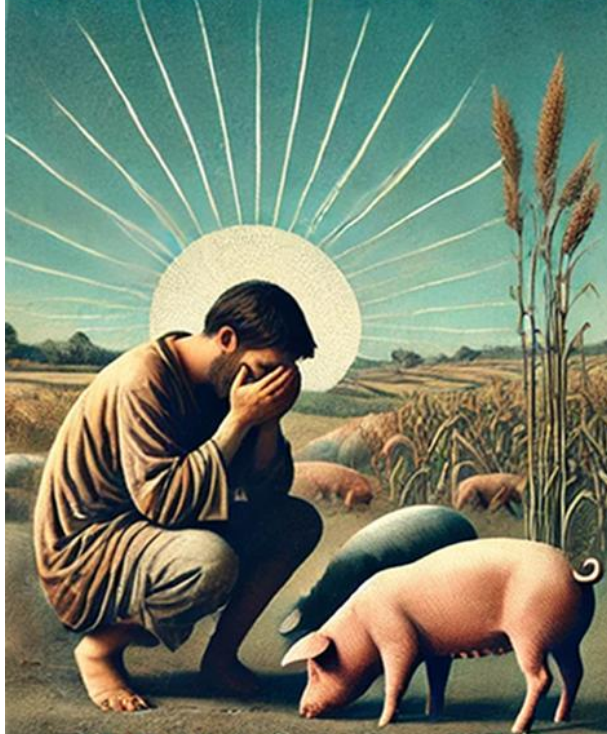


THE SOUL'S HUMILIATION



THOMAS HOOKER

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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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CHAP. I. INTRODUCTION

Luk. 15:14-18, &c.

14. *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.*

15. *And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*

16. *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

17. *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants in my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?*

18. *I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned, &c.*

That a poor sinner might come and be partaker of the precious merits and death of our Savior and receive comfort thereby.

There are two things considerable. First, a fitting and enabling of the soul for Christ. Secondly, an implantation of the Soul into Christ. For howsoever

it is true there is abundance of mercy, and infinite merit in Christ: yet unless the Soul be fitted and enabled by the hand of faith, to lay hold upon Christ; he shall never receive comfort from him, be his necessities never so many, and his misery never so grievous. Therefore John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way, that all those mountains of pride might be laid low, and all the ditches filled up, and all the crooked things might be made straight and all rough things might be made smooth, that there might be a way for Christ. The meaning is this: The heart of a man is the high way wherein Christ comes. Now there are mountains of pride and untoward stoutness of heart, and many windings and turnings, and devices which the heart hath, by reason of many lusts that are in it. This fitting and preparing, is nothing else but the taking away of that knotty gnarliness of the heart, and that pride, and all such cursed corruptions, that the door may be set open, and the heart made ready that the King of glory may come in.

The heart being thus fitted and enabled, then follows humiliation: for the breaking of the heart, is not all that God hath to do with a poor sinner, though the Lord wound the heart of a sinner, and run him through, yet the heart will be starting aside, and will not go out to Christ. Therefore I shall now speak of humiliation of the spirit, yet before I come to it, give me leave to lay open two passages.

1. The necessity of this work, it must needs be.
2. The nature of this work.

First, it is necessary that the soul should be thus humbled; for humiliation pares away all self-sufficiency from the soul by compunction: the Lord breaks the heart, and wearies it with sin, and then the soul will be no more drunk, nor loose, nor vain, no more foolish, nor dissembling, nor hating of God's servants, nor use no more false weights; by humiliation the Lord

plucks away the confidence in a man's privileges, and all his good performances, and all his duties, by which he is ready to shelter himself, and by which he thinks to get some succor and comfort to his own soul. Now as sin shall not rule in the heart, so the Lord will make the sinner see, that whatsoever he hath and doth, can never help him, except the Lord Jesus come down from heaven by his mighty power. For the further opening of these, you must know that there are these two main lets, which hinder the coming of faith into the soul, and which keep a man from believing in Christ, that Christ may have possession of him.

First, when the soul is taken up with a secure course, and rests itself well apaid in his own practices, and therefore it never seeth any need of a change, nor never goes out for a change: now while he lives thus, and blesseth himself in his sin, it is impossible that ever the soul should receive faith, or ever by the power of faith repair to Christ upon these terms: forever where faith comes it works a change, all the old things are done away, and become new, he is new in heart and life; now the secure sinner that seeth no need of a change, will never see need of faith, nor labor for it; and if the Ministers of God bid such a man to leave his sin, and to pray in his family, and forsake his sinful practices, and to sanctify the Lord's day, and take up new courses, he thinks they bid him to his loss: now by that time the Lord hath taken away this let, and burdened the soul marvelous extremely, and saith, is it well that you live in drunkenness, and in covetousness, in cheating, in lying and the like, then take your sins and get you down to hell with them; thus the Lord is forced to break the heart: then a poor sinner begins to see where he is, and now he saith, and is this true, then I am the most miserable creature under heaven, and except I be otherwise, it had been good for me if I had never been borne; by this time the soul sees need

of a change: Therefore as they said, Men and brethren what shall we do, we have been thus and thus, but if we rest here it will be our ruin forever, oh what shall we do. Thus the soul comes to a restless dislike of itself, and saith, I must either be otherwise or else I am but a damned man forever.

When the soul is thus resolved that it must of necessity change, and there is no dallying with the Lord nor with himself, and this heart must be altered, and this course must be amended. When it sees that it must change, it begins to improve all means to see if he can possibly do it by his own strength, and by his means using, as if the soul did say, good Lord cannot my wit compass it, and cannot my prayers work it, and though I am a sinful wretched man, yet I will be no more drunk, nor unclean, nor the like: but by prayer, and hearing, and fasting, I will labor to mend all in this kind; will not these duties do the deed? This very resting in a man's self-sufficiency doth marvelously cross and hinder the work of Faith, for this is the nature of Faith; It goes out of it self, and fetcheth a principle of life, grace, and power from another. The soul apprehends itself miserable, and it falls upon the arm of God's mercy, and merely goes out to God for succor. Now for a man to fetch all from without, and yet to seek for sufficiency from himself, these two cannot stand together, they are professedly cross one to another; and therefore after the Lord hath made the soul see an absolute necessity of a change, and now the soul seeth an utter impossibility in himself, to change or alter himself, then he is content to go to Christ for grace and power. Thus Humiliation pares away all a man's privileges and all his hearing and praying &c. not, that a man must use these no more, but he must not rest upon them for strength to help and succor himself withal. As it is with the graft. 1. it must be cut off from the old stock 2. it must be pared and made fit for the implantation into another. So the Soul being cut off from sin: then

humiliation pares it, and makes it for the ingrafting into Christ. Thus you see this work is absolutely necessary.

But what is this humiliation of heart. It is thus much. When the soul upon search made despairs of all help from itself: he doth not despair of God's mercy, but of all help from himself and submits himself wholly to God, the soul strikes sale and falls under the power of Jesus Christ and is content to be at his disposing,

In this description let me discover these three particular passages.

1. First, the sinner that is now wounded and apprehensive of his own misery, makes out for some succor and remedy elsewhere, but he doth not go to Christ.

2. Secondly when he used all means that he can, he seeth no help at all, nay, he utterly despairs of finding any succor from himself or from the creature.

3. Then the soul despairing of all succor in himself, it falls down at the throne of grace, and saith, if the Lord will damn him he may, and if he will save him he may which as yet he cannot see, but he resolves to wait upon God for mercy; he submits himself to the Lord and is content to be at his disposing.

For the first part of the description that the soul seeketh for remedy elsewhere and not from Christ. This is expressed here in the 15th ver. of this Chapter. The Prodigal would needs have his portion, and he would not ever be a slave in his fathers family: well he had his portion and gone he is, and he hath spent all, and when all was gone there fell a great famine in the Land; and, what did he then? He would not now riot anymore as he had done, because poverty pinched him in this kind, but he turns good husband, and is content to use any means for his maintenance, and he would make

hard shift before he would go home to his father, and therefore he joins himself to a Citizen of the Country, &c.

This prodigal is a true picture of every poor distressed sinner that hath rioted away his time, yet at last when the venom of sin begins to scorch and pierce his soul, and he is famished for want of God's favor and the wrath of God pursues him, and a desperate sorrow seizeth upon his heart, and he is wearied and burdened and tired with his sin, and sees that he hath no help, he sets all his wits to work to see if he can tell which way to succor himself in these his grievances, and though he will not take up any base courses as he had done, but proves a good husband and useth all means to succor himself. So the doctrine from hence is this.

CHAP. II. THE FIRST DOCTRINE.

A sinner naturally in his trouble and distress seeks for succor (not from God nor from Christ) but from himself and from his own abilities.

So that the soul being in this great extremity of heart by reason of his sin, he dares not, nay he will not meddle with sin anymore but it betakes itself to hearing and praying, and to other duties ordinary and extraordinary, and by these he thinks to be absolutely succored. I confess the best of God's Saints must use these means, they must hear and pray, and fast, but they must not rest upon these; it was very fit that the Prodigal should labor for his living, but not that he should not withal seek home to his father for relief. So, it is requisite that we should hear and pray and fast, but these should not keep us from a father. It is the nature of man naturally to make of means a Savior to himself: he scrapes for some succor and, and rests upon some rotten endeavors, and because he can hear and pray and fast, he thinks this is enough to save him, he uses not these to bring him to Christ but rests on them.

It is a natural thing engrafted into all mankind since the fall of Adam: as you may see by the Apostle; because the Jews were scrambling for life and happiness from the works of the Law, therefore they could not attain it, but the Gentiles which did not seek it from the works of the Law, they got it, as if he had said, when they saw their anguish and trouble then they fell upon these duties of hearing and praying and fasting, and they thought that was enough in Conscience, and here they took up their stand, this is to cleave to a man of the Country. And the same Apostle saith, they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, sought to establish themselves in their own righteousness, &c: this they would have, here they would rest, and here they would die. In common experience we may see it: take a poor sinner that hath been soundly awakened in the sense of his own vileness, what is the ground of his hope? Oh saith he, now the world is well amended with me, and I have not been drunk so many years, and I have performed these and these duties, as if that would serve the turn: this is to look for happiness from a man's own duties. It is with a poor sinner as it was with Ephraim, when Ephraim saw his wound and his sickness, then he went to Ashur and to king Jareb, that is to the king of contention or advocate, but he did not heal their wound. Therefore the lamenting Church saith Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses neither will we say anymore to the work of our hands, yow are our gods: as if they had said, we made king Ashur, and the King of Egypt our gods, and we thought we might have hired help from them; but now we see there is no help in them: as it was in that temporal distress, so it is in this spiritual affliction of the soul. When the soul seeth his wound and his sin before him to condemn him, and misery prepared to plague him, and he hath (as it were) a little peep-hole into hell, the soul in this distress sends over to prayer and hearing and holy services, and thinks

by his wits and duties or some such like matters to succor itself, and it begins to say my hearing and my prayer, &c. will not these save me? Thus the soul in conclusion rests in their duties. Though these duties be all good, honorable and comfortable, yet they are no gods at all able of themselves to save us, but they are the ordinances of God that lead us to God, yet they cannot give salvation to any that rests upon them. It is the nature of a sinful heart to make the means as meritorious to salvation; yet mistake me not, these duties must be had and used, but still a man must not stay here. A man will use his bucket, but he expects water from the well: these means are the buckets, but all our comfort, and all our life and grace is only in Christ; if you say your bucket shall help you, you may starve for thirst if you let it not down into the well for water: so, though you brag of your praying, and hearing, and fasting, and of your alms, and building of hospitals and your good deeds, if none of these bring you to a Christ, and if these are not means to settle you on a Christ, you shall die for thirst, though your works were as the works of an Angel.

But why doth the soul seek for succor from itself, and will not go out to Christ?

[*Reas. 1.*] The first reason is, because the sinner (being conceived not yet to be in Christ) out of the guilt of sin dares not be so proud as to think that he shall have any favor at God's hands, for the sinner being now overwhelmed with the body of death and the guilt of his abominations galling of him, and being starved by reason of his sins, and still his sins being before his eyes, and to this day having gotten no assurance of the pardon of them, and God being angry against him, his heart shrinks in consideration of the eternal wrath of the Almighty against him; and he saith, because I have despised justice and abused mercy, how dare I appear before

God's justice; for fear justice consume me and execute vengeance upon me, and therefore the soul dares not yet venture to come before God: and hence it is that the soul saith, can I not take some course of myself and do it without Christ? Must I needs go and hear? Certainly the word will condemn: and must I needs go and confess my sins? What shall I, a rebel go before a Prince? To come before him, it is the next way to be executed and have some plague thrown upon me. As a malefactor will devise some shift that he may not come before the judge; so while the soul may have some succor from himself and the staff is in his own hand there is some hope, and he would willingly do anything for himself; but for the soul to have salvation out of his own reach, and to put the staff out of his own hand and to hang his salvation upon God's good pleasure, whose love and mercy (as yet) he was never persuaded of. Oh this is very hard, and the heart is marvelous shy and careful in this; and it is with the heart in this kind as Rabshakeh said to the people of Israel; If you say to me, is not that he whose altars you have broken down, &c. Thus he labored to pluck away the hearts of this people from trusting in the Lord: The soul in this kind sometimes shakes and shrinks in the apprehension of his own vileness, and saith as this wretch did, have you offended him? And do you look for any succor from him? This argument was very peevish and keen and yet false, for they were the altars of Idols, but the soul saith against itself and marvelous truly: when a Minister would persuade a man to go to heaven for mercy, the soul begins to reason thus with itself, and saith, shall I repair to God? Oh that's my trouble, is not he that great God whose justice, and mercy, and patience I have abused? And is not he the great God of heaven and earth, that hath been incensed against me? Oh, with what face can I appear before him, and with what heart can I look for any mercy from him;

I have wronged his justice, and can his justice pardon me? I have abused his mercy, and can his mercy pity me? What, such a wretch as I am; If I had never enjoyed the means of mercy, I might have had some plea for myself, but oh, I have refused that mercy, and have trampled the blood of Christ under my feet; and can I look for any mercy? No, no, I see the wrath of the Lord incensed against me, and thats all that I look for: the soul rather desires the mountains to fall upon him, that he may never appear before God. Nay, I have observed this in experience. In the horror of heart, the soul dare scarce read the Word of God, for fear he should read his own neck verse, and he dare not pray, for fear his prayers be turned into sin, and so increase his Judgment: thus the soul out of the guilt of sin dare not seek out to the Lord, and therefore it will use any shift to help itself without going to God.

[*Reas. 2.*] The second Reason, why the soul dare not seek out to Christ for succor, it is this, because the mysteries of life and salvation through Christ are not yet made known to the soul, the soul being yet considered, as barely broken and wearied with the burden of sin. Let me say as the Apostle doth, the new and living way in Christ, is not yet revealed to the soul, and it is not yet set open before his eyes, though it shall be revealed, taking it as in this precise consideration only prepared for Christ. Nay, those supernatural truths, namely, that the soul must live by another man's life, and be made holy by another's holiness, and be sanctified by another's spirit, these are not yet revealed; these do exceed our corrupt nature. Adam after his fall could not have found out this way, if the Lord had not revealed it. Had not the Lord Jesus Christ that came from the bosom of his Father, made this bosom truth known, we had never been acquainted with it; therefore the soul cannot come to Christ upon these terms. As our Savior saith, No man

hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven. Now, this poor distressed sinner as yet guilty of his sin, and yet not seeing a way revealed, and not able to ascend into this heavenly mystery, because it seeth no better way, it will betake itself to these duties, that may be done by his own strength without seeking to Christ.

[*Reas. 3.*] Because for a man to be able, and to have a power and principle of life, to perform duties of himself, and to please God of himself, it was once possible in the time of man's innocence; Adam had it, and he might have procured God's favor, and have kept the Law, and have been blessed by the Law, because the Lord had given him a stock in himself, and made him able to do it of himself, and we retain thus much of Adams nature, we are loath to live of another, but we would fain be as able to do duties as Adam was. And it is with every natural man as it was with Samson: he had once Sacramental hair, and therefore when any temptation came, he did shake himself, and was able to break strong cords, and to overcome his enemies, and when his hair was gone, he went out as at other times, and thought to do as he had done, but the Spirit of God was gone from him: So, because Adam had power of himself to yield exact obedience and to please God, a natural man makes an offer of this still, and would be doing, and he goes out and shakes himself, and saith, cannot my wit, and my prayers, and my good meanings, and my privileges save me, and satisfy divine Justice, must the guilt of sin still lie upon me. Thus the soul would give content to God by his own strength; as it is with a man that hath been a rich Chapman, and hath had a fair stock, but is now decayed, it is hard to bring down the pride of this man's heart, he is loath to be a Journey-man again, he will be trading though it be but for pins: So, the Lord put a stock into Adams hand, and he turned bankrupt; and yet we will be trading here for a company of

poor beggarly duties, dead prayers, and cold hearings, and we think this will be sufficient. This is the disposition of the soul naturally: So, the issue of the point is thus much; if the soul through the guilt of sin dare not appear before God, and it knows not yet how to come to God, in, and through a Mediator; and in regard of Adams innocence, it needed not to go out to another, for any power and strength, hence it is that the soul will invent any way, and take up any course rather than come to Christ, but all the former truths are true, and therefore still this turns the heart to deal with God in this manner.

[*Use. 1.*] Here you see the reason, why that opinion of some men prevails so much, and why they rest upon their own good works, because their hearts give such entertainment to it: it is old Adams nature, and every man seeks it, but if ever God draw you home to the second Adam Christ Jesus, he will draw you from the first Adam. You wonder to see a company of poor wretches, build all their comfort upon what they can do, and they will patter over a few prayers, it may be in their beds too; it is easy to consider it. Nature makes a man thus give way to himself in it, and no wonder though his heart is prepared for this way when it comes.

But for instruction for ourselves. Doth the soul seek out everywhere before it come to the Lord God? And to the Lord Jesus Christ? And will the Lord Jesus spare, and succor a poor sinner when he comes? Then hear, and see, and admire at the goodness of the Lord, that ever the Lord should vouchsafe to give entertainment to a poor sinner, when he hath made so many outs. If he come home never so late, the Lord receives him when he comes. Is not this mercy, that when we have been roving and ranging, here and there, and we have coasted this way, and that way; and never thought of Christ, nor mercy, nor of his blood? I say, is not this admirable mercy, that

the Lord Christ, should receive us when we come, yea though we come to him last of all? He may deal with us justly, as he did with the people in Jeremiah; Where are thy God's (saith the Lord) that thou hast made thee, let them arise if they can help thee in the time of thy trouble, for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, oh Judah; The people made Idols and served them, and when the time of trouble came, and all their gods failed them, then they come for succor to the Lord, and would fain shelter themselves under his wings. Nay, saith the Lord, go to your gods that you have loved, and let them help you, as if he had said unto them, do you come to me in the day of your distress, have you honored and worshipped your Idols, must they have all the honor, and I have all the burden, get you home to your Idols, and let them succor you. Oh, think of it and wonder. So the Lord may justly deal with us; we that rested here upon our good prayers, and our hearings, and fasting's, and yet when all these prevail not, but the guilt of sin remains, and wounds the conscience still, and at last we are forced to look up to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to say, except the Lord Jesus Christ's blood purge these filthy hearts of ours we shall never have help, and good Lord be merciful to us. Did you rest in these, because there was no God in Israel, and no mercy in the Almighty, that you have rested upon your privileges? Go then (may the Lord say) do you come to me to be saved and succored? Go to your meritorious works now, let them cheer your hearts, and pardon your sins and comfort you, for I will not succor you at all. It were just with the Lord to deal thus with us, because we give him the leavings, and come last to him. But here is the wonder of mercies, that whensoever we come, he casts us not of, yet if we would but come to him, and leave these broken reeds, he would receive us: Yet return to me (saith the Lord): as if the Lord had said, you say that all that you can do will not

succor you, you have plaid the adulterers with many lovers, yet at last come home to me, and believe in me, and settle your hearts upon my mercy, and whatsoever your weakness and rebellions have been, I will save and succor you.

[*Use. 2.*] The second use is for Exhortation, seeing it is so, that we are ready to seek for succor and relief from ourselves, then let this make us watchful against this deceit of our hearts. Yet, I do not dishonor these ordinances, but I curse all carnal confidence in these. You cleave to these poor beggarly duties, and (alas) you will perish for hunger: the devil knows this full well, and therefore he will sink your hearts forever. Judas did so, and hell is full of hearers, and dissemblers, and carnal wretches, that never had hearts to seek unto Christ in these duties, and to see the value of a Savior in them. The devil slides into the heart this way unsuspected and unseen, because he comes under a color of duties exactly performed; but now in that the devil labors to cheat us of heaven and salvation, we should be so much more watchful. This is the stone that thousands have stumbled at, yea many that have gone a great way, in the way of life and salvation. For howsoever, the soul that is truly broken cannot be satisfied without a Christ, yet it may be much hindered from coming to Christ: but those that are not soundly broken and wrought upon by the work of contrition, they are daubed up, and come to ruin and destruction forever. When the soul lies under the hand of God, and under his stroke, and a man seeth his drunkenness, and his base contempt of God, and his grace, and all his sins are presented before him? Oh, then he voweth and promiseth to take up a new course, and every man will mend one, and he begins to approve himself in the reformation of the evils committed, and then he thinks he need do no more, and now the soul saith, well now I see the justice of God

is provoked, and I see now what sin is, and what the danger of it is, I will have no more drunkenness, now I will be a sober man, and now no more scoffing and scorning at those that go to hear the word; I will attend upon the good word of God myself, and by this time he thinks thus? What can you say against me? What can I do more, to heaven I must go; all this is but a man's self. Its true, this is the way, and these are the very means, but all these cannot procure the pardon of one sin, if he go no further. We have many such trials: I have known many that have done great works, but never had a thought of Christ, and never expected salvation from him, and thus they fed upon the husks: and when the devil saith, you pray, and hear, and do duties; so did Judas and many others that are now in hell, then the heart seeth his vileness, and he is driven to a desperate despair, so that no Minister under heaven is able to comfort him, but he goes away with the husk of duties, but Christ who is the substance of all, and the pith of a promise is forgotten, and a Christ in hearing, and a Christ in prayer is not regarded, and therefore he famisheth for hunger.

Now see the success that the Prodigal found, the case is clear, he found no relief at all. No man gave unto him: his hungry stomach was not refreshed, and his wants were relieved; so that now the soul of the poor man sinks unrecoverably in his misery. And that he doth thus, consider two phrases, first in the 16th ver., no man gave unto him. Not, that no man gave him husks, for he that fed the swine might have fed himself, but the meaning is, no man gave him man's meat, if he might have had man's meat, though never so poor and mean, he would have been content, but no man did give him, and hence follows the phrase in the 17th ver., How many hired servants in my fathers house have bread enough, and I die for hunger. It was not because he had no husks, but because he had no bread, as if he had said,

perish I shall, I see no succor; nay, I look for none, I may shuffle on here for a while, but if I stay here I am a dead man. This condition of the Prodigal, discovers the second passage in the description of Humiliation; So the Doctrine from hence is this:

CHAP. III. THE SECOND DOCTRINE.

