spirit of God witnesseth to our spirits that we are the sons of God, and consequently heirs of his kingdom, as it is, Rom. 8:17, and his testimony is true and infallible. It also is the earnest of our inheritance, and a pledge to assure us that God will make good his promises unto us, Eph. 1:14, 2 Cor. 1:22, and thereby also we are sealed unto the day of redemption, Eph. 4:30. And therefore seeing the Lord hath confirmed our assurance by the testimony of his spirit, by this earnest, pledge, and seal, we need not to fear our falling away or to doubt of our perseverance. But of this I have already written at large in treating of the certainty of our election.

The tenth reason may be taken from God's continual aid in all trials and temptations; for if he be always ready to strengthen and support us, we can never finally be overthrown, but though we fall, yet we shall not fall away, but shall be raised up again in despite of all our enemies. For God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will give a good issue with the temptation, that we may be able to bear it, as it is, 1 Cor. 10:13. And he knoweth to deliver the godly out of temptation, as the Apostle speaketh, 2 Pet. 2:9. And therefore be our weakness never so great, yet let us not fear our final falling away, but knowing whom we have believed, let us persuade ourselves of our perseverance, knowing that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him, as it is, 2 Tim. 1:12.

And these are the reasons drawn from God's nature in himself and his actions towards us, whereby we may undoubtedly be assured of our perseverance. The second sort of arguments may be taken from ourselves, and first from the nature of true faith wherewith we are endued, which is not temporary but constant and permanent. For he that hath a true and lively

faith, is like the house built upon the rock, which neither the rain nor floods nor winds could overthrow, Matth. 7:24,25: neither shall the gates of hell overcome him, chap. 16, ver. 18: he is like the good ground in which the seed falling is not stolen away, nor choked up, nor withereth for want of root, but he receiveth the seed and keepeth it, and bringeth forth fruit with patience, as it is, Luk. 8:15. And contrariwise it is a most undoubted mark of a hypocrite who never was endued with a true faith, when as his faith is temporary, and he falleth away, according to that, 1 John. 2:19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have continued with us. But this cometh to pass that it might appear that they are not all of us.

The second reason may be taken from the example of those who have grievously fallen, and yet have continued in the state of grace, and have been raised and restored again by unfeigned repentance: and thus did David fall and that most grievously, and yet was not deprived of God's spirit, as appeareth, Psal. 51:10,11. Thus did Peter fall by denying his master, Noah by drunkenness, Lot by incest, and yet they were not deprived of those graces which they had received; howsoever for the time they were much eclipsed and weakened, neither were they rejected by God, but upon their true repentance were received into his former love and favor.

The last reason may be taken from the weakness and inability of the causes which should hinder our perseverance and make us fall away. For there is nothing in the world so powerful, but it is altogether too weak to work this defection. For first, afflictions cannot deprive us of grace, nor hinder our perseverance, as it is, Rom. 8:35: for though they are the fiery trial, yet they do not burn us, but refine us from our dross, neither do they hinder our salvation, but rather cause unto us a far most excellent and

eternal weight of glory, as it is, 2 Cor. 4:17: nor yet our flesh, for though it be never so strong, yet the spirit of God dwelling in us, will in the end mortify and subdue it. Not the world, for our Captain Christ hath overcome it, not only for himself but also for his members, John. 16:33: yea and he enableth us also by his holy spirit to overcome it. For all that is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, as it is, 1 John. 5:4. Not the devil, for if we resist him, he will flee from us, Jam. 4:7. And he that is, borne of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not, 1 John. 5:18. Not our sins, for they are punished and fully satisfied for in Christ; and if we sin, we have an advocate with the father, &c. 1 John. 2:1,2. And for the corruption of sin, though it dwell in us, yet it shall not reign in us, Rom. 6:12. Though we fall into it, yet not with full consent of will, 1 John. 3:9, for the regenerate man sinneth not, but his corrupt flesh dwelling in him; as it is, Rom. 7. Not any temptation, for the Lord is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our power, but will give a good issue unto it, 1 Cor. 10:13. Not anything in the world, Rom. 8:38,39, for all things whatsoever shall be so disposed by the wise providence of God, that though they be never so hurtful in their own nature, and apt to draw us from God, yet they shall work together for the best unto them which love God, as it is, Rom. 8:28.