The broken-hearted sinner finds no help; nay, he hath no hope to receive any help from himself in the matter of justification.

You see the ground of the point is clear: The Citizen relieved him not, but he gives himself as lost, and saith; I cannot help myself, and no man will succor me, and therefore I perish for hunger. This is the picture of a soul that is famished for want of the sense of God's favor, though he use means; and heareth, and prayeth, and fasteth; yet he finds no good, and no sound comfort in all these: not that a man must not use these means, but he must not rest upon these: a man must not think that his bucket can quench his thirst; but he fetcheth water from the fountain with it: So, these duties are as the bucket, a man may famish for all these duties, unless he go to the Fountain of Grace, and pardon, and mercy, and in the use of all these see a need of Christ, and go to God for a Christ by them; these means must be used, but these cannot be saviors of him; these means must be used to bring him to a Christ, yet they cannot save him without a Christ. What was spoken temporally to Ephraim, it is true of the Soul spiritually: When

Ephraim saw his wound, and his sickness, he went to Ashur and King Iarib, but they could not help him, nor cure his wound. It is true, this Text mainly aims at a temporal deliverance, but this may draw us to consider the success that a poor Soul finds in his duties, resting upon them. When a poor Soul is broken in the sight of his sin, and weary of it; he sends down to prayer, and hearing, and the like; but these cannot succor him without Christ: and therefore the Prophet Isaiah saith, Why lay you out your money for that which is not bread, &c. The Lord accounts the pains of his faithful servants good labor, and would not have them lay it out for that which is not bread. All the profits that may enrich a man, and all the honors that may advance a man; nay, all the privileges that a man hath; as Word, Sacraments, and Ordinances; and that a man is baptized, and hath often come to the Lord's Table; these come no farther than the very bare husk; if they go no farther, and have not an eye to their Savior; these are no true bread: the horror of heart cannot be quieted, nor his sins pardoned, barely by these duties doing: the meat of the Soul, is not the bare Word, nor the bare Sacraments; but a Christ in all these: this is the prop of the Soul: all the bare duties in the world cannot succor us, if we rest upon them, without justification through Christ.

The Apostle Paul, a learned Pharisee, and a man of an unblameable life, because he was a man of a good life, of the Tribe of Benjamin, and a Jew circumcised the eighth day; he thought to do great matters, and he thought he had done enough; he counted these his privileges, gain. What, learned Paul? Reverend Paul, unblameable Paul; What, not he go to Heaven? He accounted these his greatest gain; as if he would lay down enough upon the nail to purchase Heaven to himself: but these were so far from saving of him, that he found them to be loss. Thus you see that a distressed sinner

finds himself helpless, and hopeless, in regard of any sufficient succor in himself, or the creature, if he go no further than the very duty.

Now the Soul finds that there is no saving succor to be had in these duties barely: I say, he comes to see it by these three means.

First, from his own experience that forceth him to confess it.

Secondly, from the examples of others.

Thirdly, The greatness of the evil that lies upon him, makes him see an utter inability to receive any good from that which he doth.

1. First, From his own experience. Though he thought to take up a new course, and to perform holy duties, and thought that without all question these would save him, yet he finds now that these will not do the deed, he hath no saving good in these; and that appears by these three particulars. First, He seeth that the guilt of sin still remains, and the justice of God, being unsatisfied still pursues him, though he pray, and hear, and perform many duties, as the Lord told the people, when they were sharking for their own comfort, and they thought to give God content by their new courses. Yet the Lord tells them, Though thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much soap, and though thou use all means of reformation, yet thy sins are sealed up, and thy iniquity is marked before me. It is with a poor sinner as the Psalmist saith of himself; Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I fly from thy presence, if I ascend up into heaven thou art there, if I lie down in hell thou art there, if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even thither shall thy right hand lead me, &c. So, let a poor sinner go where he will, and do what he can, the guilt of sin will ever be with him, it will lie down, and rise up, and walk with him in the way. His sins remain unpardoned, and the wrath of God is not appeased: and hence it is that all his prayers, are but as so many indictments against

him, and he dare not read the word for fear he should read his own damnation. Nay, at every Sermon that he hears, he seeth more vileness in himself, and every Sacrament that he receives, increaseth (not his comfort but) his horror, and he thinks thus with himself, good Lord, I have taken my bane this day for I come unpreparedly, and the Lord knows, what an unfaithful, and unbelieving heart I have.

2. Secondly, as the guilt of sin cannot be removed by all his duties, so his conscience cannot be quieted by all that he doth; if his heart be thoroughly pierced by the Sword of the Law, still conscience calls upon him, and quarrels with him, and takes exceptions against him in the best of his duties, so far they are from yielding any satisfaction to God, or from bringing any peace to his conscience; if he rest upon the bare performance of them. I speak of a broken-hearted sinner: for the conscience is now Eagle eyed, it was full of film, and scales before, but now it is open, and Eagle eyed, and can spy, all his weaknesses, and pick matter of disquiet, even in the best of all his duties that are done. The Soul thought them very good payment, yet now the heart is touched, and conscience is awakened, and tells him of his barrenness, and deadness, and roving thoughts, when he doth pray, and how insufficient, he is to pray, and therefore he dare not pray with his Family, and conscience saith to him, you have formerly contemned prayer: and now you cannot pray. And when the Soul comes into the congregation, there Conscience notes him, and when he goes home, Conscience saith thus unto him, how dead were you, and how unreverently did you attend to the Word, and how unwilling was your heart to be in subjection to the Word, thus Conscience becomes God's Serjeant, and saith, doest thou think that these prayers will save thee; Nay, they are rather a means to condemn thee, so heartless, so cold, and so dead hearted thou art in them; and is this hearing

sufficient to save thee: Nay, will not the Lord curse thee for thy weak performance of these duties? Now the distressed Soul comes to a stand with itself, and he seeth so much weakness in his duties, that he almost leaves off all, saying: I had as good not go to the Word at all, for I profit not by it; and I had as good not pray at all, as pray thus deadly, and untowardly: thus the Lord drives the Soul out of himself; and when Conscience thus picks quarrels with him, and saith; Will prayer, and hearing, and these duties so meanly performed, save you? Nay, may not God justly confound you for them? It is admirable mercy that God did not confound you in hearing, and strike you dead in praying! And then Conscience calls him in question for his old sins, and saith; If God may condemn thee for these duties, and for these prayers? Then what may God do for thy old drunkenness, and railing at good men, and good means? As the Apostle saith, If our conscience condemn us; God is greater than our Consciences, and knoweth all things: so the Soul saith, I know thus much by myself, but God knows more.

3. Thirdly, as the guilt of sin cannot be removed, nor Conscience quieted, merely in the performance of duties, if the Conscience be truly enlightened: so in the last place, the sin that hath taken possession in the heart cannot be subdued by the power of any performance that he doth. I speak still of one that is not yet engrafted into Christ: rebel against his sin he will; but kill it, and subdue it, that he cannot: and hence it is, that the Lord lets in upon the Soul a great many infirmities, and a swarm of weaknesses that are present with the Soul: and so he seeth an utter inability in himself to help himself against them; the one of these two things befalls him. If he be a man of mean parts, and small gifts, he seeth himself so weak, and so unprofitable under all means, that his Soul almost sinks down in desperate discouragement; and when he gets nothing by all the duties that he doth, he

falls out with himself, and pineth almost to desperation. And if he be a man of great parts, and gifts, and learning, and hath wisdom to conceive of things; the Lord suffers many corruptions to fall upon him: and when he comes to humble himself before God, he saith, I am able to discourse of this, and that; and I can hear, and pray; but (oh) this heart of mine: a man had as good move a mountain, as move my heart; this hard heart will not stir, nor be broken under all, and helped against these as it should be. Now, the Soul upon these terms is even content to leave off all: and it befalls the heart in this case, as it did Hagar: When her bottle of water was spent, she cast the child under a tree, and sat a far off, because she would not see the child die; so it is with the Soul. When the bottles of these Saints, and scanty duties are done, the soul sits down in discouragement, and saith, Good Lord, it will never be, my Soul shall never be accepted, and my sins will never be pardoned; and the heart begins to reason thus with himself, and saith; I have had as good means as ever any poor creature had, and many gracious friends have counseled me, and yet the guilt of my sins is ever before mine eyes; and my Conscience is not yet quieted: Nay, these sins, this blind mind, and this hard heart will not be subdued; but the Lord Jesus Christ can do more than thou, and the world too. The Lord will make thee see that thou and the world can do nothing, that Christ may take away the guilt of sin, and quiet thy Conscience, and subdue thy corruptions for thee: thus much he seeth from his own experience.

The second passage is this; as his own experience makes the Soul confess that there is no hope of good in himself; so the example of others doth confirm a broken hearted sinner in this; that all the creatures in the world, and all the duties under Heaven without Christ, cannot purchase salvation to the Soul; because the Soul now seeth, and considers in the Scriptures, that

many thousands have had all these privileges, and done many duties, and yet come short of perfection. Many reprobates have had these privileges as well as God's people; and the Soul thinks thus with itself: If beauty, or honors, or riches, might have purchased eternal life; then Pharaoh, Absalom, and Nebuchadnezzar, should have been accepted of God: therefore, What have I that many thousands have not had? And, What do I that reprobates have not done, and yet for ought I know, it never did them good? Isaac was circumcised, and so was Ishmael too; Abel offered Sacrifice, so did Cain too; and the stony ground received the Word with joy, and many there were that waited upon God in the use of his Ordinances, as you may see in the Prophet Isaiah. Ahab fasted, and Judas repented, and yet he is a devil now in hell this day: And the Prophet David saith, If the Lord should mark what is done amiss, who could abide it? There was enough in David's prayers to condemn him; and if all these did thus, and much more than I can do; Then why should I think to find more help in my prayers than they did: thus the Soul seeth that God's people never had Justification from any privileges that they enjoyed, nor from any duties that they did, without relying on Christ.

Thirdly, the greatness of the evil which now the Soul seeth, and the desperate misery wherein it is, is so great, that now it finds an utter inability, that all the creatures under heaven should ever remove the evil of it. For the soar that is made, and the wound that is given by sin, is broader than all the salve (that the creatures can apply) is able to cover. The Word, Sacraments, Prayer, and duties cannot reach the evil that lies upon the heart in this particular; and this is considerable; the means that must comfort and quiet the heart in distress, must be able to bear the wrath of God, and to take away the venom and poison of the wrath of the Almighty. Now, the Soul

seeth that no creature can do this; no creature can beat back God's wrath but it will fall; and hence it is that the Lord saith, he hath laid salvation upon one that is mighty; there are mighty corruptions, and mighty indignation, and mighty guilt, and therefore the Lord hath laid salvation upon the mighty. It must be more than a creature, that must bear or remove the wrath of the Creator; As the text saith, There is no other name under heaven, whereby you can be saved but only by Christ. Prayer saith, there is no salvation in me; and the Sacraments and Fasting say, there is no salvation in us; there is salvation in no other but in Christ. The other are subservient helps, not absolute causes of salvation; As the holy Prophet Jeremiah, showing the people's desperate condition and their misery therein, saith, In vain is salvation hoped for from the mountains; he had said before in the 22nd ver., Return again, oh, disobedient children and I will heal your rebellions, and they answered, behold we come Lord for thou art the Lord our God, and in vain is salvation hoped for from the mountains: By salvation in the mountains is meant the Idols set up in the hills, which the poor people worshipped, and thought they were able to succor them, but in the day of trouble, they said, we come Lord, for in vain is salvation hoped for from the mountains. So, if thou trust in thy praying, and hearing, and good works, though thou hadst a mountain of them, they can do thee no good, unless with the eye of faith, thou lookest upon Christ for acceptance: but in the Lord our God is salvation for evermore. Then gather up all: if the Soul seeth by experience, that no good will come by these, and if examples show so much, and if the greatness of the evil, show that it is impossible for any comfort or pardon to be brought home to the Soul; barely by these means, then the heart concludes thus, and saith; these will not do the deed, I may have all these privileges, and perform all these duties, and yet salvation

is not in these; if I trust in them, there is no pardon in them, and no hope of redemption from them saith the Soul. The Soul doth not despair of all good in Christ, but the Lord is compelled (as I may say with reverence) to weary us from this confidence in ourselves, and from seeking any succor from ourselves, that he may make us go to Christ.

[*Use 1.*] This is a word of Exhortation. You see that a poor Soul finds nothing, and he hopes for no saving succor from any means enjoyed, or duties performed, therefore we ought to have our desires quickened, that since we see the way, and the duty required, we must not rest upon anything here below. Since our hearts must be brought to this, and we must not rest upon the bare performance of holy duties, (though I do not dishonor these duties, but only speak against resting upon them) Oh, therefore strive to come unto this, it will make you ready for the riches of God's mercy and goodness in Christ Jesus. Let us have our hearts raised up from our own bottoms, and let us pluck down the foundations that we have had in privileges, or any service done by us at any time. This is that which above all things we must do; all the Saints of God have found this, from day today, after search made, then why should we seek for succor from these; I say, we must not neglect these duties, but we must not rest upon them. Be persuaded to pluck off the handle of hope, from of anything that we do, or any privilege that God gives us. Let us do what we may, but yet go beyond all that we can do in this case; when your hearts are hankering after these crazy holds, stay them, and deal by your hearts, as the Lord sometimes did with the people of Judah. In their distress, they did not go to the Lord, but they went to Egypt, and Nile, and therefore the Lord saith unto them: What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink down the waters of Nile? &c. When they were thus ranging for their own relief in the time of their

trouble, the Lord (as it were) calls after them, and saith, you will down to Egypt? What have you to do there: Deale so by your own Souls, when thou findest thine heart hammering help from itself, and catching it out of the fire, thou seest thy sins, and art troubled; and now to quiet all, thou wilt hear, and pray, and perform duties; and thus thou thinkest to forge comfort out of thine own shop; therefore call upon thy own heart, and say: what hast thou to do to rest upon these broken staves, upon thy praying, and hearing, and professing; these, if not accompanied with faith in Christ's merits; will lay thee in the dust, and if thou makest God's of them, the Lord will pluck them away. Judas prayed, and preached, and heard, and received the Sacraments too, and yet he is a devil in hell this day, and except thou have more than he had, thou wilt be no better than he was: and therefore think thus with thyself; what have I to do to stand here in these duties? I may be deluded by these, but saved and comforted by them I cannot be, therefore use these I will, but rest upon them I will not. If I could look up to heaven, and speak to Abraham, and Paul, and David; and say, how were you saved; they would all make answer, and say, oh, away to the Lord Christ, it is he that saved us, or else we had never come here; and he will save you too, if you fly to him. Therefore (brethren) bring back your hearts from these, and dream not to receive any saving succor from what you have, or, what you do, unless you rely on Christ.

But, me thinks I hear some say; Oh, it is marvelous difficult, and hard; we hang upon every hedge, and we are ready to think that it is enough, if we can but take up a task in holy duties; How shall we pluck our hearts from resting upon them?

[*Ans.*] For the answer to this question; suffer me to answer two things. First, I will show the means whereby we may find all these hopeless, and

helpless resting upon them. Secondly, I will show when these means drive the heart truly to despair of all succor in them,

Now, that we may find these means to be so to us, as they are in themselves, and that our Souls may be able to say, It is true; these are the holy Ordinances of God, but it is in vain to expect any salvation, or justification from them alone. I say, the means are mainly four, and I will handle them something largely; because, if I be not deceived, here is the main set of a Christian; and herein appears the root of old Adam; we will not part with ourselves: the means are four.

First, consider seriously with thyself, and be convictingly settled, and persuaded, of the inconceivable wretchedness of thy natural condition. If thou canst but see this thoroughly, it will make thee see how vain it is to look for any succor from thyself; labor to see the depth of thine own misery because of thy sin, and to see how thou hast sunk thyself into such a desperate gulf of misery; that all the means under heaven will be short to succor thee, unless the Lord Jesus come down from heaven, and his infinite power be let down, to pluck up thy Soul from that misery wherein thou art: there thou liest, and there thou art like to perish forever, if God in mercy succor not. Now, that I may pull down the pride of every vile wretch; give me leave to discover the depth of our misery, in these four degrees.

First, consider that by nature thou art wholly deprived of all that ability, which God formerly gave thee to perform service. Whatsoever is borne of the flesh, is flesh: (saith our Savior) and therefore the Apostle Paul saith, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwells no good thing. All men by nature are flesh, and therefore think thus with thyself, and say, there was never good thought in my heart, nor good action done by me, for in me dwells no spiritual good thing: there may be moral good in us, but though

we are good morally, yet we are naught spiritually; howsoever you prank up yourselves, and think yourselves somebody, yet there is no spiritual good in you: unless God work upon your hearts; whatsoever you have thought, or done, is all in vain.

Secondly, thou art not only deprived of all spiritual ability, but thou art dead in trespasses and sins. What is that? A man is wholly possessed with a body of corruption, and the Spawn of all abomination hath overspread the whole man, and it leavens all the whole lump of body and mind. You often read this phrase in Scripture, but you perceive it not; as it is with a dead body being deprived of the Soul (which did quicken it, and enable it to do the works of a reasonable man) there comes a kind of senselessness, and after that, all noisome humors breed in the body; and all filthy vermin come from the body, and therefore a man may bury it, but he cannot quicken it anymore. Just so it is with the Soul that is deprived of the glorious presence of God's Spirit, and grace which Adam had in his innocence: For, look what the Soul is to the body, the same is the grace of God's Spirit to the Soul. When the Soul is deprived of God's Spirit, there follows a senseless stupidity upon the heart of a man; and all noisome lusts abound in the Soul, and take possession of it, and rule in it, and are fed there; and appear in a man's course in this kind. There is no carrion in a ditch, smells more loathsomely in the nostrils of man, then a natural man's works do in the nostrils of the Almighty: There are some works of a dead body; it rots, and stinks, and consumes: so, all the works of a natural man are dead works: nay, all the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. If you can but say over the Lord's Prayer, you think you do a great piece of work; but, though these are good in themselves, yet because they come from a corrupt heart, they are dead, and loathsome prayers in the nostrils of the Almighty;

as the wise man saith, He that turneth his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer is abominable. The prayers of a drunkard, of an adulterer, or of a blasphemer, are an abomination to the Lord, He cannot abide them; they are such unsavory, dead, stinking prayers, that the God of heaven abhors them: I would to God you were persuaded of it. I would have a man to reason thus with himself, and say; This is just my condition; How many gracious commands have I slighted, and despised? How many precepts have I trodden under my feet; therefore even my best prayers are abominable to the Lord; and if my prayers be such? Then what is my person, and all my sinful lusts? Look what we do with a dead body, we may pity him, and bury him, but we cannot quicken him: So, we may pity a poor drunkard, and pray for him, and bury him with tears; but we cannot save him: Nay, all the means in the world will not save him, except the Lord's mighty power come from heaven to work upon his heart.

Thirdly, the sentence of condemnation is now already past upon him, and one foot is in the pit all-ready. He that believes not, is condemned already: He doth not say, he may be condemned; but the sentence is already past upon him: his hard heart was never soundly broken, and his proud heart was never content to part with itself and all for Christ, and therefore he goes to endless torments for evermore. Every natural man is an unbeliever, and therefore stands under the sentence of condemnation: So that, unless the Lord be pleased to open his eyes, and to break his heart, and to draw him from that estate, he is like to perish, and go to hell forever.

Fourthly, and lastly, if this be not enough, he is not only deprived of all spiritual good, and dead in sin, and stands under the sentence of condemnation, though this were enough to lay out hearts low before the Lord. You see the sinner in the pit; But will you see him sinking into the

bottom? I am loath to speak the worst: Nay, I durst not have thought it, had not the Lord Christ spoken it in his Word. Therefore see what he saith, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil? Who was that? It was Judas. Why, what did he? What, a dead man, and a damned man, and a devil too: What will become of such a poor forlorn creature? It is said of Judas, that the Devil put it into his heart to betray Christ, out of a covetous humor to get money, and the Devil entered into Judas. Thus the devil puts it into his mind, and suggested it into his heart, to devise a way how to compass his end: nay, the Devil entered into Judas, not by a corporal possession; but by a spiritual kind of rule, which the devil did exercise over Judas, that is, when the devils counsel, and advise took place with Judas to betray his Master: this is not Judas his condition alone, but it is the condition of all men by nature. That, look as it said of the Apostles, They were inspired with the Spirit of God; and as it is said of all sound Christians. They are led by the Spirit of God: So, on the contrary, the wicked are led by, and with the spirit of the devil, He rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience: The devil casts wicked thoughts into their hearts, and carries them into the commission of those evils, which formerly he had suggested: The devil rules in them; he speaks by their tongues, and works by their hands, and thinks, and desires by their minds, and walks by their feet; The devil shall cast some of you in prison, saith Saint John. All men are naturally under the power of Satan, and therefore Saint Paul was sent to preach the Gospel that he might deliver them from the power of Satan to God. You think yourselves brave men, and you can despise the word, and the grace of God and abuse his Ministers: Alas, the devil hath power over you; as it is with a dead sheep, all the carrion Crowes in the Country come to prey upon it, and all base vermin breed and creep there:

So, it is with every poor natural sinful carnal creature under heaven; a company of devils, like so many carrion crows prey upon the heart of a poor creature, and all base lusts crawl, and feed, and are maintained in such a wretched heart. Now (brethren) think of all these, and search seriously. It is better to know this now, then to know it when there is no remedy: I say no more for pity; is it so with thee, and me, and all of us by nature? Then judge the case clearly, and pass the verdict. Doest thou think that a few faint cold prayers, and lazy wishes, and a little horror of heart can pluck a dead man from the grave of his sins, and a damned soul from the pit of hell, and change the nature of a devil to be a Saint? No, it is not possible; and know that the work of renovation, is greater than the work of thy creation; and there is no help in earth, either go to Christ, or there is no succor for thee. We can pity poor drunkards, and sorrow for them; but we are as able to make worlds, and to pull hell in pieces; as to pull a poor Soul from the paw of the devil. Nay, he is a devil, and a damned devil, as you have heard: if this were well considered; it would dash in pieces, all those carnal conceits of a great many, which make nothing of turning a devil to be a Saint.

Secondly, consider seriously the infirmity, and feebleness, and the emptiness of all means that we enjoy, and all duties that we do: it were argument enough, to persuade a poor broken-hearted sinner, not to rely upon a poor broken reed that will deceive him when he hath most need: therefore since they cannot succor us, let us draw our hearts from resting on them. This is a matter of great weight also; for the Soul being thus broken for sin, sets a great matter of excellency, and sufficiency in holy duties. Nay, people hang all their hope of eternal life, upon what they have, and what they can do. Come to a poor broken-hearted sinner, and tell him of his sin, that he stands guilty of. Mark what his reply is. I confess (saith he) it is

true; I have been so, and so, but the world is well amended, I meddle not with my sins, and I have reformed all those base courses. Nay, the Lord knows that my corruptions have cost me hot water, my heart hath been exceedingly vexed with them, I hope, I have had my hell here, and I shall no hell hereafter. Alas, poor wretch, is this the hook that upholds thy heart, and is this all the ground that thou goest upon? It is good that thou doest repent and amend, and reform thy ways, and blessed be God, for what he hath made thee able to do; but, this I must tell thee; If thy repentance, and reformation be all thy hope, and thou reliest upon them, as the Jews did upon their Legal righteousness: thy Soul and all will sink everlastingly; if thou look no further for help, for all these cannot procure thy acceptance before God in that great Day of accounts; nor give any satisfaction to God's Justice. Now the weakness of all these privileges, and duties, may appear in five particulars.

First, Thou canst not do that which God requires of thee, in all this that thou so much braggest of. Thou hast a hard heart, and canst not repent: If thou canst do what God requires of thee; then why doest thou not break that hard heart of thine. It is a heart that cannot repent. The Saints of God find this; though they see their sins, yet their hearts will not break. Thou art as able to rend the rocks in pieces, as to break thy hard heart. The good that I would do (saith Saint Paul), I cannot do, and the evil that I would not do, that I do. The Church complains of it, and saith? Why are our hearts hardened from thy fear. Therefore God may justly take exception against thee.

Secondly, Thou art not many times careful to do what thou canst; sometimes thou lettest pass opportunities; and if thou takest the occasions, it is marvelous slightly, and hoverly; though God have put power, and

ability into thy heart, to perform holy duties; so, that thou seest the occasions, yet thou slightest them over most shamefully. In many things we sin all, (saith the Apostle Saint James) and the Prophet Isaiah saith, There is none that calleth upon thy name, neither stirreth he up himself to take hold of thee. It was the common fault of the wise Virgins, they all slumbered: this befalls even those that are the most beloved of the Lord.

Thirdly, Do what thou canst in the best of all thy services; when thou comest to the highest pitch of the holiness of thy heart, and to the most ferventest prayers that ever thou didst make, and the most broken heart that ever thou haddest, and the most exactest way of godliness; I say in the very best of all thy duties; there is still some imperfection, and for which God may in exact rigor frown upon thee: now Judge this; can that service save thee in which there is enough to condemn thee? Thats impossible; in the best of thy duties there is enough to make God frown upon thee. And therefore the Priest that was to offer Sacrifice; Was to offer Sacrifice for the sin of his offering. Where we see that even the holiest service that ever the Minister puts up to God, and in the best care that ever he expressed, he hath need to offer Sacrifice for his offering: and so it is in all your services. You little think that God may condemn you, for your Prayers, and Sacraments, and Fasting's. But I will make it clear to you: for, this is a common rule, we all believe in part, we know in part, and we love in part, so that, though our hearts are renewed, yet they are but renewed in part, there is some hatred mixed with our love, some unbelief with our faith, and some ignorance with our knowledge: And as the Apostle saith, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that these two are contrary the one to the other. There is so much corruption in thee, so that when thou wouldest do good, thou canst not do it with that readiness that thou oughtest; thou canst

not do it with all the whole stream of thy heart. The Law requires, that we should love the Lord with all our hearts, and with all our strength; So that we have no hangings back in our duties; but in all our prayers, and hearings, and readings, there is flesh that opposeth the spirit, and corruption, that crosseth the work of grace. So that we are not able to perform any service, as God doth require of us: how backward are we to duties, and how weary in duties? What wandering thoughts? What privy pride? And what seeking of ourselves have we in them? You know nothing, if you know not this; but whether you know it or no, it is so. There is much corruption, opposing and thwarting the work of the Spirit; and therefore you had need pray for the repentance of your repentance; and to beg the pardon of all your prayers: and whereas you think, that you will repent, and amend, and hear, and pray, and the like; I tell you; that though it be commendable to pray, and hear; yet there is so much sin in your amendment, and repentance, and duties; that in exact justice God may curse all that you do, and execute his Judgments upon you for the same, therefore these cannot save you. He that heretofore hath profaned the will now Sanctifies it, and So he thinks all is quit; but I tell thee that in all thy sanctification of the same, thou hast need of a Savior.

Fourthly, Were it granted, and let it be supposed (which I confess will not, nay can never be) but Imagine it were so; that after God hath opened a man's eyes and broken his heart, he should never commit the least sin in all the world, and never have any failing in holy duties, nor any distemper in his Soul, though this cannot be; but Imagine it were so: that he did never sin after his repentance, yet even the sin of his nature which he brought into the world with him were enough to make the Lord take the advantage of him forever, and to cast away all that ever he doth as abominable from his presence. Our repentance, and our exactest performance of duties, though

we could do them even to the uttermost: it is a duty that we are bound to do, and the doing of that which we owe; can never satisfy for that which hath been done amiss by us: but our repentance of sin and our reformation is a duty which the gospel requires, and therefore will not satisfy for that which is done amiss before our conversion. As a Tenant that is run behind hand with his Land-Lord so many hundreds, and at last he begins to consider with himself what he hath done, and he brings the rent of the last half year when his lease is out, will this man think that he hath now satisfied his Land-Lord? If he should say, now Land-Lord, I hope you are contented, and all is answered and have fully paid all that is between you and me, you Land-Lord's would be ready to reply thus, and say, this satisfies me for the last half year past, but who pays for the odd hundreds: so it is with a poor soul, be it so that after those arrearages that thou hast run upon the score with God, after all thy contempt, and pride and all thy Stubbornness of Spirit, at last God opens thine eyes, and breaks thy heart, and gives thee a fight of, and sorrow for these sins; wilt thou come before the Lord, and say, Lord, I have repented of my sins past, and so I hope thy Justice is satisfied, and all accounts made even between thee and me, the Lord would answer, it is true thou dost repent and reform thyself, the gospel requires it, but who pays the odd thousands and who satisfies for thy old drunkenness, and for thy thousands of pride and Stubbornness, and all thy carelessness, and all thy contempt of God and his grace, and who satisfies for all thy blasphemies, and omissions of holy duties, and the like, the Lord may justly take the forfeit of thy Soul and proceed in Judgment against thee to thy destruction forever. Our repentance and amendment is a new duty which the Lord requires of us from the gospel, but it is not the paying of the old debt; for if we do not repent, we stand guilty of the breach of the gospel, and so

must satisfy for that sin. The breach of the Law is sin, and the wages of sin is death, the wages of sin is not repentance nor amendment, but it is death; then repentance will not satisfy for sin: no, no, the wages that must be laid down for a man's sin, is death. As the Lord said, In the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die the death. And therefore the Apostle saith, cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Law to do them. Repentance is only a work of the gospel to bring our hearts in frame again, but the breach of the Law must be satisfied for; so that, having sinned against the Lord and wronged his Justice we must either die ourselves or have one to die for us; then, there is no laying down of any satisfaction to God by anything that we can do in this case but we must have recourse to our Savior who only can satisfy gods wrath for our sins.

Fifthly, As a sinner is utterly unable to bring himself into a good estate, by all the means that he can use; so he is unable to maintain his lot: and to keep himself aforehand in a Christian course, when he is brought unto it. Therefore as it necessary to have a Savior to pardon us: So, it is necessary to have a Savior, to continue that estate of grace to us for our good. When the Lord in mercy had given to Adam in his innocence, perfect holiness, and righteousness; insomuch that he was able to keep the Law, and to purchase favor for himself, Adam then fell, and spent all that stock of grace; and if we had our stock in our own hands, we should spend all and be ruined forever, if God did leave us to ourselves. If Adam having no sin, could not keep himself in that happy estate; much less are we able that have much corruption in us; therefore it is not only required to go to Christ for grace to pardon us; but we must go to Christ to maintain our grace, and to keep our hearts in frame here, and to bring us to a Kingdom forever hereafter. When Adam had spent all the stock of grace; and proved a bankrupt, the Lord

would raise him up again; but he would not put the stock into his own hands again; but he puts it into the hands of Christ. As, a man that gives his child a portion, and he spends it all; now his father will raise him again, but will not put it into his own hands, but into the hands of some friend, and will have his Son go to that man for his allowance every day, and for every meal: So, it is with the Lord our heavenly Father, because we have misspent all that wisdom, and holiness, and righteousness, which God gave Adam, and in him to all of us; therefore the Lord would not put the stock of grace into our own hands again, but he hath put it into the hands of Christ, and will have us depend upon Christ for every crumb of grace; yea, even for the will to do any good; and we must go to him, that he may preserve and maintain the work of grace in us; and wonderful happy are we that it is so. For, should the Lord set the devil, and us together, all were gone. The Lord Jesus gives grace, and continues it, and helps us to persevere in grace; and so makes us come to the end of our hopes, even the salvation of our Souls. Oh therefore, look up to the Lord Jesus Christ; and say, Oh, it is a blessed mercy; that when my heart is proud, vain, loose, and foolish; that then I may go to the Fountain of grace, for humility, and for grace. We are kept (saith Saint Peter) By the power of God through faith unto salvation: As if he had said, all the powers of hell and darkness are come about us, and a world of wickedness besets us, and all the powers of the world, and the corruptions of our own hearts allure us. Now, we cannot stand by our own strength, therefore we have need of a Christ, that we may be kept by his power, and be able to suffer, and to do anything for his names sake, and that he may preserve us in that great day of accounts. And the Apostle John saith, Little children you are of God and have overcome the world, for greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world. He doth not say,

greater are you, then he that is in the world, but greater is he that is in you, &c. He doth not say, greater is your humility then your pride; greater is your patience, then your impatience; and greater is your love, then your hatred; but he saith, The Lord Jesus is greater in us, to succor and to help us; then all the temptations of the devil, and the corruptions of our hearts that can press in upon us, to do us any hurt, or to hinder us in a Christian course. Doest thou think thy own hearing, and praying, and duties will serve the turn and save thy Soul? No, no, thou art an undone man, if thou rest upon thy own crazy bottoms? Amend thou mayest, and pray thou oughtest; but these will not save thee; these will not cause the acceptance of thy person with God; nor justify thy Soul before his Tribunal. All these are poor, weak, and crazy means? For, if thou canst not do what God requires; and if thou doest not what thou art able, and if in the best of thy services, there is pride, and stubbornness enough to condemn thee, and when thou risest up from prayer, thou hadst need pray again for pardon of thy prayer: Nay, couldst thou do all that thou shouldest after conversion; in the most strictest and exactest manner; yet that doth not satisfy for the sin, that thou hadst committed before conversion; and if thou canst not maintain thy own grace, then there is an absolute necessity of going to Christ for all. Nay, ask your own hearts, and services; and say thus? Prayer, wilt not thou save me, and hearing? Wilt not thou save me; they will all profess plainly, and say; salvation is not in me (saith prayer), and salvation is not in me (saith hearing), and salvation is not in me (saith repentance, and amendment; Indeed, we have heard of a Christ; that he hath died, and satisfied, and suffered, and risen, and delivered his poor servants; and plucked poor Souls from hell; and we need a Savior to pardon us, alas, we cannot save ourselves. All thy duties will say to thee, as the King said to the woman;

when the famine was great in Samaria: And the King was going upon the wall, there cried a woman to him, saying, Help, oh King. And the King made this answer, If the Lord God succor not, how can I help? So, me thinks the Soul saith; When it is besieged with the wrath of God? Oh help prayer, and hearing, and Sacrament, and the like? Mee thinks, I hear them reply in this manner; Alas, how can we help, you have prayed sinfully; and heard the Word untowardly; and received the Sacraments unworthily? Oh, let us all go to heaven for a Mediator; good Lord, pardon the sin of these prayers, and these hearings, and the unworthiness of these Sacraments; and all this frothiness, and deadness in hearing: Thus they will all send you to heaven for a Christ; and say, alas, I cannot save you; how many commands have I disobeyed? How many duties have I slighted, and therefore send to Christ for pardon; we are weak, and feeble, and only come to the ear, and to the eye; but the Lord Jesus must come down from heaven, and be powerful, every way to do good to your Souls. You must go to a Christ, to batter the proud flesh; and to pardon all that is amiss, and to perform all duties that you would have done. When Elisha took up the cloak of Elijah, he said, where is the God of Elijah; he did not say? Where is the cloak, but where is the God of Elijah. All the ordinances of God, are but as the bark of the tree; but Christ and the Promise are the pith. The heart, and life, and power of all is in Christ only: therefore look higher then these, for they do all proclaim; that there is no succor but in Christ.

The third means to drive our hearts from resting upon our duties is this. We must consider the inconceivable hazard, and danger, and the inconvenience that will come if we put any affiance in any of those privileges that we have, or any duties that we perform. The very

consideration hereof is able to withdraw our hearts from resting upon them. The danger appears in two particulars.

First, This carnal confidence in what we have, and do shut a man out from having any part in Christ. He that is guilty of this sin, withdraws himself from the favor of the Lord, and he becomes incapable of that mercy and good which God hath revealed; and Christ hath purchased for poor distressed sinners. For this is all that the Lord looks for at our hands, that we should deny ourselves, and wholly cast ourselves upon his goodness and mercy. Nay, that man which relies upon what he doth, puts himself without the reach of all that mercy and great salvation that is in Jesus Christ. Christ came not to call the righteous to repentance, nor them that trust in themselves; nor them that think they can save themselves, but he came to call sinners to repentance, and those that see an utter insufficiency in themselves to save or succor themselves in the day of trouble, there is great salvation in Christ, and plenteous redemption purchased by Christ, and you hear of all this, and it is all true, but this I must tell you, all that Christ hath done and deserved shall never do you good, if you rest upon yourselves. You do think that it is such a great sin, as indeed it is, sometimes you make conscience of drunkenness and other sins, if you make conscience of anything, then know that this is the greatest sin in the world. See how the Apostle sets himself against this carnal confidence, where speaking to the Galatians that trusted in their own circumcision, that answers to our Baptism: Behold (saith he) I Paul, say, I, not a bare man, but I, Paul inspired with the Spirit in an extraordinary manner, and I, an Apostle that do not, nay that cannot err, I that have received a commission from the Lord, I say, that if you be Circumcised, that is, if you trust in your Circumcision, Christ shall profit you nothing. Nay, (saith he) Jesus Christ is made of none effect

to you if you seek to be justified by the works of the Law. If you rest in the merit of your prayer, Christ is made of none effect to you, and you shall never receive any power from the death of Christ: the blood of Christ will never purge those filthy hearts of yours, and his resurrection shall never quicken you. Whatsoever your case and condition is, or can be, if your sins were never so heinous for greatness, continuance and for number, if you will but renounce yourselves and go to Christ nothing shall condemn you, but if your sins were never so well reformed and amended: and reformation, nay, Christ himself shall never do you any good. It is with the Soul of a poor sinner, as it is with the body of a man. If it had some slighty disease or sickness, and that may (haply) be cured, but if his throat begin to swell, and the vital passages be stopped up that he can receive no meat nor physic, every neighbor will say, he is but a dead man, all the means and men in the world can do him no good, he can receive nothing down: So it is with the Soul; it is annoyed with many base corruptions, and sinful distempers; and if it be wounded with many rebellions; there is means enough in Christ to cure all? If thou were a filthy besotted drunkard, or an adulterer, the blood of Christ can purge thy drunken adulterous heart, one touch of Christ, can cure all: thy bloody issue. If thou wert dead in trespasses and sins, the Lord Jesus could quicken thee, and raise thee from death to life; but if thy proud heart swell with thy own sufficiency, and thou wilt rest upon thyself, all the merits and grace in Christ can do thee no good. This is the main conclusion, into which all the rest is resolved. You will not come to me (saith our Savior) that you might be saved. He doth not say; you have many sins and shall not be saved; but, you will not come to me, &c. that is, you will not go out from yourselves to the Lord Christ; and therefore cannot receive mercy and grace from his Majesty's hands: though thou art never so base and vile,

if thou couldst go to the Lord Jesus, and rest upon him for mercy, nothing should stand between thee and heaven, but if thou stickest in thyself, all the grace in Christ can do thee no good.

Secondly, This carnal confidence, makes a man unprofitable, under all the means that God bestows; As the Prophet Jeremiah saith, Cursed is he that trusts in the arm of flesh, and departs from the Lord; Why? What shall become of him? The text saith, he shall be like a heath in the wilderness, and shall never see good. The nature of the heath is this; though all the dew of heaven, and all the showers in the world fall upon it; and though the Sun shine never so hotly, it will never grow fruitful, it will never yield any fruit of increase, but it is unfruitful still. Such a Soul thou wilt be; thou that restest upon thy own services &, sayest; because thou hearest, and prayest, and doest sanctify the Lord's Day; therefore thou must needs go to heaven; I say, thou shalt never see good by all the means of grace; if thou makest them independent causes of salvation; all the promises in the Gospel shall never establish thee, and all the judgments in the world will never terrify thee; thou shalt never have any saving grace wrought in thee by them: The truth is, he that hath all means, and hath not a Christ in all; he shall never see good by all. Therefore thou that restest upon thy parts, and gifts, and upon thy duties; thou wilt have a heart so besotted, that grace will never come into thy heart, and God will never quiet thy conscience. It may be a poor drunkard is converted and humbled; but thou standest still, and canst get no good by all the means in the world. Therefore say thus to thyself? Doth this carnal confidence cut me off from all the grace and mercy that is in Christ; and without mercy, and pardon from Christ I am undone forever; and without grace I am a poor defiled wretch here, and shall be damned forever after; if I rest here, I may bid a due to all mercy: Nay, all the means

that I have, never do me good. Is this the fruit of my carnal confidence? Oh Lord withdraw my heart from it.

Lastly, When all the means of grace, will not pluck away the Soul from resting upon itself, when reason will not rule him, nor means will not prevail with a poor sinner, as commonly a great while they will not; then the Lord tires a poor Soul with his own distempers. And the Lord deals with the Soul, as an enemy deals with a Castle that he hath besieged; When the Citizens will not yield up the Castle, he famisheth them, and cuts off all provision, and makes them consume within, and so at last they are forced to resign it up upon any terms. So, When the Lord hath laid siege to a carnal heart, and hath showed him his woeful condition, and yet the heart will not of, nor will not take up any terms of peace, but still he will shift for himself. Now, what doth the Lord do? He takes away the comfort of all the means that he hath, till he is famished with the want of God's favor; and then he is content to yield up all to the God of heaven and earth. It was just so with this Prodigal; all the world could not persuade him but he might live better of his portion, and so away he goes; and when he had tried the world, and could get no succor, at last he confessed, it was better to be at a fathers finding, and now he saw that a fathers house was admirably good, and that the servants and children in their fathers house are happy; for they have bread enough and enough again, and to spare too: and so he is forced to return. So, it is with many poor distressed souls: all the arguments under heaven cannot quiet them, and all the means in the world cannot pluck them from themselves; and we tell them daily, that they must not expect grace, nor power, nor pardon from themselves; It is mercy and peace (saith the Apostle). You would have peace of conscience, and pardon of sin, and assurance of God's love; and whence would you have it, you would have it

from your duties? It is not prayer, and peace, nor hearing, and peace; but it is mercy and peace; and therefore away to the Lord Jesus, that you may receive mercy from him: Yet we cannot get poor creatures from themselves, but they would fain shuffle for themselves, and have a little comfort of their own, and they say, Lord, cannot my prayers, my care and fasting merit salvation? Now, what doth God then? He saith, to such a Soul, go try then, put to the best of thy strength, and use all the means that thou canst, and see what thou canst do; See if thou canst cure thy conscience, and heal those wounds of thine; and subdue the corruptions of thy heart, with thy prayers and abilities: but when the Soul hath made trial, and weltered, and wearied itself, at last, he finds that all the means he can use cannot quiet him, nor comfort his conscience, and the poor sinner is pinched and wearied, and the Lord will not answer his prayers, nor sweeten the desires of his Soul, and the Lord will not bless the Word to him for his comfort, and at last, the Soul saith: Such a poor Christian (even a man of mean parts, and weak gifts) how is he comforted, and such a profane drunkard is pulled home, and hath gotten the assurance of God's love; The Lord hath pulled down the proud hearts of such and such; and they live comfortably, and sweetly; and I have no peace nor assurance of God's love. You may thank yourselves for it; they saw nothing, and they looked for nothing from themselves; and therefore they went home to the gate of mercy to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they have bread enough, if you would come home to Christ, you might have been comforted also. Now therefore, go to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as certainly, as God is in heaven; refreshing and comfort will come into your hearts, and mercy (which is better than marrow) shall satisfy those feeble fainting spirits of yours. You see what the way is, and what the helps be to pluck off our hearts from resting upon these duties, and therefore think thus with

thyself, and say, is my misery so great? And are my duties so weak? And is my carnal confidence so dangerous; that I may be troubled forever? For anything that I can do of myself; and is comfort nowhere else to be had, but in the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh then Lord, work my heart to this duty. Stick not in yourselves, do all this, but go beyond all that you can do, and labor so to approve your hearts to God, that you may see greater mercy in God, then in all that you can do.

Now there are two Cavils, which carnal persons slander this truth of God withal; and these must be answered before I can come to the trials.

The first cavil with which wretches are content upon this truth, it is this. Oh say they? What, is it so that all our prayers, and hearings, all our care, and desires, and all our improvement of means are nothing worth? Will not all these justify us? Nor make us acceptable to God? Then let us cast care away, let us swear, and riot, and drink, and live as we list, we hear that all the duties that we can do, will not save us, the Minister tells us so. Thus a company of carnal wretches run headlong down to eternal destruction, one swears, and another casts all the commandments of God behind his back.