And thus have I proved the certainty of our perseverance, both by plain testimonies of Scripture, and also infallible reasons: I had purposed (as in the other points going before) to have answered such objections as are commonly suggested by Satan, and stiffly urged by his instruments the Popish rabble against this truth, and accordingly had almost finished that which I intended; but diverse reasons moved me to desist from my purpose, as first and especially his earnest desire who is at the chief charge of

printing these my labors, who fearing that the greatness and dearness of the book might be a hindrance to the sale thereof, entreated me to forbear the publishing of this controversy, which being somewhat long, would have increased the volume and consequently the price. To whose request I more willingly condescended, partly because the controversy before handled, of the certainty of faith and assurance of our salvation, is of the like nature, so that the proving of the one is the confirming of the other, and the answering of those objections which are made against the certainty of our assurance, is a sufficient refutation of those which are objected against our perseverance, many of the testimonies of Scriptures and other reasons which are alleged against both, being the very same: And partly because I understand, that my godly learned and most dear brother, purposeth presently to publish his Lectures upon the 15th Psalm, wherein this controversy is largely and much more excellently handled and determined, than I was any ways able to have written of it. Notwithstanding, if my book seem maimed in respect of this defect, and if I see it be desired that it should be entire and full in itself, I will hereafter most willingly supply that which yet is wanting, if I perceive that my labors are approved as profitable for the Church of God. In the meantime I commend them to God's blessing, who only is able by the assistance of his holy spirit to make them effectual for those ends for which I intended them, he being the sole fountain of all true comfort and consolation: desiring the Christian reader who shall find fruit and profit by these my labors, that as I have not been wanting unto him in my pains and best endeavors; so he will not be wanting to remember me in his prayers unto Almighty God, for the continuance, increase, and holy use of all his gifts and graces which he hath bestowed on me. To this God most wise, most gracious, and most infinite in all perfections, the Father, Son and Holy

Ghost, be ascribed all glory, praise, power and dominion both now and evermore, Amen.

FINIS.

APPENDIX III. – BOOK. III.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

In the original facsimile edition of this book, there were a considerable amount of scripture references in the margins. They have been listed here by Chapter in the order they appeared.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

Lev. 20:8; Joh. 1:13; Ephes 2:10; Ezek. 36:26; Ezek. 34:28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Psalm. 51:13; Gen. 1:28; Jer. 13:23; Eph. 2:1; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:4,5; Heb. 9:14; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 2:11; Joh. 3:5,6; Act. 11:16; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:5; Eph. 2:1,3; Joh. 15:3; Joh. 17:17; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15; Phile. 10; Act. 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 4:2; Act. 8:37; Act. 15:9; Gal. 5:6; Rom. 6:6; Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12,13; Rom. 6:4; Matth. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10:31; Tit. 3:5,7; Joh. 3:3; 1 Cor. 15:50; Rev. 21:27; Heb. 12:14; 2 Pet. 1:10.

CHAP. II.

Rom. 7:15,19,22; 2 Cor. 7:11; Psalm. 119:18; Col. 1:9; Psalm. 119:11; Rom. 7:18; 1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 6:19; Rev. 22:11; Heb. 5:14; Rom. 8:29.

CHAP. III.

Psalm. 34:14; Psalm. 37:27; Isa. 1:16,17; Rom. 5:11,18; Eph. 4:22,23; Rom. 6:4,5; Col. 2:12; Col. 3:3,5; Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:6,7,8; Psalm. 63:4; Phil. 3:10,11; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:17; Rom. 7:18,22; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 5:26,27; 2 Cor. 5:1,2.

CHAP. IIII.