[*Ans.*] To this I answer. Doth the Minister say so; nay, the Word, the Scripture, the Spirit of God saith so, and the Lord Jesus himself speaks it. In the meantime wilt thou gain-say that which the Lord Christ hath spoken? Doth not the Apostle say, You are saved not of works, &c. And in another place, It is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in the Lord that shows mercy. It is the spirit of God that saith it, and doest thou stand to out-face the Lord Jesus Christ in it? But stay a while, and take a full answer with thee, and know these three things thou that doest abuse this doctrine of God's free favor. First, howsoever thy good works are not sufficient to save thee, yet thy evil works are enough to damn thee. As the Apostle saith, that

all they might be damned which believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. You that take pleasure in your drunkenness, and profaneness, and in your jibing and jesting at the means of grace, there is room enough in hell for you all: that all you might be damned. Yea, thou that delightest in thy drunkenness, thou mayest drink down thy last, and thy damnation too, and thou that blasphemest against the truth of Christ, take heed that God pour not down his wrath upon thee. It is true, though thy good works are not perfectly good and cannot save thee, yet thy bad works are perfectly naught and will condemn thee. Nay, thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord, and will the Lord save thee for that which is abominable to him? Thou thinkest hell is broke loose because mercy is come into the world, this thy wickedness will condemn thee for evermore. Secondly, they that thus stand it out against God's free grace in Jesus Christ (the Lord in mercy open their eyes, my soul mourns for them and for that strange punishment that shall befall them, except the Lord break their hearts in time) as any sin is enough to condemn them, so their sin is of an inconceivable heinousness, and their judgment will be answerable. Their sin is become out of measure sinful, because mercy is revealed, and they have made a mock of it. The very height of all, that wrath that is in God shall be their portion. Good Lord, is it possible that ever any man should dare to despise the mercy of God, and to trample the blood of Christ under his feet, and not only to commit wantonness, but to turn the grace of God into wantonness, and to make the Lord Christ the Patron of all their filthiness? How will the Lord Jesus take it at their hands: that, whereas the Lord Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, they should make Christ a means to uphold the works of the devil. Oh, that ever any man should dare to sin, because mercy abounds! And because they hear that

Christ will one day save them, therefore they in the meantime will do all they can against him that must save them. See what S. Paul saith against such, Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, long sufferance and forbearance, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance, but after thy hardness of heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath. Thou that livest in the bosom of the Church, where the Angels come down from heaven, and rejoyce in this free grace of God in Christ, and hast thou the offer of this mercy, and doest thou despise it? Then thy drunkenness is not bare drunkenness, but there is a treasure of vengeance in it. And thou sayest, thou wilt be drunk, and profane, because thy sobriety and thy good works cannot save thee. I tell thee, it is not bare scorning and bare profanes, but there is a mass of vengeance in all these. And when thou shalt stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall be indicted for a drunkard, and a scorner, and a profane person, and such a one as hast tossed the people of God with scorns upon thy Ale-bench; when the Law hath thus proceeded against thee, then will mercy come in against thee, and say, Lord, execute vengeance upon him for me, and for me, saith another, for I have been dishonored, and because mercy did abound, he would have his sin abound also. And then comes in the blood of Christ, and cries aloud, saying, Vengeance against that drunkard, indeed Lord, there's a poor wretch that knew no other, but vengeance (Lord) against that drunkard, and that scorner, because my blood was shed, and mercy was offered, and he despised it. You that know your drunken neighbors and servants, and see their rioting and scorning, tell them that there is a treasure of vengeance in those sins; and you that are guilty of it, go your ways home and mourn, and the Lord give us hearts to mourn for you. You that know what this sin is, when you go to the Lord in Prayer, put up one petition for them, and say,

Good Lord take away that treasure of vengeance. Oh, pray that if it be possible this great sin may be pardoned. Thirdly, all such persons must know that it is carnal confidence, in the means that withdraws a blessing from them in the use of the means. What things were gain to me (saith Saint Paul) I accounted loss for Christ; that is, when he put any confidence in them, he lost the benefit of the means.

Secondly, Some will say, you do nothing but reprove us for duties, and labor to pluck us from them? Then, why should we pray, and hear, and what good shall we have by all that we do, if we cannot be saved by these means; then, what use is there of them?

[*Ans.*] To this I answer. Yes, there is great use of them, and much good to be had by them: As the Apostle saith; Let us also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses. When he had spoken of free Justification through his grace; then the Text saith, teach a man to maintain good works for necessary uses: and in the 4th and 5th verses, he saith; After that the kindness, and love of God our Savior towards man, appeared not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration. Now, least any man should say, if God do not save a man for his works, then why shall we do good works and the like? See what he adds; Let us learn to maintain good works, &c. There are many necessary uses of the means, though they be not meritorious, and of absolute sufficiency. Were not he a mad man that should say, what shall I do with my money if I cannot eat it? And what shall I do with my boat if I may not dwell in it? A man may buy meat with his money, and row with his boat. So, you must use all means, and improve all importunities, and if ever pray, and fast, pray and fast now in these days of trouble, but think not to be

saved, nor justified by the worth and merit of them: yet use them for some necessary uses; and the uses are three.

[*Use 1.*] First, We must use all the means that gives us as guides, to lead us by the hand to the Lord Jesus Christ; and as lights to show us where life is to be had. John the Baptist professed plainly, that he was not the Messiah, but he pointed at him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. So, I say, all the ordinances of God which are honorable, and commendable, and comfortable; they all profess, that they are not our Savior's: only they point us to a Savior, even the Lord Jesus Christ; the Word reveals Christ, and Prayer goes to a Christ, and the Sacrament presents Christ to us; and therefore they all say with one accord, let us go to the Lord Jesus, and look up to him. When your hearts are troubled and disquieted, all your duties knock at your hearts, and say, would you not have mercy, and power against corruption, and some evidence of God's favor? Oh (say you) it is that which we want, and it is all that we desire in this world; Come then (saith Prayer and the Word) we will go to Christ with you; there is all fullness in him: this is the end of all the holy ordinances of God, not to make them Savior's: but to lead us to a Savior.

[*Use 2.*] Secondly as they are guides to lead us to a Christ, so they are means to convey grace, mercy and comfort from Christ to our souls. Though they are not meat yet they are as dishes that bring the meat. They are the means whereby salvation hath been revealed, and is conveyed to you. There is a fountain of grace in Christ, but the word, and prayer, and Sacraments, and fasting, these are the conduits to convey this water of life, and to communicate this grace to us. You do not use to drink the conduit, but the water that the conduit brings. Ask, that your joy may be full, (saith our Savior) and so the Lord speaks by the Prophet Isaiah, incline your ear,

and come unto me, hear and your souls shall live. As if he had said wait upon God in his word and ordinances, and your souls shall live. Though the means are not life itself, yet life is conveyed by them. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If you would have any grace and holiness, the treasure of it is in Christ. The word is as the Indenture or great will of God whereby the treasure of God's favor is made known to your Souls. The bond or will is not the treasure, but conveys the treasure to us, and makes us have a right, and title to it: our Savior saith, my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, and, all the promises in Christ are, yea, and Amen. Yea, that is truth itself, and, Amen, that is confirmed now, you must receive the tenure of all these in Christ. And the holy Sacraments, are as the broad seals whereby the Covenant of grace is confirmed, made authentical and ratified to your Souls. When a man hath much goods and lands and would make another his heir, he passeth his lands or goods over to him by will, and if the will is not only drawn but also sealed, then, though this will is not the treasure itself, yet it is a special means to convey this treasure to the heir that must have it. So, the Word is the will of God, and the Sacraments are the Seals of it, and all that mercy and goodness in Christ is made known to you by the Word, and made sure to you by the Sacrament; the Word and Sacraments are not this treasure, but they are blessed means to convey this treasure to your Souls. Therefore, when your hearts, are dead, weak and heavy, and you begin to breath for some consolation, saying, who will tell me how I may have my dead heart quickened, and my heavy heart refreshed, as David once breathed for the water of Bethlehem; then me thinks the word and prayer, and Sacraments do all say, we will go to the Lord Jesus Christ for all these for you, and then Christ will sanctify you in his word, and if you have strong devils hanging

upon you, fasting, and prayer will fetch power and grace from Christ; and cast all these devils out: So then you see their good use of all these.

[*Use 3.*] Thirdly, the last use of the means is this, that by the exercise of ourselves in them, and by the improvement of our times and means, we may glorify the God of grace that hath given us all these means, and that we may wait upon him with fear and reverence, and honor God in his word, and come to his table, and there partake of the dainties of life and salvation, and express the virtues of him that hath called us to this marvelous light, that we may see God's grace in prayer, and in professing, and delight in the duties of his worship. These are all very good uses; so then, the conclusion is this, you must not think that your duties can pardon one sin, yet they must be used, and bless God for them, and (if ever) now is a time to improve all these, for they are a means to lead us to Christ, and to convey grace and life from Christ into our souls, and thereby we may glorify the God of grace that hath been so merciful to us. The second thing that I mentioned is this. When shall we know that our hearts are brought to this pass, that the means of grace do work so kindly that our hearts may be brought to this holy despair. I would not have you go away and say, the minister saith, we must despair. Its true you must despair of all saving succor in yourselves but you must not despair of all mercy in Christ.

[*Ans.*] For the answer to this question, you must know that there are three particular trials of our own hearts, whereby we shall know when the Lord is pleased to deal so kindly and sweetly with us, as to drive us from ourselves to Christ.

First, the Soul of a poor sinner that seeth all means helpless and hopeless in themselves, will freely confess and acknowledge (and that openly) that the work of salvation is of an inconceivable difficulty, and he seeth an utter

insufficiency and impossibility in himself, and in any means in the world to be saved of himself: He seeth that it is beyond his power, and the staff is out of his own hand, and the Soul almost sinks under it, and conceives it almost impossible to come out of it, in regard of that which it apprehends. He seeth now that all those broken reeds and rotten props, and all that boldness whereby the heart did bear up itself, they are all broken in pieces, and all those Castles which he hath built in the air, wherein he comforted himself with dreams of consolation, they are all thrown down to the ground, and battered about his ears, and now the Soul wonders how he was so deluded, to trust to such lying vanities, and to such deceitful shadows. This is the difference that the Soul will find in itself before this work of conversion, and after it is wrought. Before, a man thinks it an easy matter to come to heaven, and judgeth it a foolishness in people to be cast down and discouraged in the hardness and difficulty of the work of salvation; and he conceives it to be a foolish conceit in the frantic brain of some precise Ministers? Oh (saith he) God bless us if none be saved, but such as these, whatsoever he saith, a man may go to heaven, and repent, and get the pardon of his sins, it is nothing but confessing his sins before God, and craving mercy in the pardon of them, and is this such a hard matter; this man in the days of his vanity, thinks he hath heaven in a string, and mercy at command, and he can come to heaven, and break his heart at half an hours warning: but take this man when the Lord hath awakened his conscience, and put him to the trial; when he seeth that after all his prayers and tears, yet his conscience is not quieted, and his sins are not pardoned, and the guilt still remains, now he is of another mind, now he wonders at himself that he was so deluded, and now he saith? Where is the deluded heart, that did think it, and the mouth that did speak it: Nay, he thinks it a

great mercy of God, that he is not in hell long ago; and he stands and wonders that ever any man comes to heaven, and he saith, certainly their hearts are not like mine; and their sins are not so great as mine, good Lord, who can ever be saved, such a devil to tempt, and such a world to allure, and such corruptions boiling within. He wonders how Abraham got to heaven beyond the Stars, and Moses, but above all Manasseh, yet he saith, blessed be God that ever he did this for them, but for myself (all things considered) I think it a matter impossible, how I, nay, how can I ever be wrought upon? Shall ever any mercy comfort me? And shall ever any means do me good? Why have not all those means that I have had done me good, I shall never have power to pray better than I have done, and I shall never be able to wrestle with God, more earnestly than I have done, and yet I see all means profit not, therefore I am but a gone man. I am but lost, and I know not which way my soul should be saved. When our Savior Christ was discovering the difficulty of the way to Salvation; His Disciples said, Good Lord, who then shall be saved. So, the poor Soul saith? Oh the means that I have had, and the prayers that I have made; So that I have thought the heavens did even shake again, and yet, Good Lord, my heart did never stir at all, and therefore how can I be saved? And as the Prophet Jeremiah saith; Shame hath eaten up the labors of our fathers, and we lie down in our shame, &c. They had the means of grace, and the ordinances of God, and shame hath eaten up all, and where are their Temples, and Privileges now? Shame hath consumed them to nothing. So, it is with a poor feeble fainting Soul, he saith, shame hath eaten up all my labors, I have labored in prayer, in hearing, and in fasting; yet I have no pardon sealed, nor no mercy granted, I am as much troubled as ever; I see as much evil as ever I did; hell is gaping for me, and so soon as life is gone from my body; the devil will

have my Soul. This is the nature of despair, to put an impossibility in the thing that it despairs of: and to say, can it be? And will it be? And will it ever be? Nay, it is impossible, for ought I know. Where is the man now, that thought it an easy matter to go to heaven, he is in another mind, and his heart is of another frame; now he hath found by woeful experience, that there is no hope, nor help in himself nor in the creature.

Secondly, this follows from the former disposition of spirit; the Soul is restless, and remains unsatisfied in what he hath, and what he doth. The heart cannot be supported, and therefore it grows to be marvelously troubled, and it is not able to stay itself. There is nothing that can satisfy the Soul of a man, but it must be some good. No man is satisfied with evil, but rather more troubled with it. It must be some good, either in hand, and in present possession, or else in expectation of some good that he may have, and he saith, it may be, and it will be. But, when he seeth the emptiness of all his privileges, and the weakness of all his duties; when these fails, his heart and all must needs sink; because he seeth no other good, but them for the while. As it is with the building of a house, if the bottom and foundation be brittle, and rotten, and begin to shake all the whole building must needs shake: So, the Soul that sought for comfort, mercy, and salvation from his outward privileges and duties; when all these begin to shake under him, and to break in sunder, and he seeth no help thereby, and that it can receive no ease therein; hence it is, that Soul (thus troubled and despairing) is in such an estate, that if all the Ministers under heaven should come to flatter him, and to daube him up with untempered mortar, and persuade him of God's mercy towards him; Take this man upon his death-bed, when all the Ministers come to give him comfort upon any terms, and they say unto him, your course hath been good and commendable, and you have lived thus,

and thus; and taken much pains in praying, and hearing, and fasting; therefore undoubtedly you cannot but receive mercy from the Lord. See what the poor Soul will reply: It is true (saith he) I have done, and may do all these, but I have not done them in a right manner. I have not had an eye to Christ's mercy; but have accounted these duties, as satisfactory to God's justice, so that they savor not so much of duty, as arrogancy; whilst presuming upon their worth: I have not depended upon God's mercy; but even challenged his justice in the reward of my labors. Thus the Soul argueth with itself, I have depended too long upon these outward works, and thought to purchase heaven by them, but now I find it necessary, that I get them died, and sanctified in the blood of Christ. Thus it was with Saint Paul when he said; I know nothing by myself? What might some say, Paul, You are a reverend learned man, and have had a great name in the Church, and who can say, black is your eye. It is true, (saith he) I know nothing by myself? But what then, yet I am not thereby justified. Nay, it is the difference that he makes between himself a Pharisee, and himself a poor contrite sinner. When he was a Pharisee he counted his privileges gain to him; but now he thought them loss in regard of Christ. They are good mercies, where God gives them in regard of themselves, but in the way of Justification, and Salvation, they are as dung and dross in respect of any merit in them. This is one difference between a dead hypocrite, and a living Christian. A dead hypocrite will be content with dead hearing, and dead praying, and with the bare shell of duties, but, a living Christian that seeth his own evil, and sin; cannot be filled nor contented without a Christ. That which will maintain a Chameleon, will starve a man; for a Chameleon will live upon the air? But, put a Man into the best air that is, and it will starve him, if he have no other food. So, if thou canst feed upon the air of hearing,

and the picture, and shadow of praying; it is a sign thou art a dead man; whereas if thou be a true man in Christ Jesus, thou must have bread, or else all the world cannot content thee. Bread for the Lord's sake, (saith the hunger-starved man: therefore let me give thee an Item this way; go thy way home, and take notice of thine heart, thou that canst lick thy Soul whole, and cure all thy sins with a few prayers, and tears, and fasting's, and in the meantime seest not a necessity of a Savior, know that it is a notorious sign of a cunning hypocrite, as there are many in these days. It is with an hypocrite, as it is with some men written of in Stories, they have such an antidote, and preservative, that they can eat poison, and it shall never hurt them: So it is with some hypocrites, that have their reservations of some sins, and they retain some base distempers, and they will tipple in a corner, and lie in some secret sins, and yet they trust so much to their antidote, and to their duties, that it will cure all, and it is but praying, and fasting so much the more often. The God of heaven open the eyes, and awaken the consciences of all such, if there be any such here this day. If it be so that thou canst pray, and keep a close hollow heart, and thou canst lick thyself whole, and then sin, and a little prayer will serve again; and then go, and be unjust, and unclean, and keep false balances still, know then, it is certain thou never haddest a part in Christ, and didst see a need of Christ. And as it was with the Prodigal: if he had been a Hog, the husks might have served him; but he was a Man, and therefore must have bread. Therefore thou hypocrite to thy Stye, if these husks will save thee, and serve thy turn, and if the mill of a prayer will serve, (I do not discommend these duties: No, cursed be he that doth it) but if thou content thyself with a mill of praying, and yet there is as much power of Christ, and sap of grace in thy heart, as in

a chip, then (I say) thou art a Hog and no Man, whom these husks will content.

Thirdly, he that seeth himself helpless and hopeless in the means, he will constantly labor to go beyond all the means. Because he is in need and finds no help here, he will seek it elsewhere that his heart may be refreshed, when the Lord hath awakened the heart and showed him the emptiness of all means, it makes the soul go further than the means: this is the heavenly skill. It is with the Soul in this case as it is with a mariner; though his hand be upon the oar, yet he ever looks homeward to the haven where he would be. And it is in professing as it is in trading. You know when a man sets up for himself and would live of his calling, he will buy and sell, but his eye is ever upon the gain, that is which must keep the Cart on the wheels, or else he may die a beggar and shall never be able to keep him and his; it is not enough to trade and to buy and sell, but he goes beyond all these, and labors to get something. Just so it is in professing; it is like thy trading, thou hearest and prayest, and professest, but the gain is to have Christ made to thee in life and death gain; So that, all the gain a man gets is Christ. Thou art a professor, and hast been baptized and hast received the Sacrament, but, what hast thou gotten by all thy praying, and preaching, and other services? Unless thou hast gotten Christ, thou hast gotten just nothing at all. It is with thee as it is with a man that hath a great shop, and much wares, and quick return, and yet he is not able to pay his debts: so thou performest many fair duties, and hast many rich privileges, and yet thou art not able to satisfy God's Justice; nor to recompense the Church for the wrong done to it, and when thou art going the way of all flesh, but specially in the day of judgment, then shall people say of thee, such a man was buying, and selling, and professing all his life and yet got nothing; and when a poor Soul

is breathing out his last, then comes justice, and saith, give me my own, thou hast sinned, and therefore thou must die for it, Lord (saith he) take some prayers, and readings, and fasting's, instead of payment, and if these will not serve, then he is blank, and justice carries him down to the place of execution, and he shall not come thence till he have paid the utmost farthing. And then the Soul saith, some comfort, some mercy and consolation for me; oh saith he, I have received the Sacrament, and prayed and fasted, and professed, canst thou not feed of these? Oh no! (saith the Soul) these are husks, bread for me as the world thinks of a man that hath got nothing by his trading, such a man that made wonderful show in the world today; so many hundreds, and thousands worse than nothing, this is lamentable. Just so it will be with thee, if thou hast not gotten Christ. If a man have gotten Christ in his hearing, and praying? He will answer all easily, and when the devil comes in, and saith? Thou hast many sins who shall satisfy God's Justice for them? The Soul makes this answer; Christ hath paid all. Oh, but thou hast broken the Law of God (saith the devil). Oh (saith the Soul) Christ hath fulfilled all righteousness for me. You have many corruptions (saith the devil; but Christ hath purged me (saith the Soul). Oh, but you shall be damned (saith the devil to him: Nay, (saith the Soul) there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, but I am in Christ, and therefore shall not be damned. Thus the devil shall go away ashamed, and say, That man is out of my reach, I shall never get him down to hell, he hath gotten Christ.

But here this question may be asked, how may a man go beyond himself in all his duties?

[*Ans.*] Because this is a skill above all skills, therefore for the answer hereof take these three directions.

First, labor to see an absolute necessity of a Christ in all these privileges that thou hast, and in all the duties and services that thou performest. First, in all thy privileges. See a need of Christ to make all these powerful to thy Soul. Hearing, and reading, and fasting, will do thee no good, except thou have a Christ to go with all these. As a Ship that hath fair Sails, and strong Masts, except there be a wind it can never go. So, the Soul is like the Ship; and the precious ordinances of God are fair Sails and good Masts; and it is good hearing, and good reading, and good fasting, but except the Spirit blow with these, thou canst get no good by them: the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and except the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit, go and breath upon thy hearing, Preaching, and upon all the ordinances, they can do thee no good. When the Lord was to come into his Garden, which was the Church. The Spices are the graces of God's Spirit. The Spices could not grow, because the Spirit would not blow upon them, and therefore the Spouse saith, Arise oh North, and come (oh South) and blow on my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out, As if she had said, Good Lord, blow this way, and that way, and give a blessing to the means, and then comfort will come indeed. And as there is need of Christ to bless all means, so secondly there is need of Christ to make all thy services acceptable to God the Father. Oh send to heaven for a Christ, that he may hide all thy weaknesses, and present all thy duties to God his Father, in his merits and righteousness. They that brought a Sacrifice in the time of the Law, were to offer it upon the golden Altar, and no Sacrifice was accepted without it: So, if thou wilt have thy hearing, and praying, and fasting acceptable to God, lay them upon the golden Altar, the Lord Jesus Christ. And know that thou hast need of Christ to cover all the failings and weaknesses in thy duties.

Secondly, In all the beauty and excellency of God's ordinances that thou seest and prizest. See a greater beauty and excellency in the Lord Jesus Christ, then in all these. See what comfort it is that thou wouldest find, and what sweet is it that thou wouldest get from hearing, and reading, praying, and professing; go beyond all this, and say, if the beams be so sweet, what is the Sun itself, and if the ordinances of God be so sweet and comfortable, what is the Lord Jesus Christ then. You come to hear, and it is well that you will come? What would you have in hearing? You would have some life to quicken you, and some wisdom in your minds to direct you, and some grace into your Souls to purge you; and then me thinks I hear you say, Blessed be the Lord this day, I found my heart something more quickened, and my Soul something enabled to hate sin, and to walk with God; bless God for that. But, is a little life in the word so good, and is a little grace in the Sacrament so sweet, Oh then away, away higher, if these be so sweet, what is the Lord Jesus the God of all wisdom, grace, and power. If the Word do so much quicken thy Soul, what would the Lord Jesus do, if thou couldest get thy heart possessed of him. Let all these drops of life and mercy draw up thy heart to heaven. When the Spouse in the Canticles had sought after her beloved, see how she describes him, his mouth is white and ruddy, and so forth, and in the 16th verse she saith, He is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. The original hath it, he is altogether pleasant, yea, pleasantness itself. You have some comfort, and some discomfort with it, you have some wisdom, and some folly, some power, and some weakness with it, but the Lord Jesus is all comfort, and no discomfort, he is all power, and no weakness, he is all life, and no deadness, therefore in all the ordinances of God, carry your hearts a little higher, and look upon that fullness that is in Christ.

Thirdly, Let us labor in the use of all means, as to see the beauty of a Christ surpassing all means, so let us be led by all means into a nearer union with the Lord Christ. As a wife deals with the letters of her husband that is in a far Country, she finds many sweet inklings of his love, and she will read these letters often, and daily, she would talk with her husband a far off, and see him in the letters, Oh (saith she) thus and thus he thought when he writ these lines, and then she thinks he speaks to her again; she reads these letters only, because she would be with her husband a little, and have a little parley with him in his pen, though not in his presence: so these ordinances are but the Lord's love-letters, and we are the Ambassadors of Christ; and though we are poor sottish ignorant men, yet we bring marvelous good news that Christ can save all poor broken hearted sinners in the world.

You do well to come and hear, but it is all that you may chat and parley a little with Christ. Our Savior saith, Where the carcass or the dead body is, there will the Eagles be. This is the nature of an Eagle, she will not go to catch flies, (that's the nature of the hedge Sparrow,) but she will prey upon the carcass. So, this is a good heart that will not prey upon dead duties, but upon the Lord Christ, who is the life of the Soul. If thou art of a right brood, thou wilt not fill and glut thy Soul with a few duties like a hedge Sparrow; still, mistake me not, I do not dispraise these duties, but (I say) they are nothing in the way of justification: if faith in Christ's merits be not joined with them. Therefore if thou hast a dunghill heart of thine own, thou mayest go and content thyself with profession, and with a few cold dead duties, but if thou art an Eagle, and a sound hearted Christian, and one, that God hath been pleased to do good unto: thou wilt never be but where the Lord Jesus is, and where his grace and mercy is. As we do at a Feast; the dish is greater than the meat, yet we reach the dish (not for the dishes sake) but that we

may cut some meat: So, the ordinances of God, are as so many dishes, wherein the Lord Jesus Christ is dished out to us. Sometimes Christ in his merits, is dished out in the Sacrament to all the senses, and sometimes he is dished out in the Word; therefore as you take the dish to cut some meat: So, take the Word; that Communicates Christ to the ear, and Prayer Communicates with Christ, and the Sacrament Communicates Christ to all the senses; cut the meat, and let not the Lord Christ go whole from the Table, and no man look after him, fill your hungry Souls with Christ. When a poor travelling man comes to the Ferry; he cries to the other side; Have over, have over; his meaning is, he would go to the other side by a Boat; he only desires the use of the Ferry-man to convey him over. So, Christ is in heaven, but we are here on earth (as it were) on the other side of the river; the ordinances of God are but as so many Boats to carry us, and to land us at Heaven where our hopes are; and our hearts should be. Therefore you would be landed: Have over, have over (saith the Soul). The Soul desires to be landed at the Stairs of Mercy, and saith, Oh, bring me to speak with my Savior. Mary came to the Sepulcher to seek for Christ, and therefore when the Angel said to her, Woman why weepest thou, she made this answer, Oh, they have taken away my Lord. So, it is with you, if you be not hypocrites. Is there ever a Mary here? Is there ever a man or woman that prizeth a Christ, and seeth need of a Christ, and that comes weeping and mourning to the holy ordinances of God? Whom seekest thou (saith the Word, and Prayer, and the Sacrament? Oh (saith the broken-hearted sinner) they have taken away my Lord Christ? Oh this sinful heart of mine; oh these cursed corruptions of mine! If it had not been for these, Christ would have comforted my conscience and pardoned my sin; if thou seest my Christ and my Savior; reveal him to my Soul, that I may receive comfort and

consolation by him. This is the frame of a Christian Soul: when the Ferryman hath carried the traveler over, he stays not there, but goes to the house of his friend, and saith, is such a man within, he desires to speak with him, and to receive some good from him. We hear, and pray, and read till we are weary, we do not cry; Have over, let me come to enjoy a nearer Communion with my Savior, that I may dwell with him, and have a nearer cut to the Lord Christ; I would have way, that I may receive grace and mercy from Christ according to my necessities. When a man hath gotten so many hundredth pounds, he not only tells that he hath met with the Ferryman, but he shows the money that he hath gotten. So, you come to Church, and go from Church, and you have your hearing, for your hearing: and your professing, for your professing and the like; but you should labor to say; I have gotten the pardon of all my sins, and the assurance of God's love to my Soul; I have been with my Savior, and thus graciously, and mercifully he hath dealt with me. All that I have said, is but a speech of a little time, but it is a task for all a man's life. Oh think of it and say, what have I gotten by all that I have done? And what would I get when I go to prayer? I would have a Christ and mercy from him. This is not in our minds. I tell thee what thou must aim at, and labor for, hear, and pray for a Savior. See a need of Christ in all, and see greater beauty in Christ than in all, and be led nearer to Christ by all, or else you get nothing by all that you do. If there were no gold in the West-Indies, the King of Spain would not care for his Ships, nor for that place. School-boys care not for the Carrier, but for Letters from a Father. So, now raise up your hearts higher towards heaven: All holy duties are but as Ships, and Carriers, but the golden Mines of mercy are all in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a sweet speech of a man (whether he was good or bad I know not) that a man should lose the creatures in God. So, I would have

you do, loose yourselves, and all ordinances, and creatures, and all that you have and do, in the Lord Christ. How is that? Let all be swallowed up, and let nothing be seen but a Christ, and let thy heart be set upon nothing but a Christ. As it is with the Moon and Stars, when the Sun comes, they lose all their light, though they are there in the heavens still; and as it is with rivers, they all go into the Sea, and are all swallowed up of the Sea: and yet there is nothing seen but the Sea. So, all the ordinances, and creatures, are as so many rivers from that Ocean of mercy and goodness in Christ, and they all return thither; therefore only see a Fountain of grace, goodness, wisdom, and power in Christ: When a man is upon the Sea, he can see no fresh water, it is all swallowed up: So, let it be with thy Soul, when thou wouldst find mercy and grace. The ordinances of God are good in themselves, yet loose them all in Christ. That wisdom in Christ is able to direct, and that grace and mercy in Christ is able to save, when all other helps fail, and that power of Christ must support the Soul in the time of trouble. There is some comfort and sweet, and some refreshing in the Word, and in the Sacrament, and in the company of God's people; but lose all these in the Lord Christ. And see that mercy, and compassion, and that boundless goodness that is in the Lord Jesus; and that mercy that will pardon all sins, and forgive all sorts of sinners, if they be humbled before him. There is no pardon in grace, nor in means, in Word, nor in Sacraments, there is none but in Christ, see none but that, and when thou art there, hold thy heart to it; drench and drown thy Soul there, and fling thy Soul into the Sea of that plenteous Redemption in Christ; and though thy prayers and all fail, yet that mercy in Christ will never fail. Away with these rivers, these are all fresh water comforts that will fail, but that Sea of mercy in Christ will hold forever. See a Sea of misery and confusion in thy soul, and a Sea of mercy in Christ, and say,

none but that Lord; Here sit, and here fall, and forever establish thy soul, that it may go well with thee forever. Thus you ought to go beyond all means, and he that doth thus, doth truly despair of all saving succor in them. Therefore go home, and say thus, the Lord hath given me some comfort, and some grace, and a heart enlarged to walk with God, and to perform duty to him, but I trust not in this comfort, nor in my enlargement, all my comfort is in Christ, that Sea of mercy is still full, and I rest there; go from all these to that, and rest there and let that content thee forever.

Thus you see how far the Prodigal hath gone. What doth he now? He comes to himself and saith, I will arise and go to my Father, and say to him 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. Now his stout stomach is come down, and he comes home by weeping cross, and he that had formerly slighted the kindness of a father, and said, He would not always be holden within his fathers house, he would have his portion, and he hath it, and is gone, and at last when his heart and all fails him, he comes to himself and said, here I may starve and die too, the hogs fare better than I do, therefore home I will go to my father &c.

This is the third passage that I told you of in the description of this work of humiliation.

In these words there are these two things clear.

First, he submits himself to his father.

Secondly, he is content to be at his fathers disposing; he doth not seek to be his own carver, and say, if I may be my fathers steward, and have some eminent place in the house, then I will go home, no, but he saith, father, I am not worthy to be a Son, make me as a hired servant, if I can but get into my fathers house again; I will die rather than go away anymore: he is

content to be anything, so his father will but receive him into his family, though it were but to be a drudge in the kitchen, here's a heart worth gold, oh! (saith he) let all the weight lie upon me I care not what I be, only let me be a servant. So then from the former of these two, the Doctrine is this.

CHAP. IV. THE THIRD DOCTRINE.

The distressed sinner that despairs of all supply and succor in himself, is driven to submit himself to the Lord God for succor and relief.

It is no thanks to the Prodigal that he comes home now, neither is it any thanks to a poor sinner that he returns after all his wandering away from God, yet better late than never. For the opening of this point I will show two things.

1. First, What is the behavior of the heart in this work of submission, and the manner of it.

2. Secondly, The reasons why the Lord drives the heart to this stand, and makes it fall down at the footstool of mercy.

The first, how the Soul behaves itself in this subjection. The sinner having a sight of his own sin and being troubled and overwhelmed with the unsupportable sorrow that attends there unto, and yet he is not able to get power over his sin, nor assurance of pardon from the Lord; for you must conceive the sinner to be in the work of preparation, and he yet conceives God to be an enemy against him, though he is in a good way to mercy, yet

God comes as an angry God against him, and he takes what course he can and seeks far and wide, and improves all means and takes up all duties, that (if it were possible) he might heal his wounded Soul, and get ground against his corruptions, but the truth is, he finds no succor and receives no comfort in what he hath, nor in what he doth, and therefore being in this despairing condition; he seeth he cannot avoid God's anger, neither can he bear it, therefore he is forced (though loath) to make trial of the kindness of a father, and of the Lord, though for the present he apprehends God to be just and to be incensed against him, and though he hath no experience of God's favor for the while, and no certainty how he shall speed if he come to God; yet because he sees that he cannot be worse than he is, but he may be better if God please, and this he knows that none but God can help him: therefore he falls at the footstool of mercy, and lies groveling at the gate of grace, and submits himself to God that he may do what he will with him. When Jonah had denounced that heavy judgment and (as it were) thrown wild-fire about the streets, saying, within forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed; See what they resolve upon, they fasted, and prayed, and put on sack cloth and ashes; the Lord in mercy grant that we may take the like courses, who can tell (said they) but God may turn and repent him of his fierce wrath that we perish not. As if they had said, we know not what God will do, but this we know that we cannot oppose God's judgments, nor prevent them, nor succor ourselves: yet who can tell but the Lord may be gracious and bountiful, and yet continue peace and goodness to us in this kind; thus it is with a sinner despairing of all succor in himself, when he seeth hell fire flashing in his face, and that he cannot succor himself, then he saith, this I know that all the means in the world cannot save me, yet who can tell but the Lord may have mercy upon me, and cure this distressed conscience and heal all these

wounds that sin hath made in my Soul: when Paul went breathing out threatening's against the Church of God, and he came furnished with letters from the high Priests, with all his tricks and implements to persecute the Saints; the Lord met him and there was a single combat fought between them, the glory of the Lord amazed him, and threw him flat on the ground, and when Paul saw that the Lord Jesus had the advantage against him, he yielded himself and said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do. This is the lively picture of the Soul in this case; this subjection discovers itself in four particulars.

1. First, take the Soul despairing of mercy and succor in himself, he seeth and confesseth that the Lord may and (for ought he knows) will proceed in justice against him, and execute upon him those plagues that God hath threatened, and his sin deserved; and he seeth that Justice is not yet satisfied, and all those reckonings between God and him are not made up, and therefore he cannot apprehend but that God may and will take vengeance of him; he seeth that when he hath done all that he can, he is unprofitable, and Justice remains unsatisfied, and saith, thou hast sinned, and I am wronged, and therefore thou shalt die. See what the text saith, can a man be profitable to the Lord; as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it any gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect. So the Soul saith; Is all that I can do anything to the Lord, is the Lord's Justice any gainer by it? Nay, Justice is yet unsatisfied, because there is sin in all that I do, and therefore Justice may proceed against me: therefore the soul resolves, that the Lord may and will: Nay, why should he not come in vengeance, and Judgment against him?

2. Secondly, he conceives that what God will do, he can do, and he cannot avoid it. The anger of the Lord cannot be resisted; If the Lord will come and require the glory of his Justice against him, there is no way to avoid it, nor to bear it, and this crusheth the heart, and makes the soul to be beyond all shifts, and evasions, and all those tricks, whereby it may seem to avoid the dint of the Lord's blow. As Job saith, He is one mind and who can turn him, and what his soul desireth that doth he. It is admirable to consider it: for this is it that makes the heart melt and come under; When the Soul saith, If God come who can turn him, he will have his honor from this wretched proud heart of mine, he will have his glory from me, either here in my humiliation, or else hereafter in my damnation. And in the next verse, Job saith, Many such things are with him: As if he had said, he hath many ways to crush a carnal confident heart, and to make it lie low, He wants not means to pull down even the most rebellious sinner under heaven. And now mark what follows, He can crush them all; what became of Nimrod, Cain, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar; They are all brought down; therefore (saith he) I am troubled at his presence, when I consider it I am afraid, for God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.

3. Thirdly, As the sinner apprehends, that God may do what he will and he cannot resist him; So the soul flings away all shifts and tricks that he had, and he resigns up the power of all his privileges that he hath to defend himself withal; he casts away his weapons, and falls down before the Lord, and resigns himself into the Sovereign power and command of God. This was in the Spirit of the Prophet David; When the Lord had cast him out of his Kingdom, he said to Zadok; Carry back the Ark of God into the City, if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say to me, I have no

delight in thee, Behold, here I am, let him do with me as seemeth good in his eyes. Or as it was with those people, 2 Kings 10:2,3,4. Where when Jehu sent this message to the people of Israel, saying, Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your masters sons are with you, and there are with you chariots, and armor, and a fenced City, look out even the best and fittest of your masters sons, and set him on his fathers throne, and fight for your fathers house. But the text saith, they were all exceedingly afraid, and therefore they sent word to Jehu and said, two Kings could not stand out against thee, and then how can we stand? We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us, we will make no King, do thou that which is good in thine eyes. This is the frame of a poor Soul: When a poor sinner will stand upon his own privileges, the Lord saith, bear my Justice, and defend thyself by all that thou hast if thou canst; and the Soul saith, I am thy servant (Lord) do what is good in thine eyes, I cannot succor myself: therefore the heart gives up itself to be at the command of God.

4. Fourthly, The Soul thus yielding up the weapons, and coming in as to an enemy, and as conquered, then in the last place the soul freely acknowledgeth, that it is in God's power to do with him, and to dispose of him as he will; and therefore he lies and licks the dust, and cries mercy, mercy Lord. He doth not think to purchase mercy at the Lord's hands, but only saith; it is only in God's good pleasure to do with him as he will, but he looks at his favor and cries, mercy (Lord) to this poor distressed soul of mine. And when the Lord hears a sinner come from wandering up and down in his privileges, the Lord replies to the soul in this manner and saith. Doest thou need mercy? I had thought thy hearing, and praying, and fasting, would have carried thee to heaven without all hazard, therefore gird up thy loins, and make thy ferventest prayers, and let them meet my Justice, and

see if they can bear my wrath and purchase mercy; Nay (saith the sinner) I know it by lamentable experience, I have proved, that all my prayers and performances, will never procure peace to my soul, nor give any satisfaction to thy Justice, I only pray for mercy, and I desire only to hear some news of mercy, to relieve this miserable and wretched soul of mine; it is only mercy that must help me; Oh mercy, if it may be possible: the issue is thus much; The sinner seeth that all he hath, and can do, can never succor him, and therefore he throws away his carnal confidence, and he submits himself to the Lord; and now he seeth that the Lord may justly come against him, and that his justice is not satisfied, and that he cannot bear God's wrath, nor avoid it, and he casts away all his shifts, and lies down at the gate of mercy. As it is with a debtor that stands bound for some far greater sums, then ever he is able to pay; to satisfy of himself he cannot, and his friends will not: and he knows that the bonds are still in force and his creditor will sue him; avoid the suit he cannot, and to bear it, he is not able; and therefore he comes in freely, and offers himself, and his person, and gives up himself into his creditors hands, only he beseecheth him to remit that which he can never pay. Just so it is with the soul of a poor sinner. The Soul is the Debtor: and Divine Justice is the Creditor. When the poor sinner hath used all means to save and succor himself, and to make payment, and he hath (as it were) made a gathering of prayers all the Country over, and yet he seeth, that there is a controversy between God and him; and yet his sin is not pardoned: and God is Just and will have his honor, and he is not able to avoid the suite nor to bear it, and the Soul saith, as David did; Whither shall I go from thy spirit? And whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there, &c. So the Soul saith, God will have his payment from this heart blood of mine, if I go into the

East the Lord will follow me; and bid his Serjeant Conscience to arrest me, and I shall lie and rot in the Prison of hell forever. Now the Soul offers himself before the Lord, and saith, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: Oh show mercy (if it be possible) to this poor distressed Soul of mine: thus the Prodigal did. An other Similitude is this. Me thinks the picture of those four famished Lepers, may fitly resemble this poor sinner. When the famine was great in Samaria: There were four leprous men sat in the gate of the City, and they said, Why sit we here until we die? If we enter into the City, the famine is there, and if we sit here we die also; Now let us therefore fall into the hands of our enemies, if they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die. They had but one means to succor themselves withal, and that was to go into the Campe of their enemies, come (said they) we will put it to the venture, and so they did, and were relieved: This is the lively picture of a poor sinner in this despairing condition. When the Soul of a poor Leprous sinner is famished for want of comfort, and he seeth the wrath of God pursuing of him, and the Lord besets him on every side: at last he resolves thus with himself, I say, when he hath used all means, and finds succor in none; he resolves thus with himself and saith, if I go and rest upon my privileges, there is nothing but emptiness and weakness if I trust in them, and if I rest in my natural condition, I perish there also. Let me therefore fall into the hands of the Lord of Hosts, who (I confess) hath been provoked by me, and for ought I see is mine enemy, I am now a damned man, and if the Lord cast me out of his presence, I can but be damned that way, and then he comes to the Lord, and falls down before the footstool of a consuming God, and saith as Job did, What shall I say unto thee oh thou preserver of men? I have no reason to plead for myself withal, and I have no power to succor myself, my

accusations are my best excuse, all the privileges in the world cannot justify me, and all my duties cannot save me, if there be any mercy left, Oh succor a poor distressed sinner in the very gall of bitterness. This is the behavior of the Soul in this work of subjection.

The reason why the Lord deals thus with the Soul, and why he plucks a sinner upon his knees; there is great reason why he should do it. The reason is twofold. First, That the Lord may herein express and glorify the greatness of his power. And secondly, To show forth the glory of his mercy.

[*Reas. 1.*] First, the glory of his power is marvelously magnified, in that the Lord shows that he is able to pull down the proudest heart, and to lay low the haughtiest spirit under heaven, and those that have out-braved the God of heaven, and been opposite to him, and despised the glory of his name. For herein is the glory of his name greatly exalted, that he makes a poor wretch to come, and creep and crawl before him, and beg for mercy at his hands, and to be at his dispose.

It is a fine passage. You know how Pharaoh would out-face the Lord, saying, Who is the Lord that I should obey him? And as the Master sometimes saith to his servant, You shall, And you shall do this saith the husband to his wife. This is the sturdy fierceness of a company of wretches. Well, the Lord let him alone for the while, but in the 27th verse, when the Lord had freed and delivered his servants, and had plagued the Egyptians with the hail, then Pharaoh said, Now I know that the Lord is greater than all God's, and that he is righteous, but I and my people are wicked. Where is Pharaoh and Nimrod, and all the rest of those mighty ones of the world? They are all gone down to hell, and God hath destroyed them, for, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. Herein is the glory of God's power. So, it is here. As we use to say, Do you know such a man?

Yes. What was he? A professed drunkard, and a desperate despiser of God and his grace, and one that did hate the very face of an honest man. Oh, the Lord hath brought him upon his knees. Oh, admirable (saith he) what is he humbled, and is his heart broken? Oh yes, the Lord hath dejected him in that wherein he was proud. As it is amongst men; If two men be in controversy, and the one enters into suit with the other, and before a man will submit and yield himself, he will die, and rather spend all that he hath then to want his will, and he will make that tongue deny what it hath spoken. He thinks this his excellency: So, it is with our God. Herein is the power of the Almighty magnified, that he hath brought down those great Leviathans; and all those Nimrods and great Kings, which said, Who is the Lord? He hath made such as these are, to come in; and to submit unto him.

Secondly, by this means the Lord doth marvelously promote the praise of his mercy. First, partly for the greatness of it. And secondly, partly for the freedom of it. First, in that the Lord helps a poor sinner at a dead lift, and when all prayers, and hearings prevailed not, and when all privileges were not able to purchase mercy and favor, then the Lord shows mercy. Doth not this argue the excellency of that Balm? That will cure when all other means cannot do the deed, that the Lord should then (I say) look upon a poor sinner, and refresh him with one drop of mercy: Oh, this is unspeakable mercy! As the Prophet David saith, All my bones can say, Lord, who is like unto thee? As if he had said, This eye that hath wept for my sins, this tongue that hath confessed my sins, and this heart that hath grieved for sin, all these have been refreshed by thee. This prayer is not like to thee, this fasting and these privileges are not like to thee, for these could not succor me; but thou art the Lord that didst deliver and succor thy poor servant. And secondly, herein is also admirable freeness of mercy; that when the Lord's mercy was

but lightly looked after, that then the Lord should give mercy, and that to an enemy. For, the Soul can say, if anything in the world would have saved me, I should not have gone to the Lord for mercy; and yet when all would not do, and when I did not think of any such matter, then the Lord saved me. This is free mercy. The hope of Israel is not like others, and the God of Jacob is not like other God's. You distressed Souls, did not you know the time when God terrified you, and then offered mercy and you would none, but you would scramble for mercy, and shift for your own comfort, and yet the Lord brought down those proud hearts of yours, and when you were at a dead lift, and could find comfort nowhere else, then did the Lord show mercy to your Souls. Was not this free mercy? Wonder at it, and give God glory for it, even forever.