Eph. 1:4; Act. 17:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; Luk. 1:74,75; 2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 6:6,8,18; 1 Thess. 4:17; Luk. 7:47; Col. 1:21,22; Eph. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Isa. 53:7; 1 Cor. 6:15; Psalm. 4:5; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21,22; Eph. 4:30; 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Pet. 2:5.

CHAP. V.

Rom. 2:5; Heb. 2:10,31; 2 Pet. 3:11; Jude. 14:15.

CHAP. VI.

1 Thess. 5:22.

CHAP. VII.

Jam. 3:2; 1 Joh. 1:8; Gal. 5:17; Rev. 22:11; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Rom. 7:12,22; 2 Cor. 12:8,9; Lam. 3:22; 1 Pet. 5:5; Luk. 1:53; Rev. 2:26,27; Rev. 3:21; Phil. 1:22,23.

CHAP. VIII.

Phil. 1:6; Psalm. 145:19; 1 Cor. 10:13; Matth. 12:20; Luk. 11:13; Matth. 11:30; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:19; Eph. 1:4; Joh. 14:16,17; Ezek. 11:19; Ezek. 36:26; Jer. 31:33,34; Joel. 2:28,29.

CHAP. IX.

2 Cor. 7:9,10,11; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 5:18; Eccl. 8:11.

CHAP. X.

Matth. 11:28; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Heb. 6:4,5,6; Eccl. 8:11; Rom. 2:4; Heb. 10:26; Matth. 12:31,32; Psalm. 19:13; Rom. 8:38,39; Matth. 12:31,32.

CHAP. XI.

1 Tim. 1:20; Matth. 12:24,31; 1 Tim. 1:13; Act. 3:17; Jam. 4:7.

CHAP. XII.

Matth. 24:3; 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:4; Col. 3:3; Jer. 32:17; Psalm. 115:3; Matth. 19:26; Job. 42 2; Psalm. 145:5; Heb. 4:13; Rom. 9:11; 1 Tim. 2:19; Rom. 8:30; Tit. 1:1; Act. 13:48; Joh. 10:26; Joh. 6:39,40; Jer. 31:3; Joh. 13:1; Isa. 64:5; Rom. 11:29; Psalm. 51:9,10,11,12,15; Joh. 6:29; Phil. 1:6.

CHAP. XIII.

Isa. 63:1; 1 Pet. 1:5; Eph. 6:10,11; Phil. 4:13; Rom. 14:4; Joh. 10:28,29; 2 Tim. 1:12; Rev. 1:5; 2 Cor. 1:20; Luke 16:17; Isa. 59:21; Rom. 8:11; Rom. 8:11,14; Jer. 32:38,39,40; Jer. 31:31,32; Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 3:2; Hos. 2:19,20; Isa. 54:10; Psalm. 1:3; Ezek. 47:12; Psalm. 15:5; Psalm. 37:24; Psalm. 112:6; Psalm. 125:1; Joh. 4:14; Joh. 7:38,39; Joh. 6:35,37; Joh. 5:24; Joh. 10:28; Joh. 8:31; Joh. 15:7.

CHAP. XIII.

Joh. 11:42; Luk. 22:32; Joh. 17:9,11,15,21; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Rom. 8:33,34,35; Heb. 7:25; Eph. 5:30; Joh. 17:21,24; Col. 3:3; Joh. 5:24; 1 Joh. 3:14; Joh. 4:14; Joh. 7:39; Joh. 14:16; 1 Joh. 2:27; 1 Joh. 3:9; 1 Joh. 2:20,27; Rom. 8:14,17; 1 Joh. 5:18; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9; 2 Tim. 1:12; Matth. 7:24,25; Matth. 16:18; Luk. 8:15; 1 Joh. 2:19; Psalm. 51:10,11; Rom. 1:35; 2 Cor. 4:17; Joh. 16:33; 1 Joh. 5:4; Jam. 4:7; 1 Joh. 5:18; 1 Joh. 2:1,2; Rom. 6:12; 1 Joh. 3:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:38,39.