[*Use 1.*] This being so, that the Soul that is thoroughly humbled, yields to submit itself to the Lord: Then, this is like a Bill of inditement, against all the stout ones of the world. This shows how unworthy they are of any mercy; Nay, how unfit they are for mercy. They are so far from partaking of God's mercy, that they will not be humbled, and therefore they cannot be exalted: Nay, they have a base esteem of it, and so they hate their everlasting salvation. For, look how far they are from submission, so far they are from the comfort and happiness of the Lord. He that will enter in at this strait gate of subjection, is so far from ever going in the way to life; that he never set one foot (yet) in this way. Let me speak, as once the Prophet did; Hear and tremble all you stout ones of the earth, you that account it a matter of credit to cast off the Commandments of God, and that you can lift up yourselves against the Almighty. Good Lord, is it possible? You know what I say; there is many one here, and if they be not here, (as commonly they are not) let them hear of it. How is it that men slight all corrections,

and snap all God's Commandments in sunder, as Samson did the Cords, and they say, their tongues are their own, and their lusts are the commands that carry them; Nay, is it not come to this pass nowadays (for the Lord's sake think of it) that men account it a matter of baseness of spirit to be such childish babes, and to be so womanish, as to stoop at every command. Oh, you must not be drunk, (saith one) it is a hot argument, and are you such a child as to yield to it. No, let us follow our own ways; is it not thus? I appeal to your own Souls: there are too many guilty in this place? Do you think to out-brave the Almighty in this manner? Do you provoke the Lord to wrath, and do you not provoke your Souls to your own confusion? Doest thou think to go to heaven thus bolt upright: the Lord cannot endure thee here, and will He suffer thee to dwell with himself forever in heaven? What, thou to heaven upon these terms? Nay, thou must not think to out-brave the Lord in this manner, and to go to heaven too? How did the Lord deal with Lucifer, and all those glorious spirits? He sent them all down to hell for their pride. Let all such spirits hear, and know their misery. I do not trouble myself with any matter of indignation, it is no trouble to me, but only because of your sins, for you are the greatest objects of pity under heaven. You that know such, and have such husbands: oh mourn for them exceedingly. The Lord doth detest their persons, As the Wise man saith; The froward in heart are an abomination to the Lord. The Lord doth abhor that heart of thine: And, shall God abominate that proud heart of thine, and yet bless it, and save it, and will He dwell with such a heart in heaven? No, he hath somebody else to give heaven to. Secondly, thy estate is desperate here, and marvelous unrecoverable. As the same Wise man saith, He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, and will not stoop to any counsels, nor reproofs, but saith? Who meddles with you, and I know what I

have to do, and let every Tub stand upon his own bottom. How many of you here have been reprov'd for your swearing, but you leave it not. How many of you have been reprov'd for your profaning of the Lord's Day; do you withdraw yourselves from it. Oh no such matter! Go your ways then and mourn over those hard hearts of yours; and in private say thus. This is my sentence right. The Lord be merciful to my father (saith the child) and the Lord be merciful to my proud husband, (saith the wife), and to my wife (saith the husband), are not we they that have been often reprov'd? Have not we had such exhortations as have made the Church to shake, the devils would have gotten more good if they had had them, and yet we have cast of all, and we would not come in, we do not yet pray in our Families, but we throw away all; the Lord hath said it, he that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck and will not come in, shall perish, he is gone then, and therefore thou may say? Oh my husband is but a dead man, and my child is a dead child, he shall perish: but is there no remedy, (may some say) No, the text saith so, he shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. The truth is, I need say no more, but you that know your own hearts, bewail those hard hearts of yours, that (as the water by continual dropping, at last melts the flint so) if it be possible those proud hearts of yours may be brought down. If a drunkard, or an adulterer will submit to the Word there is remedy for them; but there is no remedy for him, that will not yield to the Spirit of God. The Lord be merciful to the Souls of them. Will you see your sturdy hearted husbands and children perish? The Lord in mercy set this home to your hearts at last, and prevail with them. Will you perish, and that suddenly? Oh let us pity them! Will you not yield now, but you will stand it out to the last man?

The Lord comes out in battle array against a proud person, and singles him out from all the rest, and when the vials of his wrath are poured out upon all wicked ones, (me thinks) the Lord saith, Let that drunkard and that swearer alone a while, but let me destroy that proud heart forever. You shall submit in spite of your teeth, when the great God of heaven and earth shall come to execute vengeance, and do not think to scar God with your mocks, you that will swear a man out of your company. Consider that place in Job, and see how the Lord comes with all his full might against a proud man. It is good to read this place often, that God may pull down our proud hearts. For he stretcheth out his hands against the Almighty (saith the text) and strengtheneth himself against God, and he saith, I will do it though my life lie at the stake for it, he strengthens himself and will do it. Surely God is afraid of him, he comes so well manned; the Lord must deal some way with him to overthrow him. Mark what the text saith; The Lord runs upon him even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers, because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat upon his flanks; the Lord comes upon him not at the advantage, but in the height of his pride, and in the rage of his malice the Lord will come upon him, and ruinate him forever: Those that now stand it out, and cast off all, carelessly throwing away the commandments of God; I would have them at the day of their death to out-stand the curse of God. The Lord God commands to sanctify his Sabbaths, and to love his truth and his children, yet, you will not, but you will strive against all, I would have you to out-stand the curse of God in the day of judgment, and when the Lord Jesus shall say, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, stand it out now, and say, I will not go to hell (Lord) I will not be damned. No, no; you broke the cords here, but the Lord will bind you in chains of darkness forever, remove those chains if you can.

No, the haughtiness of men shall be brought low, and the loftiness of men shall be abased, and the Lord shall only be exalted in that day.

[*Use 2.*] The second Use is for instruction, to show unto us that a humble Soul is marvelous teachable and tractable, and is willing to yield unto, and to be guided by any truth; it submits, and there is no quarrelling against the commandments of God, one word of God's mouth is enough. If the Lord reproveth, it takes the same home to itself, if the Lord promiseth, it believes; and if the Lord threatens, it trembles. It is easy to be convinced of whatsoever it is informed, if it have no good reason to gain-say it. It is not of that wayward and pettish disposition, that it will not be satisfied though all his reasons be answered, and all objections taken away. It is not led by his own humors, as many a man is, though his conceits be against reason, and opposite against God and his grace. Nay, it is content to yield to the authority of the truth, and to take the impression of every truth; it hears, and yields, and obeys, and frames itself answerably. As Job saith, That which I know not teach thou me, and if I have done any iniquity, I will do so no more. The humble Soul is content to confess his ignorance, and to submit to any truth, that may inform him, and it is content to receive that mercy and grace that is offered, by what means soever God seeth best to Communicate it. Nay, the heart that is truly submissive, is as willing to take comfort when it is offered upon good grounds, as it is to perform duty enjoined. By a foolish pettishness, the devil withdraws the hearts of God's own people from much comfort, that God hath dished out of purpose for their benefit. For howsoever the Soul of a poor sinner be truly touched, yet for want of this lowliness, and this teachableness, and submission it refuseth, that sap and sweet, that it should take and receive from the Lord. Take a poor sinner, that hath many sins burthening of him, and he is crushed with them, and

that in truth he desires comfort, but receives none: Let the Minister of God come, and answer all his arguments, and satisfy all his quarrels that he can make, and set him on a clear board, and tell him that the work of grace is clear, and mercy is appointed for him: Now mark how he flies of through that sullenness, and untoward peevishness and pride of Spirit, he casts away the mercy, and yields not to the comfort offered, though he is content to yield to the duties enjoined, and so he deprives himself of that mercy, and comfort that is offered; and thus when all is done time after time, the Soul saith, I see it not, and I perceive it not: and all the world shall not persuade me of it. Why? What, are you wiser than all the world? What a pride of heart is this? Oh saith he, another man may be cozened and deceived, but I know my own heart better than any Minister doth. But you tell the Minister what your condition is, and so, what you know he knows, and he hath more judgment to inform you, than you have of yourself. Then saith the Minister, all your cavils and objections are answered, and removed; and all that work of grace that God hath wrought, you have made it known and revealed, and all this is made good by the Word of God; now if all these quarrels be answered, and if all the reasons and evidences of the work of grace be made clear, that you cannot deny them; then, why may not you take comfort? Down with that proud heart of yours, that will not believe whatsoever the Minister saith. Oh the height of pride, and haughtiness of heart in this case! I speak to you to whom comfort and mercy is impropriated, down with those proud spirits I say. It is not because you cannot, but because you will not. It is said in Isaiah, God prepares the garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness. When the Lord seeth the soul prepared and humbled, he takes measure of it, and disheth out a comfort answerable, he prepares a consolation as fit as may be, and yet the Soul will not put it on, nor be

warned and refreshed with it; as it is with some way-ward and untoward child, who when his father hath prepared a suit of clothes fitting for him; because he hath not such and such a lace, he will not put it on, but throws all away. Oh, it is marvelous pride of spirit! A rod, a rod. Even so, when the Lord prepares the garment of gladness, you will not put it on, nor receive the comfort that is offered, and so swelt your own hearts.

Now I come to this last passage in this work of Humiliation, and this is the dead lift of all. The Prodigal doth not stand it out with his Father and say, I am now come again, if I may have half the rule in the Family, I am content to live with you. No, though he would not stay there before, yet now he cannot be kept out, he is content to be anything. Oh (saith he) I confess I do deserve the worst, but if any man will once help me in, and but throw me over the threshold, if I may but Scour the Kettles, or do any drudgery, I will never out again. Oh that I could get in once. As if he had said, you that think nothing sufficient, if you had tasted the bitterness of affliction as I have done, you would be glad of anything in a Fathers house; Come all you drunkards, and adulterers, you will needs away from God, and his grace? I tell you, if you were bitten and troubled as I have been, then you would say, it is good being in a Fathers house, and it is good yielding to the Lord upon any terms: as it was with this Prodigal: So it is with every Soul that is truly humbled with the sense of his own vileness. When the Soul seeth that no duties will quiet his Conscience, nor get the pardon of his sin, he comes home and is content, (not only to take up the profession of the Gospel upon some agreements with the Lord, and to say, if I may have honors, and preferments, and ease, and liberty, and the like, then I am content to follow it. Nay, the Soul saith, let me be a miserable slave and imprisoned, let me be a servant, and be brought to the heaviest hazards,

I care not what I be, if the Lord will but receive me to mercy. Lord (saith he) show me mercy, and if I am content to be, and to suffer anything. So from hence the Doctrine is this.

CHAP. V. THE FOURTH DOCTRINE.

The Soul that is truly humbled, is content to be disposed of by the Almighty, as it pleaseth him.

The main pith of this point lies in the word, content. This phrase is a higher pitch then the former of submission: and this is plain by this example. Take a debtor, who hath used all means to avoid the creditor: in the end he seeth that he cannot avoid the suit, and to bear it he is not able. Therefore the only way is to come in, and yield himself into his creditors hands; where there is nothing, the King must lose his right; so the debtor yields himself: but suppose the creditor should use him hardly, and exact the uttermost, throw him into prison; Now to be content to under-go the hardest dealing, it is a hard matter: this is a further degree then the offering of himself. So, when the Soul hath offered himself, and he seeth that God's writs are out against him, and his Conscience (the Lord's Serjeant) is coming to serve a Subpoena of him, and he is not able to avoid it, nor to bear it when it comes, therefore he submits himself and saith, Lord, whither shall I go, thy anger is heavy and unavoidable; Nay, whatsoever God

requires, the Soul lays his hand upon his mouth, and goes away contented and well satisfied, and it hath nothing to say against the Lord. This is the nature of the Doctrine in hand: and for the better opening of it, let me discover three things.

1. First, What is the behavior of the Soul, in this work of contentedness. Brethren, these are passages of great weight, that I would have every man to take notice of.

2. Secondly, What is the behavior of the Lord, or, what is the disposition wherewith the Soul must be contented.

3. Thirdly, The reason why the Lord will have the heart at such an under, and to be at his command? For, howsoever the Lord's work is secret in other ordinary things, yet all the Souls that ever came to Christ, and that ever shall come to Christ, must have this work upon them; and it is impossible that faith should be in the Soul; except this work be there first, to make way for faith.

How shall a man know when his Soul is thus contented? This frame of heart discovers itself, in three particular acts, or passages.

First, You may remember, that I told you before, that the sinner was resolved to yield to God, and to submit himself to his power, and pleasure, and he did beg mercy. Now the Soul that is truly abased, (though he seek mercy) yet he seeth so much corruption, and unworthiness in himself, that he acknowledgeth himself unfit for mercy. He cannot avoid the wrath of God, neither can he bear it, therefore he saith, Oh mercy, mercy Lord! What (saith the Lord) I had thought your own duties, and prayers, would have carried you out against my Justice, and have purchased mercy? Oh no (saith the Soul) it is only mercy that must relieve and succor me, but such is my vileness, that I am not fit for the least mercy and favor, and such is the

wickedness of this wretched heart of mine, that whatsoever are the greatest plagues, I am worthy of them all, though never so insupportable: and all the Judgments that God hath threatened, and prepared for the devil and his angels, they are all due to this wretched Soul of mine, for I am a devil in truth; only here is the difference, I am not yet in hell: and oh (saith the Soul), had the devils the like hopes, and means, and patience that I have enjoyed, for ought I know, they would have been better than I am. It is that which shames the Soul in all his sorrows, and makes him say, had they the like mercy? Oh those sweet comforts, and those precious promises that I have had, and that the Lord Jesus hath made to me, and hath come so many heavy journeys to knock at my heart, and said, Come to me ye rebellious children, turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die. Oh that mercy, that hath followed me from my house to my walk, and there mercy hath conferred with me, and from thence to my closet; and there mercy hath wooed me: and in my night thoughts when I awaked, there mercy kneeled down before me, and besought me to renounce my base courses, yet I refused mercy, and would needs have my own will; had the devils but such hopes, and such offers of mercy, they that now tremble for want of mercy; they would have given entertainment to it for ought I know: And what, do I seek for mercy, shall I talk of mercy? Alas, shall I seek for mercy, when in the meantime, I have thus slighted and despised it; what I mercy? The least of God's mercies are too good for me, and the heaviest of God's plagues are too little for me. Nay, the Soul finds no end in pleading, and therefore he reasons thus with himself, and saith, that God cannot do more against him then he hath deserved; but be sure, he thinks that God will not lay more upon him then he is worthy of. Nay, it is sure the Soul cannot bear nor suffer so much, as he hath deserved and plucked upon himself, if God should proceed in rigor

with him. For the sinner that will deal plainly, and discerns his evil exactly; it is easy for him to number up all his abominations, and the Soul thus reasons with itself, and saith, I only deserve eternal condemnation; for the wages of all sin is death, being committed against an infinite Majesty, and against a Divine Justice, and then, what do all these my sins deserve, committed, and continued in, and maintained against the light of God's Word, against all corrections, and all checks of conscience, and all the Commandments of God, hell is too good, and ten thousand hells is too little to torment such a wretch as I am. In truth, I begged mercy, but what, I mercy? I am ashamed to expect it, and with what heart can I beg this mercy which I have trodden under my feet? Shall that blood of Christ purge my heart, that blood that I have trampled under my feet, and accounted it as an unholy thing? And when the Lord hath wooed me, and his wounds were bleeding, and his sides gored, and his hideous cries coming into mine ears, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, yet this Christ have I slighted, and made nothing of his blood, and can the blood of Christ do me any service? Indeed I do crave grace, but how do I think to receive any. All the pillars of the Church can testify, how often grace, and mercy hath been offered to me, but I have refused it; therefore how can I beg any grace? And as the text saith, They shall see their sin and acknowledge their ways, and Judge themselves worthy to be condemned. So the Soul confesseth, that it is worthy of nothing that is good, it is not worthy of God's love, nor of God's preservation nor any other privilege, only he confesseth that he doth loath himself, and saith, Oh this stubbornness, and villainy, and this wretchedness of mine? What I mercy? No I am not worthy of any, it is more than I can expect, I am only worthy to be cast out forever. As the Prophet Ezekiel saith, That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy

mouth more because of thy shame; that is, they shall remember the evil that they have committed, and the Lord's kindness and mercy that they have opposed, and they shall be confounded, and not open their mouths anymore. So, now his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he saith, I remember my evil, and am ashamed to expect any mercy, I sought for mercy before, but now I see I am unworthy of any, and worthy of all the judgments that God can pour upon me. The Soul confesseth clearly, that he hath deserved more than God will lay upon him; for if God should pour all his wrath upon him, he must make him infinite to bear his infinite wrath, and therefore the Lord only lays so much upon him as he is capable of.

2. Secondly, the Soul acknowledgeth the equalness of God's dealings be they never so harsh in this kind. He confesseth that he is as clay in the hands of the Potter, and the Lord may deal with him as he will. Yea, the Soul is driven to an amazement at the Lord's patience, that he hath been pleased to reprieve him so long, and that God hath not cast him out of his presence, and sent him down to hell long ago. It is the frame of Spirit that the poor lamenting Church had, It is the Lord's mercy that we are not confounded, because his compassions fail not. When a poor drunkard seeth how he hath roared in the Alehouse against God and his truth, and how he hath plotted against the Saints, he wonders that ever God could bear with such a wretch, and that the earth hath not swallowed him up quick. And when the Lord hath humbled the heart of an adulterer, or adulteress, he begins to think thus with himself, the Lord saw all the evils that I have committed, and all my plotting's, and all my inveighing's and alluring's to this sin, and my delight in it: then the Soul admires that ever God's Justice was able to bear with such a monster, and that God did not confound him in his burning lusts, and cast him down to hell. Oh (saith he) it is because his

mercies fail not, that my life and all hath not failed long ago. Nay, the Soul concludes, that the Lord should not save him. As Nehemiah saith, Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly; as if he had said, It is righteous that every man should lie under his own load, and therefore thou mayest justly condemn us. Nay, the Soul saith, That God cannot but plague him for ought that he perceives in Justice; as Daniel saith, Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doth, because we obeyed not his voice: He speaks there of the 70 years captivity. So the Soul saith, Because the Lord is just, and righteous, and doth not only punish, but he cannot but punish, and therefore he justifies the Lord in all the plagues that ever can be inflicted upon him. And hence it is that the Soul will not maintain any kind of murmuring or heart rising against the Lord's dealings, much less doth he hide it in the Lord. But, though nature and corruption will be stirring, and sometimes the heart will be grudging against the Lord, and say, Why doth the Lord thus, and why are not my prayers answered, such a Soul is humbled, and such a Soul is comforted, and why not I as well as he, yet when any such matter riseth in the heart, he stifles, crusheth and chokes these wretched distempers, and doth abase itself before the Lord, saying, What if God will not (as the Apostle saith) speaking of the rejection of some, and the receiving of others: so the Soul saith, What if God will not hear thy prayers? And what if God will not pacify thy conscience? Nor show any mercy to thee, thou hast thy own, and doth the Lord do me any wrong, vile hell-hound that I am, I have my sin and my shame, wrath is my portion, and hell is my place, I may go thither when I will, it is mercy that God deals thus with me. Now the Soul comes to clear God in all his providence, and saith, It is just with God

that all the prayers which come from this filthy heart of mine, should be abhorred, and that all my labors in holy duties should never be blessed, for I have had these ends, and by respects in all my duties; it is I that have sinned against checks of conscience, and against knowledge; and therefore it is just that I should carry this horror of heart with me to my grave; it is I that have abused mercy, and therefore it is just and righteous with God, that I should go with a tormenting conscience down to hell; Oh that (if I be in hell) I might have a Spirit to glorify and justify thy name there, and say, Now I am come down to hell amongst you damned creatures, but the Lord is righteous and blessed forever in all his dealings, and I am justly condemned.

Thirdly, Hence the Soul comes to be quiet and frameable under the heavy hand of God in that helpless condition wherein he is; so that the Soul having been thus framed aforehand, it comes to this, that it takes the blow and lies under the burden and goes away quietly and patiently, he is quiet and saith not a word more: oh! This is a heart worth gold. He accounts God's dealing and God's way to be the fittest and most reasonable of all. Oh (saith he) it is fit that God should glorify himself though I be damned forever, for I deserve the worst; whatsoever I have it is the reward of my own works, and the end of my own way, if I be damned, I may thank my pride, my stubbornness, my peevishness of Spirit and all my base corruptions; what, shall I repine against the Lord because his wrath and his displeasure lies heavy upon me? Let me repine against my sin that made him do it. Let me grudge against my base heart that hath nourished these adders in my bosom, shall I be unquiet and murmur against the Lord because this horror of heart doth vex me? Oh, no, let me bless the Lord and not Speak one word against him, but let me repine against my sin; as the holy prophet David saith, I held my tongue and Spake nothing, because

thou Lord haddest done it. So the Soul saith, when the sentence of condemnation is even seizing upon him, and God seems to cast him out of his favor, then he saith, I confess God is just, and therefore I bless his name and yield to him: but sin is the worker of all this misery that hath befallen me. The holy Prophet Jeremiah pleading of the great extremity that had befallen the people of God, saith, woe is me for my hurt, my wound is grievous, but I said, truly this is my grief and I must bear it. This is the frame of a heart that is truly humbled; it is content to take all to itself and so to be quiet, saying, this is my wound and I must bear it, this is my sorrow and I will suffer it, thus you see what the behavior of the heart is in this contentedness. Hold these well for they are of marvelous difficulty and great use. But, what is the dealing of the Lord that the Soul must be contented with?

[*Ans.*] The behavior of the Lord towards the Soul in this kind discovers itself in two things. First, In what he will do to the Soul; Secondly, in the manner of his dealing, how he will deal with the Soul, and the heart must be contented with both these: Sometimes a man will bear a thing, but not the manner of it, that kills him; but God will make a sinner wait upon God for mercy, and beg again and again and be content with the harshest of his dealings and glad he may have it so too.

1. First thing that God will do to the Soul, and which the Soul must be contented with, is that salvation, and happiness, and the acceptation of a man's person now, must be no more in a man's own hands, nor in his own ability, the Lord hath taken the staff out of his hand; and salvation must be no more put in his own power. Here is a wonderful height of pride expressed before the Soul will yield to this. When Adam was created in his innocence, the Lord put a fair stock into his hand, and he might have traded

for himself, and he had liberty of will and power of grace, so that he might have gotten the favor of God, by that which he could do, if he would have done he might have lived: But, when Adam had betrayed that trust which God committed to him in the state of Paradise, because he had forfeited this trust, the Lord took all away from him, and nothing shall be in him, or from him anymore in the point of Justification, or acceptance as any way meritorious. Adam in his innocence might have required mercy by virtue of a Covenant from God, but Adam shall now have nothing in his own power anymore, but he shall have his Justification and acceptance (not in himself but) in another, even Jesus Christ. So that the reason why any Soul is justified and accepted with the Lord, it is merely in another, not in himself. It is a great matter to bring the heart to this: for the Soul to see nothing in himself, but all in and through Christ; Oh this is a difficult work. The Lord will not trust him with a farthing token. There are two passages marvelous useful this way, and therein you shall see the exceeding pride of a man's heart, and it is very common. One passage is in the Romans, Where the text saith, The Jew and the Gentiles sought for righteousness, that is, how they might find acceptance and righteousness in the sight of God. The Jew sought this by the works of the Law, that is, by himself, by his sacrifices, and washing, and the like; and he thought these would have acquitted him in the sight of God. But the text saith, Israel which followed after the Law of righteousness, hath not attained it, that is, they have not attained it, because they sought it not by faith and from Christ, but, in and of themselves, and therefore they never came to attain it. But most pregnant is that other place, where the Apostle saith, I bear them record that they have the zeal of God but not according to knowledge, for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,

have not submitted themselves to God's righteousness: the cause why any man is acquitted of God; it is not because of anything that he hath or doth, but it is from another's righteousness. But what a great matter is this: The text faith, That going about to establish their own righteousness they have not submitted, &c. here in this place there is this remarkable. They thought to establish their own righteousness, that is, their own duties, and services, their own parts and abilities, and because they thought to find acceptance for what they did, they did not submit. Submission argues a point of subjection, and the want of this, horrible pride. This is marvelous devilish pride, that a man should set up the lusts of his own righteousness, and duties, and think to find acceptance, and reconciliation with, and pardon from the Lord because of these. So that now the Soul is nothing, and the Lord saith unto him, thou shalt go in rags all thy days, that Christ may be thy righteousness. Thou shalt be a fool, that Christ may be thy wisdom; and thou shalt be weak, that Christ may be all thy strength, and I will make thee submit to that righteousness of Christ. Nay, the Lord saith further, if you think to find acceptance, and to purchase mercy by what you can do, then come your way, and bring all those prayers, and duties, and see if they can all answer my exact Law of righteousness, and satisfy my Justice. Thus the Lord is fain to empty a man of himself, this is an admirable work of the Spirit, when the heart is thus content to be at God's carving, and to have nothing of its own, to be ignorant, weak and mean, and to have all from a Christ. This is considerable, every man would fain bring something with him, even where God hath wrought grace, and then we are all dead in the nest, and all amort when we find it not, and we are ready to say, if I had these, and these enlargements, then God would accept me, but because I have not, the Lord will reject me. What is this but to set up the merits of a

man's parts and duties: therefore it is that the Lord will bring the Soul to this, to be content to be justified, (not for what he hath,) but for something in another, besides what he can do to entitle himself to heaven and happiness. Therefore the Apostle saith, To him that worketh not but believeth (on him that justifieth the ungodly) is faith accounted for righteousness. This is our nature; We would fain be joint-purchasers with Christ, and have something of our own of merit (to make us find acceptance with God) as well as Jesus Christ in the point of Justification. But the Lord will bring the heart to this, it shall come as an ungodly wretched traitor, that the Lord may justify him in Christ. Why dare not a poor sinner sometimes come to Christ, and look to him for mercy? Oh, he is not worthy. But, art thou not content to see thy unworthiness? Yes (saith he) but I see such pride, such liveness in holy duties, and such corruption that I dare not go to Christ for mercy. If this be a burden to thee, and if thou art content to be rid of this, then Christ hath prepared mercy for thee, and thou mayest take it; the Lord will make thee know that thou art not accepted, because thou art worthy, but through Christ. The Lord justifies the ungodly.

The second part of the Lord's dispose, that he brings the Soul unto, it is this. As the Soul must look for what it hath from another: so in the second place, it must be content to take, what mercy, and what that other will give. Not, what the Soul thinks fitting; but, what mercy accounts the best for him. Now, see this blessed frame of heart in these three particulars.

1. First, The Soul is content that mercy shall deny what it will to the Soul, and the Soul is content, and calmed with whatsoever mercy denies. If the Lord will not hear his prayers, and if the Lord will cast him away, because he hath cast away the Lord's kindness, and if the Lord will leave him in that miserable and damnable condition, which he hath brought himself into, by

the stubbornness of his heart, the Soul is quiet. Though I confess, it is harsh and tedious, and long it is ere the Soul be thus framed; yet the heart truly abased, is content to bear the estate of damnation; because he hath brought this misery and damnation upon himself. In a word, the Soul seeth, that it deserves nothing at God's hands; and therefore he is content, if God deny him anything; and it befalls the Soul in this case as it did David: See how willingly he takes, whatsoever the Lord shall allow him. Where he saith; Carry back the Ark of God into the City, if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation; but if he shall say, I have no delight in David; Behold here I am, let him do whatsoever is good in his eyes. As it was with David for a Temporal Kingdom. So it is with the Soul for a Spiritual Mercy. The Soul saith, if there be any mercy for a poor rebellious creature, the Lord may look graciously upon me; but if the Lord shall say; thou hast brought damnation to thyself, therefore I will leave thee in it. Behold, here I am, let the Lord do with me what he will.

[*Obj.*] But, some may here object and say, Must the Soul, can the Soul, or ought it to be thus content, to be left in this damnable condition?

[*Ans.*] For the answer hereof. Know, that this contentedness implies two things, and it may be taken in a double sense.

First, Contentedness sometimes implies nothing else, but a carnal security; and a regardlessness of a man's estate, he regards not his own Soul, what he is, nor what he hath, nor what shall become of him. This is a most cursed sin, and this contentedness is nothing else, but a marvelous negligence, either of God's glory or his own good; and it is a sin to give way to it: and it is a fore-runner of damnation to that man which entertains it. The Soul that is truly humbled and abased, cannot (nay it dare not) say so

in cold blood, setting aside passions, and temptations). Nay, this contentedness argues damnation forever. This is not meant in this place, neither is it lawful to give way to it; and it is certain, upon these terms the Soul shall never be saved; God will make him prize mercy, and care for it too before he have it.

But then; Secondly, it implies a calmness of Soul not murmuring against the Lord's dispensation towards him, and this contentedness is ever accompanied with the sight of a man's sin, and the following of God for mercy. The Soul that is thus contented to be at God's disposing, it is ever improving all means, and helps that may bring him nearer to God, but if mercy shall deny it, the Soul is satisfied and rests well apaid; this every Soul that is truly humbled may have and hath in some measure. Yet you must not throw all at six and sevens, no, it is a cursed distemper of Spirit that you must hate as hell itself. But this contentedness is opposed against quarrelling with the Almighty, and this every humbled Soul doth attain unto, though it be not so plainly seen. As it is with some thief that is taken for a robbery and the sentence of death hath past against him: he should not neglect the using of means for to save his life and to get a pardon, and yet if he cannot get a pardon, he must not murmur against the Judge for condemning of him because he hath done nothing but Law. This thief should use means for a pardon, but if he cannot get one, he should be contented though the sentence pass against him: So, we should not be careless in using all means for our good but still seek to God for mercy, yet thus we must be, and thus we ought to be contented with whatsoever mercy shall deny because we are not worthy of any favor; and the humble Soul reasons thus with itself, and saith, my own sin and my abominations have brought me into this damnable condition wherein I am, and I have neglected

that mercy which might have brought me from it, therefore why should I murmur against mercy? Though it deny me mercy, and if mercy leave me in that miserable estate, which I have brought myself into, I have but the reward of my own works. Mark this well. He that is not willing to acknowledge the freeness of the course of mercy, is not worthy, nay, it is not fit to receive any mercy: but that Soul which is not content that mercy deny him what it will, he doth not give way to the freeness of the Lord's grace and mercy, and therefore that Soul is not fit for mercy. I conclude all thus. Judge with yourselves whether this be not a marvelous hideous pride of heart or no? That the sinner doth murmur because the Lord will not dispense of mercy as he will himself, either the sinner thinks that he hath deserved mercy, and therefore he is angry with God because he gives it not, or else, he thinks himself wiser to dispose of mercy than God; both which are most devilish pride of heart, and arguments of a haughty heart that is not yet fit for mercy; nay, if this be in the heart and if the heart allow of this and continue in this distemper, the Soul cannot receive mercy.

[*Obj. 2.*] But some may object. Can a man feel this frame of heart, to be content, that mercy should have him in hell? Do the Saints of God find this? And can any man know this in his heart?

[*Ans.*] To this I answer. Many of God's servants have been driven to this, and have attained to it, and have laid open the simplicity of their Souls, in being content with this. But the secret passage of the Soul is most subtle here, and hard it is to find this, and clearly to discern this frame of spirit this way: but the best way to guess it, and to be able to discern it, is this. For this end, you must know these three things.

First, that the Soul out of the nature of it, and in nature cannot but desire the preservation of itself, and it is a rule that God hath stamped in the

creature, and therefore we must not think that nature must or should, or can go further then nature, and it is not the fault of nature, that it is carried in this kind.

But secondly, the Soul being humbled, cannot but yield itself, to be disposed of by the Lord as he will, yea, if the Lord will bring destruction upon it.

Thirdly, though the Soul sometimes find a secret rebelling against God, and a grudging against the Lord's dealings, and the sinner begins to say, these are my corruptions, and still my sins prevail against me, and I shall one day perish, and the Lord seems not to look at me, and with that, the Soul sometimes grudgeth, and repines at the providence of God, yet the heart that is truly humbled, grudgeth at himself, because he hath such a quarrelling heart against the Lord's dealing with him in this kind. Nay, I have known many in the anguish of heart, when they have thus quarreled with the Almighty, they have fallen into a desperate extremity, and thought they had committed that sin against the holy Ghost; Insomuch, that it hath made them to walk more humbly before God all their days; but (I say) when the Soul finds these distempers, it labors to undermine them, and it dares not quarrel against God, it dare not but yield, and this is an argument that the Soul is content.

2. Secondly, The Soul that is contented comes to be well apaid with this, that mercy shall take away from him what it will, friends, and means, and ease, and liberty, and credit, and whatsoever it is that the heart hath loved most. It is content that God should strip him naked of all: And hence it is, that we shall observe it in experience, and in practice. A broken battered Soul, that hath been long overwhelmed with the weight of his corruptions, the Lord brings him to a marvelous desperate low ebb: You may see a man,

sometimes in the torment of Conscience, that nature and natural parts begin to decay, his understanding grows weak, and his memory fails him, and he grows to be marvelously distracted, and besides himself, so that the party which was (before) a man of great reach and of able parts, and was admired, and wondered at for his wisdom, and government; he is now accounted a silly sot, and a mad man, in regard of the horror of heart that hath possessed him, in so much that the husband saith, Oh my wife is undone, and the father saith, my child is undone, he was a fine witty child before, but now he is a very sot. Yea, the mercy of God will not leave a man before he be content to be a despised man, that he may find mercy and be saved, and mercy will pluck away all those parts and gifts from him, and make him glad to have salvation, and all in another: And in conclusion, when God cheers up his heart again, he is more wise than ever, and more able than ever, both for temporal, and spiritual affairs. How can you believe (saith our Savior) that seek honor one of another. Without this dealing of God, no man would ever come to heaven, though the Lord sometimes abates some measure of it. It may be before this work, the Soul saith, if I may have honors, and ease, and liberty, and credit, so it is; I care not whether ever I have drop of mercy or no: But the text saith, How can you believe which seek honor one of another, and not that honor that comes from God only. Mercy will bring you down upon your knees, and you shall not be content with the honors of the world; No, no, mercy will make you content to be fools, and to take that honor only which is from God, though you be abased, and hated, and persecuted in the world. It is against reason that the Soul can believe, except this be in the heart.

As the humbled soul is content, that mercy shall deny him anything, and take anything from him, so it is content, that mercy enjoin what it will, and

make what Edicts, and Law it will: So that the Commands, and Precepts of the mercy of God in Christ may take place in his heart. When John the Baptist came to prepare them for Christ, and the hearts of the people were humbled, the Publicans came to him saying, Master, What shall we do? And so the soldiers said, Master, what shall we do? And he said, Do no man wrong, but be content with your wages. The question is not now, covetousness, and cruelty, what shall we do? No, the soldiers came now, and said, Thou art our Master, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of wisdom is revealed to thee in the Word, command and enjoin thou what thou wilt, and they are content, with whatsoever he commands them. The humbled heart is content, that mercy do what it will with him, not only that mercy shall save him, for so far a reprobate, and a carnal hypocrite may be content. The hypocrite is marvelous willing, that mercy shall save him; but his lusts and corruptions must rule him still. You are content, that mercy should save you from your peevish heart, and yet your peevish heart must rule you still; and you are content that Christ should save you from your drunkenness, and profaning of the Lord's Day, but these lusts must rule you still. A drunkard that hath gotten some dangerous surfeit, is content that the Physician should cure him, not because he would leave his drunkenness, but because he would have his health, and therefore being up, he returns to his drunkenness again. And the thief that is condemned to die, cries for a pardon, not because he would live to be an honest man, but to be free from the halter; and therefore when he is freed, he goes to the hie way and robs again; it is not for honesty that he desires a pardon, but for liberty. Deceive not yourselves: mercy will never save you, except mercy may rule you too. Here is a heart worth gold, and the Lord delights in such a Soul, that falls into the arms of mercy, and is content to take all from mercy, and to be at

mercies disposing, and to have mercy sanctify him, and correct him, and teach him, and to rule in him in all things. This the heart of a truly abased sinner will have, and it will say, Good Lord do what thou wilt with me, rule this Soul, and take possession of me, only do good to the Soul of a poor sinner. If the Lord give anything, he is content, and if the Lord take away anything, or command anything, he is content. You that are ruled by your lusts, think of this. When the Lord hath awakened and arrested your Souls, and you are going down to hell, Oh, then you will cry, Lord forgive this and that sin, it is true, I have hated and loathed the Saints of God, good Lord forgive this sin, oh that mercy would save me, then mercy will answer, and say, When you are out of your beds, you will return to your old courses again, no, he that ruled in you, let him save and succor you. I will save none (saith mercy) except I may rule them too.

3. Thirdly, The last degree of contentedness is this. The Soul is willing that the Lord should make it able to take what mercy will give. This is a lower peg that the Soul is brought unto. The sinner before had nothing of his own in possession, nay, he can challenge nothing of the other, but merely to do what he will, and he is not able to take what mercy will give and bestow. And therefore he is not only content that mercy provide what it thinks good, but also to give him strength to take what mercy gives. The beggar that comes to the dole, though he have no means to help himself withal, and though he can challenge nothing of the man, yet he hath a hand, and can receive the dole that is given him, but a poor sinner is brought to this low ebb, (and this shows the emptiness of it) that as he hath no spiritual good at all, and can challenge no good, neither is he able to take that good which mercy provides. The hand of the Soul whereby it must receive mercy, is faith, and the humbled Soul seeth that he is as able to satisfy for his sin,

as to believe in a Savior that must satisfy. And he is as able to keep the Law, as to believe in him that hath fulfilled the Law for him. In Saint John, believing is called receiving, and therefore the poor sinner seeth that it is not only mercy and salvation that must do him good, but he seeth that if mercy and salvation were laid down upon the nail for believing and receiving of it, he could not do it of himself, and therefore the Lord must give him a hand to receive it with. You know the Apostle Paul saith, The natural man cannot receive the things that be of God. And the same Apostle is plain, to you it is given to believe. So that faith is a gift, and a poor sinner is as able to create a world, as to receive mercy of himself. The want of this, is the cause why many a man that hath made a good progress in the way of happiness, he falls short of his hopes. Many a sinner hath been awakened, and his heart humbled, and the Soul comes to hear of Christ, and thinks to lay hold of mercy and Christ out of his own proper power, and thus he deceives himself, and the faith that he dreamed to have was nothing else but a fancy, a faith of his own framing, it was never framed by the Almighty Spirit of the Lord in heaven, he never saw need of the power of God, to make him able to believe as well as to save him, and therefore his faith and all came to just nothing. Now the broken-hearted sinner saith, All that I expect it must be from another, and I am content to take what mercy will give, and that mercy shall deny me what it will, and give me what it will, and I am content that mercy rule in me, nay, that mercy must give me a heart to believe and to take mercy, or else I shall never believe. Now you see what it is that the Soul must be contented withal.

Now I come to show the manner of God's dealing with the Soul, for the Soul must be content with this too, as I told you before. The manner of God's dealing may appear in three particulars.

1. First, the Soul stoops to the condition that the Lord will appoint, be it never so hard, and it is content to come to God's terms, be they never so harsh and wearisome. As, sometimes when the soul finds that the heaviest hand of the Lord hath laid long upon him, and that the sharpest arrows of the venom of the displeasure of the Almighty stick deepest in him, and he finds the fierceness of God's wrath burning in his heart, and that all his sins which have been sealed up in a bag, as Job saith, they are all set in order before him, and the wrath of the Lord (more heavy then any mountain) falls upon his back, (I say) when the poor sinner finds himself thus pursued after, in the fiercest and most terrible manner, the abased heart dare not fly away from God, nor repine against the Lord, but he lies down meekly. 1. He will not fly away from God, for that is his pride. Nay, he dare not do it. He will not go with Saul to the Witch of Endor, nor with Judas to a halter. When the Lord let Judas see that he had betrayed innocent blood, and filled his heart with horror, he did not go to God and lie down under the harshest horror, but he went to a rope and hanged himself, and all through his pride, because he was not content with the harsh dealing of God, though he leaped from the firepan into the fire, As the proverb is. And likewise Cain went into the land of Nod. So, when the Lord hath awakened a poor creature, and after a good while, that a man would have thought he had gone on a good way in a Christian course, at last when he finds that he is not able to bear the wrath of God, but more iniquity comes in against him, then he flies of from God, and falls from a Christian course, and goes to the Ale-house, or some other base course, and so hardens his conscience: but (I say) the humble Soul dare not do so, but lies at God's foot-stool, and if it were the very bottom of the dregs of God's wrath, and the very fire of hell, he is content to undergo God's dealing. He doth not question God's dealing, and say, others are not

thus, and thus terrified, and why should I be so? No, the Soul returns all against itself, and saith, why do I talk of others? They have not such untoward, unclean peevish hearts as I have. The humble soul resolves with the Church in Micah, I have sinned and therefore I will bear the indignation of the Lord: So the Soul saith, I have sinned most heinously, I know not their sin, but I know my own sin, and therefore I will bear the Lord's wrath, though it be never so unsupportable, and unsufferable; Lord give me a heart, that I may be able to bear it. When a Malefactor comes to the Assizes, he looks for nothing but condemnation, and execution, if he can escape with burning in the hand, or branding in the forehead, or shoulder, he is glad, and goes well apaid, and cries, God save the King, because he thought he should have been hanged: So it is with an humble, and a self-denying sinner; When the poor creature finds the heaviest of God's indignation upon him, and such strange distempers, as if a thousand devils were within him, the Soul quiets itself thus, and saith, Why do I thus fret? And wherefore am I thus perplexed? It is well that I scape thus: I might have been in hell this day, and blessed be God that it is no worse, that I am not in hell; I might have been roaring in hell, as thousands of poor reprobates are, that have no more hope of mercy; therefore I will bear whatsoever the Lord lays upon me.

Secondly, as he is content with the hardest measure, so he is content with the longest time. He is content to stay for mercy, be it never so long. After the poor soul hath his eyes growing dim with waiting for mercy, his hands grow feeble, and his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and his heart begins to sink, and his Soul shakes within him, with waiting for the mercy and goodness of the Lord; and yet he finds no mercy, and hath no Inkling of any favor, yet God looks a far of. Yet his Soul is content with this. If a

beggar should stay half a day for an alms it would grieve him, though that be his pride. See what Isaiah saith, I will wait upon the Lord that hath hid his face from Jacob, and I will look for him. As if the poor sinner did say, The Lord hath hid his face away, and turned his loving Countenance from me, yet I will look towards heaven, so long as I have an eye to see, and a hand to lift up, I will yet look to heaven to the Lord that hath not (as yet) heard nor answered my prayers, the Lord may take his own time, it is manners for me to wait and stay God's time: Away therefore with that peevishness, and that discontentedness of Soul, that when a poor sinner hath called, and cried, and finds no answer, and hears no news from heaven, he secretly intends to lay all aside; As if a man, lift a weight again, and again, and seeth that it is too heavy for him, he lets it alone. So many poor creatures are content to let all alone, and say; why should I wait upon God anymore? I have prayed, and cried thus long, and find no answer; why should I wait any longer? How now? Who shall have the worst of it? Cannot God have his glory without your prayers? Why should you wait? This is horrible pride of heart. Why should you wait? Its no marvel, that you should take such State to yourselves? Who must wait then? Must the King wait, or the Subject? The Master or the Servant? The Judge or the Traitor? Down with that proud and sturdy heart of yours. A humble Soul dare not do so; he is content to wait for God's mercy, and you will be brought to it too, before ever the Lord will give you any mercy. The humble soul saith thus, I have waited thus long, and the Lord seems to be angry with my person, and prayers, and all is blasted, yet I will wait still; Nay, I am glad that I may wait? What, wait upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and mercy: Yes, and glad you may. Kings and Princes have done it, and blessed are they that wait upon mercy. Nay, the poor broken heart resolves thus, and saith, if I lie and lick

the dust all my days, and cry for mercy all my life long, if my last words might be mercy, mercy, it were well I might get mercy at my last gasp: Oh, I bless God, that yet I live here, and that I am not in hell as thousands are, that wait for judgment and vengeance, blessed be God, that yet I may wait, till God look upon me in goodness and mercy.

3. Lastly, when the Soul hath stayed a long time, it is content with the least pittance of mercy; he is not like many proud beggars, that think much when they have stayed long, if they have but a farthing. Nay, if he have but from hand to mouth, It is all that he craves, and all that he looks for. This is our nature; We would fain have something to trade withal, but the Lord will keep the staff in his own hand, and the Soul is content to have it so. He comes sometimes and God will not hear, and he goes away, and comes again, and then goes away fasting, and well contented too. See how the poor Woman of Canaan did. She comes to beg mercy of our Savior, and he said, It is not lawful to cast the children bread to dogs, truth Lord (saith she) I am as bad as thou canst call me, I yield all, I am as vile a sinful poor creature as ever any was; Yet Lord the dogs may eat the crumbs that fall from their Masters table. You know the Dog must stay till his Master comes in, and when he is come, he must stay till he sit down, and then till he cut his meat, and he must not have the meat from his trencher neither, when he hath stayed all this while, he hath nothing but the crumbs. So it is with a poor sinner; you must not think that God will be at your beck: No, you must be content with the crumbs of mercy, and pity, and lie under the table, till the Lord let the crumbs fall. The humbled soul saith, Lord, let my condition be never so hard, do what thou wilt with me, let the fire of thy wrath consume me here, only recover me hereafter, and let me find mercy, and if the time be never so long, if at last gasp I may find mercy I am content, and

whatsoever thou givest, I bless thy name for it. The Soul doth not quarrel with the Almighty, and say, Why are not my graces increased? And why am not I thus, and thus comforted? And refreshed: Nay, it lies, and looks for mercy, and if it have but a crumb of mercy, it is comforted, and quieted forever. Thus the heart is brought very low.

Why doth the Lord thus bring the heart under, is this necessary and requisite? Yes, it is without all question, not only convenient but very necessary, that it should be so. And the reason is taken from the nature of the covenant of grace which requires this; and without which the covenant of grace could not be fitted for us. For the covenant of grace is this, Believe and live. The condition on our part is faith, and believing. Now faith is nothing else, but a going out of the Soul, to fetch all from another, as having nothing of itself, and therefore this resting in ourselves, will not stand with the nature of this covenant. Now were it so, that we were not resolved to yield to, and to be guided by another, it is certain, we could not have our hearts enlarged to go to that other: by whose wisdom, and providence, we would not be guided and disposed. To be in ourselves, and out of ourselves, to have power in ourselves, to dispose of anything belonging to our spiritual estate, and to fetch all from another; these are two contraries, and therefore cannot stand together. To have the dispensation of life, and grace in our own hands to dispose of it as we will, it utterly overthrows the nature of this second Covenant of mercy and grace in Christ. For (I pray you observe it) this I take to be the main difference, between the second main Covenant of grace, whereof the Apostle disputes so often. And the first Covenant of works, which he so often confutes. The first Covenant is, to Do and Live, This Adam had, and if he had stood still, he should not have needed any Savior: The second Covenant is, Believe and Live, that is, to live by

another. These two cannot stand together, in one and the same Soul, at one and the same time. The same Soul that is saved by the Covenant of Grace, cannot be saved also by the Covenant of Works. The Lord in the beginning, put the stuff into Adams hand, and he had liberty, to dispose of Life and Salvation; by reason of that ability, and that principle of Grace that God had given him; for he had perfect knowledge, and perfect holiness, and righteousness, and by the power of these he had liberty, freely to please God, and to keep the Law, and to be blessed in so doing, and if he had done that which he had power to do, he might have been blessed forever, and we all in him, but he lost it, and so overthrew himself, and all his posterity: Now we being thus fallen in Adam; and being deprived of all that holiness, and righteousness which Adam had: Now the sinner is neither able to fulfill the Law, and so to purchase mercy for himself; nor to satisfy for that which is done amiss. A sinner must die, and yet he cannot satisfy in dying: he is dead in sins and trespasses, and having lost all that ability which Adam had: therefore the Soul must go out of it self, and since it is so, that nothing which he hath, or doth can save him, he must go to another, that whatsoever is amiss, that other may satisfy for it, and whatsoever mercy is needful, he may purchase it, and whatsoever is to be done, he may do it. Now, what we have done amiss, Christ hath satisfied for it, and what we cannot do, Christ hath done it, he hath fulfilled all righteousness. And hence it is, that these two are so professedly opposite the one to the other, the Law, and Faith. The first Adam, and the second Adam. Consider a passage or two. The Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace cannot stand together in the point of Life and Grace; As the Apostle saith, If it be of grace, then it is no more of works, and if it be of works, then it is no more of grace. As if he had said, If a man be saved by grace, then he cannot be saved by works, and if he be

saved by works, then he cannot be saved by grace. And in another place the same Apostle saith, If they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is of none effect. If a man that thinks to merit life by the Law be an heir, what needed faith, or the promise. For, it is the nature of faith, to go out to Christ, and to receive all from him; now if I had enough in myself, I had no need of Christ, and faith were made of none effect. You are saved by grace through faith, saith the Apostle,) and that not of yourselves. There S. Paul brings in a denial, not only of sin but of works, and saith, You are not saved of yourselves. He doth not say, of your sin; but, yourselves; you, and your works, and all must be renounced, and all that you are and do, as any way meritorious; and not to be found in yourselves but in Christ, before ever you can receive mercy from Christ. So I dispute thus. There is none that will save us, Man nor Angel, and our works will not; therefore we must go to Christ, and if we go to Christ for all, and expect all from him, then we must be content, to be guided by him in all. Now, let me propound this question: Either thou must be content, to be at the dispose of God, and mercy, or at whose dispose wilt thou be. If thou wilt have anything else (besides mercy) to dispose of thee? Thou makest that to be a Mediator to thee. But haply thou wouldst dispose of thyself, and dispose of mercy after thy own mind? Yes, so I thought. It may be thou sayest, I will have grace, if I may dispose of it. Thus a proud heart would fain have it in his own hands; but upon these terms thou never hadst: (nay, thou never shalt have) grace. Here is the winding of the Soul. Therefore many dare not venture their salvation upon God's free favor. But they would have it in their own power, that they may receive it when they will, that they may be drunk and take grace, and be proud, and profane, and take grace when they will. It is a sottish delusion of men, that are deluded, and blinded

by the devil. But that the Soul (which would have it thus) cannot have it upon these terms, I thus reason.

He that will have grace from his own dispose shall never have grace, because he hath none in his own power to dispose of;

But he that is not content to be at the dispose of grace, and to be at the dispensation of God's good pleasure for mercy and grace, he would have it to be at his own disposing.

And therefore he shall (nay he never can) have grace.

In a word. Who must dispose of you? Your selves? Then you must have that grace which you can dispose of, and thats just none at all. Grace is merely in God's hands to dispose of. Thus we have brought the Soul to be fitly prepared for Christ, and mercy, and grace.

Now let us do as travelers do, they sometimes sit down, to reckon how many miles they have gone. So let us inquire, what we have spoken. You know I mentioned two things, necessary in this work of preparation for Christ. First, Contrition. And secondly, Humiliation. First, God brings the sinner to a sight of himself and his sin; and makes him to be insupportably burdened with the vileness of it, so that now the heart of a poor sinner, seeth an absolute necessity of a change, and therefore thinks thus with himself, if I rest thus, I shall never see God with comfort. That's for Contrition. Now he seeth that he must change, and he is content to change; and therefore, though he will no more be drunk, nor follow his old base practices, yet he begins to shirk for his own comfort, and he useth all the ordinances of God, to see what they can do for him, and he goes to himself, and his self-sufficiencies, and finding no succor there, he falls down before the Lord and begs mercy, and yet he seeth himself unworthy of mercy, without which he must perish. He hath nothing, and he can do nothing to merit it; yet he is

content, that God should dispose of him as he thinks good, only (if it be possible) he prays, that the Lord would show mercy to a poor forlorn creature. Now the sinner is pared, and fitted for Christ, as a graft for the stock. He is come to the very quick, and is as little as may be. All his swelling sufficiency is pared away: For, he is not only brought to renounce his sin, but even his sufficiency, and all his parts and abilities; which Adam needed not have done, if he had stood in his innocence. In a word, he is wholly plucked from the first Adam, (for here is the main lift) So that now the second Adam Christ Jesus, may take possession of him, and be all in all in him, (as the Apostle saith): Now, the Soul is a fit matter for Christ to work upon, namely, to make him a vessel fit to receive mercy and grace: and when he hath fitted him for mercy, he will give it to him: and when he hath given him grace, he will maintain it, and increase it, and then quicken it, and crown it, and perfect it in the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ. And lastly, he will glorify himself in all these. Here is a right Christian indeed, that expresseth Christ in all. Christ preparing, Christ giving, Christ maintaining, and increasing, and Christ quickening, and Christ crowning. Thus you see that it is not left as a matter of liberty, but it is of necessity required, that the heart be thus contented: every humble heart hath this in some measure, though not (all) so sensibly.

The uses are double. First, to the people, to show them what to do. Secondly, to the Ministers.

The uses for the people are. First, for Instruction. Secondly, for Examination. Thirdly, for Terror. Fourthly, for Exhortation.

The first use is for instruction, and that is double.

First, Is it so that the humble Soul is content to be thus at the Lord's disposing? Then from hence we collect this use, that, they which have

greatest parts and gifts and means, and places, abilities and honors, for the most part they are most hardly brought home to the Lord Jesus Christ. They that are most hardly humbled, they are most hardly converted; how hard a thing is it for such men as have gifts, and learning, and wisdom, or any bigness that makes them swell naturally, how hard is it (I say) for such men to be saved. I wish their courses did not testify the same; they that are most high and greatest in gifts, and place, they must come in at the strait gate, and what a hard and difficult work that is, judge you, and therefore it is hard for them to come home to the Lord Jesus Christ. Humiliation is the emptying of the Soul from whatsoever it hath that makes it swell. The heart must not joy in anything, nor rest upon anything, but only yield to the Lord Jesus Christ to be at his disposing and carving, now these parts and gifts, and abilities and means (both for Judgment and place) they are great props and pillars for the heart of a carnal man to rest upon and to quiet itself withal, and to look for some good there from; and when the heart is settled upon such pillars as these are, it is hard for the word of God to prevail with that heart. The Prophet Jeremiah knew it well enough and therefore he said, I will go to the rich and honorable, and they burst all bonds asunder and brake the yoke. The poor were naught, but the rich were exceedingly vile; and our Savior proves it, for when the rich young man came to Christ and said, Master what shall I do to have everlasting life: Christ answered thus, go sell all that thou hast, but he would not, and hereupon our Savior comes to show the difficulty of the work of salvation, saying, it is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven. It is true, a rich man may be brought home, but it is easier for a Camel &c. There is great difficulty for a man that hath many gifts and parts to deny all, and to be at the Lord's disposing. If a man were

fit to cut a Camel so small till he were fit to go through a needles eye, what a work would it be: so it is with a great man. The blind Pharisees saw this when they said, do any of the rulers believe in him? As if they had said, a company of Cobblers, and Tailors, and the basest sort of people believe in him, it is they only that will not swear, and that will sanctify the Lord's Day; But do any of the great men, and rulers believe. The Apostle also took it for confessed, and therefore he said, Brethren you see your calling, how not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty men, not many noble men are called. Indeed, blessed be God, there are some great, some wise, and some noble men converted. But, not many. For they have so much of themselves, that they are hardly brought to renounce themselves. Therefore commonly greatness and wickedness, go both together. And it is a pretty speech of the Prophet David, There is that great Leviathan, that great Whale, little rivers have their little fishes, but there is that Leviathan. So, there is that hideous pride of spirit, and that strange resistance of God and his grace; those fearful crying sins in great men. Yea, many mighty men, except God give them a great deal of grace, they are pestered with a great deal of corruption; Insomuch that they are hardly brought home. For a rich man to become poor, and a noble man to be abased, and for a wise man to be nothing in himself, this will cost hot water, and yet it will be in all that belong to the Lord. See what the Prophet Isaiah saith, The day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low, and upon all the Cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the Oaks of Bashan, and the glory of the Lord shall be exalted in that day. As if he had said, The Lord shall undermine the mountains, and make these tall Cedars fit to come in at this strait gate. The poor receive the Gospel, and he that will have the

pearl, must part with all that he hath; not that God will take away all these outward things and parts, but that he must loosen his affections from these if he will have Christ. A poor creature that hath nothing, may more easily come to the price of the Lord Jesus Christ, then he that hath his hundreds, and thousands a year: What (saith one) must a man part with all these? Yes, the Lord will have the love, that was set upon these wholly to himself.

Right worshipful and beloved, and you of the Ministry, suffer the words of Exhortation. The greater your parts and abilities are, the greater is your danger; and the greater your places are, the more hard will it be for you to come home to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore as ever you desire comfort to yourselves; go aside into your closets, and think thus with yourselves, The Spirit saith, Not many noble men, not many mighty men, not many wise men after the flesh are called. Hath the Lord advanced me? Then the more care I had need have, and the more I had need to tug and toil for Christ, for it is marvelous hard to have this proud heart humbled, and for an honorable man to lie and lick the dust and to take the crumbs under the table. You that have these honors, and friends and means and parts for the Lord's sake let none of these bear up your hearts against the truth of Christ, and let none of all these make you swell, and say, because I am great, or rich, or honorable or wise, therefore I must not be checked, and shall such a man as I be at the command of a poor Minister? Alas, we desire not to have you at our commands, only we would have you be content to be at the dispose of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you must be; if you belong to him: and glad you may. It is observable, that when the Turk comes into the congregation, or the Temple of his Idol, he lays by all his state, and hath no man to attend him for the while: so let every man that hath riches, honors, and parts, let them be as if they had none. You that are rich, be as if you had

no riches, and you that are honorable as if you had no honors: and you that are wise, as if you had no wisdom; when you come to hear the word of God, humble yourselves, and say, my wisdom, my riches, and my depth of judgment shall not hinder me, but whatsoever it is that is my part and my portion, let the Lord speak to me, as if I were the meanest and weakest in all the congregation. The Lord give you hearts to do it, the work is hard, and therefore put hard to your hearts to do it.

Secondly, is a humble Soul content to be at the Lord's dispose? Then hence I collect that, a humble heart makes all a man's life quiet, and marvelously sweeteneth whatsoever estate he is in. That which makes a man content in every condition must needs make him quiet whatsoever estate he is in; howsoever the heart that is truly humbled may sometimes be tossed and troubled, yet he is not distracted, because he is contented, as it is with a ship upon the sea, when the billows begin to roar and the waves are violent, if the Anchor be fastened deep, it stays the ship; let the tempest be what it will: so this work of humiliation is the Anchor of the soul; the world is the sea, and the ship is a soul that is truly humbled, the deeper this humiliation is, the more quiet is the heart, and the more it is calmed. When Job in the time of his extremity gave way a little to his proud and sturdy heart, he quarreled with the Almighty, his friends and all, but when the Lord had humbled his proud heart, he said, behold I am vile and base, once have I spoken, yea twice; but now no more. And it is observed of Jonah that when he was in peace and in quietness, he had a sullen heart, and when the Lord said, dost thou well to be angry? Yea (saith he) I do well to be angry. See how distracted a distempered proud heart is, but take Jonah in the whales belly, and we shall hear no more news of quarrelling, but of praying, and there he abased himself; as it is with a Physician, when the Patient hath

some vehement fit of a fever or the like; that he cannot sleep, they use to give him a little Opium and that makes him rest a little. This humiliation of heart is like Opium: there are peevish fits of a proud heart that no word nor commands will rule a man, but he must have what he will, or else he will set his mouth against heaven, but a little receipt of this Opium will quiet all, if he could but come to see his own emptiness and wretchedness, and get his heart to be at God's disposing, then his heart would be wonderfully calmed and meekened whatsoever he endures.

Humiliation gives quiet to a man's course in three causes. First in the fiercest temptations; Secondly, in the heaviest oppositions of men, Thirdly, in the greatest poverty that can befall a man in this life.

1. In the strongest temptations. When Satan begins to besiege the heart of a poor sinner, and lays battery against him; the Soul is so settled, that he cannot be removed. See how the humbled heart tires the devil, and runs him out of breath, and out-shoots him in his own Bow, in the very highest of all his malice and indignation. Take a poor Soul at the under, when he hath been thoroughly burdened with a corruption, and laid gasping for a little grace, and favor, and could not find any evidence of mercy; the Soul cries continually, and begs for mercy earnestly; the devil seeth him, and (having some permission from God so to do) he lets fly at the poor Soul, and labors to knock him off from his course, and saith to him in this manner.

Satan objects.

Doest thou think to get mercy from the Lord? And doest thou dream of any mercy at the hands of God? When thy own conscience dogs thee. Nay, go to the place where thou livest, and to the chamber where thou liest, and consider thy fearful abominations, and how thou art foiled by them to this

day, set thy heart at rest, God hears not, and respects not the prayers of such vile sinners.

The Soul answers.

Now, the Soul seeth this easily, and confesseth it plainly, and the humbled Soul saith, it is true. I have often denied the Lord, when he hath called upon me, and therefore he may justly deny me, yet seek to him for mercy I must, and if the Lord will cast me away, and reject my prayers I am contented; if he do cast me away, what then Satan?

Satan.

what then, saith the devil? I had thought this would have been enough to make thee despair. Yet this is not all: for God will give thee over, and leave thee to thyself, and to thy lusts and corruptions, and thy latter end shall be worse than thy beginning; and thou shalt call, and cry, and when thou hast done be overthrown; that loose, unclean, and proud heart of thine will overthrow thee forever, God will leave thee to thyself, and suffer thy corruptions to prevail against thee, and thou shalt fall fearfully, to the wounding of thy conscience, to the grieving of the hearts of God's people, to the scandal of the Gospel, and the reproach of thy own person.

The Soul answers.

Yet the humble Soul replies in this manner, and saith, if the Lord give me up to my base lusts, which I have given myself so much liberty in, and if the Lord will leave me to my sins; because I have left his gracious commands, and if I shall fall one day and be disgraced, and dishonored; yet let the Lord be honored, and let not God loose the praise of his power, and justice, and I am contented, if God do leave me, what then Satan?

The Devil objects.

What then saith the devil? I had thought this had been enough to drive thee out of thy wits, yet this is not all. For when God hath left thee to thy sins, then the Lord will break out in vengeance against thee, and get praise from that proud heart of thine, and make thee an example of his heavy vengeance to all ages to come, and therefore it is best for thee, to prevent an untimely Judgment, by an untimely death.

The Soul answers.

The humble heart is quieted all this while, and replies, whatsoever God can, or will do; I know not: yet, so great are my sins, that he cannot, or (at least) will not do so much against me, as I have deserved; if the Lord do come in Judgment against me I am contented; say what thou wilt, what then Satan?

Thus you may run the devil out of breath; then the devil leaves the humbled Soul.

The want of this Humiliation of heart, it is where by men are brought to desperate stands; so that sometimes one man goes to a halter, another runs out of his wits, and another drowns himself: all this is horrible pride of heart. Why will you not bear the wrath of the Lord? It is true indeed, your sins are great, and God's wrath is heavy, yet God will do you good by it, and therefore be quiet. In the time of war, when the great Cannons fly off, the only way to avoid them, is to lie down in a furrow, and so the Bullets fly over them, whereas they meet with the mountains and tall Cedars. So it is with all the temptations of Satan which besiege us. Lye low, and be contented to be at God's disposing, and all the temptations of the devil, shall not be able to disquiet or distract thee.

Secondly, when Satan is gone, then comes the troubles, and oppositions of the world. And this Humiliation of heart, gives a secret settling to the Soul,

against all the railings, and oppositions of the wicked world: For, this takes of the unruliness of the heart. So that when the Soul will not contend with oppositions, but is content to bear them, it is not troubled with them. The humble Soul seeth, God dispensing with all oppositions, and therefore it is not troubled with them. A man is sometimes Sea-sick, not because of the Tempest, but because of his full stomach; and therefore, when he hath emptied his stomach, he is well again: So it is with this Humiliation of heart. If the heart were emptied truly, though a man were in a Sea of oppositions, if he have no more trouble in his stomach, and in his proud heart, then in the oppositions of the world, he might be quieted. Consider David, when he was in the wilderness, and sent to Nabal for some relief, see how he raged extremely against him, because he was denied it: The reason was not in the offense, but in the pride of his heart. Take the same man in the persecution of Absalom, and when Shimei cursed him, saying, Art not thou he that killed such and such, and that committed adultery with the wife of Uriah. In this his heart was marvelous quiet, and now he was able to bear it, better than the soldiers that were with him. Though his cause was just, and he might have revenged it: yet now he was humble and brought under, and therefore quieted, though never so much opposed. This Humiliation of heart, so settles a man, that though ten thousand oppositions come against him, yet nothing will disquiet him. Cast disgrace upon the humble heart causelessly, and he cures it thus, he thinks worse of himself than any man else can do, and if they would make him vile and loathsome, he is more vile in his own eyes than they can make him, and therefore he is contented. If they imprison a humble Soul, and persecute him, he wonders at God's goodness, so far he is from being discontented, that he wonders at God's

goodness, and mercy towards him, that he would cast him into a Dungeon, when he might have cast him into hell.

Thirdly and lastly, this Humiliation of Soul, brings in satisfaction and contentedness, in all the wants that may befall him. Take away from him what you will, and deny him anything, yet he will be quiet. He that is contented with all God's dealing towards him, cannot be disquieted with anything; The humble Soul justifies God, and is pacified, and joins side with God's providence; he justifies God in whatsoever he doth, and therefore is quiet in whatsoever he hath done. The ship that goes with wind and tide goes easily, but if it goes against wind and tide, it is wonderfully troubled; so, when the humble Soul goes on with God's blessed providence, and goes that way which the will of God goes: he goes on quietly, and the want of this humiliation of heart is the cause of all your disquietness; when you will stand in opposition against the Almighty; the Lord will have you poor, and you will be rich, the Lord will have you base and mean in the world, and you would be honorable, the Lord on the one side, and you on the other side, you would have it, and the Lord saith you shall not; if all come not according to your mind, oh then you fly out, God must be of your mind, and be at your beck, and this you must have, and that you will have, or else God shall hear of you: thus you make your own trouble, and this troublesome Spirit breeds all the sorrow that befalls you; whereas if you would go on with God, you might be quieted and comforted whatsoever condition you were in; as one said, that he could have what he would of God; why, how was that? Because, whatsoever God's will was, that was his will; humiliation quiets all, and supplies all wants, once make the good will of God that which thy heart shall yield unto, and God's providence the best that can befall thee, and then live comfortably forever. Oh! That our hearts

were brought to this. But the pride and vileness of our hearts is such, that we trouble ourselves needlessly: therefore above all, labor for this. Be content to want what God will deny, and to wait God's good pleasure, and to be at his disposing, and then live quietly, and comfortably forever. Oh! That I could bring your hearts to be in love, with this blessed grace of God. Is it so, that Humiliation brings quiet in all a man's conditions? Is there not a Soul here that hath been vexed with the temptations of Satan, did you never know, what it is to be under the malice of an enemy, and did your own distempers never trouble you? Have none of you found hard measures at the hands of wicked men? Is there never a Soul here that is burdened with many wants, and that loves his own comfort? Have you not many necessities at home, the want of friends, and means, and even of common necessaries, and would you arm and fence yourselves, that no wants may disquiet you, nor trouble you, but in all, to be above all, and to rejoice in all; more then all oppositions in the world can do you hurt, then be humbled, and forever quieted. Whatsoever can or shall befall you, by the devil and his instruments, and if every spire of grass were a devil, be humbled, and then be above all the devils in hell, and all temptations, and oppositions, that they shall not so disquiet you, as to cause you to be unsettled or uncomforted.

In the next place, you are to be desired, to try yourselves by the former truth: and let every man try his own heart, whether ever God hath given him this gracious disposition of Soul or no? You must come to this truth: for there is no justification nor acceptation without this; Nay, there is no faith can be infused into the Soul, before the heart be thus fitted and prepared: no preparation, no perfection. Never humbled, never exalted; therefore let every man and woman, lay their hearts to the former truth, and consider this

one thing in the general. So far as the heart is from this contentedness, to be at God's dispose, so far it is from true preparation for Christ. You must be empty, if ever Christ fill you: you must be nothing, if you would have Christ all in all to you. Thus much in the general. But, now let us come to the particular trials: and herein let us consider two things. First, the truth, and soundness of our Humiliation. Secondly, the measure of it: both of these, this Doctrine doth discover to us. It is very profitable to handle them both, that they which have not this work may be humbled, and that they which have it, may see how far they come short of the measure which they should and might have, the want of which is the cause of much sorrow, and the want of much comfort.

You may try the truth of this work of Humiliation, thus. In the general, look how you are disposed of in your lives, and conversations. But in particular, that you may see where we be, let us observe these three rules.

First, Let us see, what it is that sways our reasons, and judgments. Secondly, What it is that over-powers our hearts, our wills, and affections. Thirdly, What it is that rules our lives, and conversations. Try your hearts by these rules, and then it will be plain and clear, whether you be truly humbled and abased or no. You know (I told you) that you must not only be disposed of by God (for God will dispose of you, whether you will or no, he will rule all things in heaven and earth, he will either crush those proud hearts of yours by Humiliation here, or else cast you down to hell forever), but you must be content to be at God's disposing. To begin with the former; namely, to see what sways our judgments. If you will attend, I hope you shall know something in your own hearts, you that are weak; as for the other, haply they come to quicken up their hearts, and to renew that which they knew before.

First, Let us try whether we submit in our judgments or no? Here is a main breach; contrary to this submission, is a man's carnal reason, and that marvelous height of our conceits, when we raise up our own carnal reasonings, as so many holds, and we maintain them against the truth of Christ; and wheresoever this frame of mind is, there this work of Humiliation was never wrought. And this is in too many. When a man swells in his own conceits against the truth of Christ. That's a sweet place to this end in the Romans. Where the text saith, The Wisdom of the flesh, or as it is in the Original. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. The carnal mind, and all the reasonings, and wisdom of it, is not only an enemy, but it is enmity against God. The Apostle doth not say, that a carnal man's wisdom and reason doth not obey, but, he is not able to bear the truth, he (as it were,) sets himself in battle array against it, it cannot be subject to the Law of God. This is a main wound in all the sons of Adam, That a man (as it were) deifies himself, and his own dreams, and devices, and makes his own conceit, a line and level to all his conversation. So that the carnal mind, will bend the truth to his mind though he break it. Here is the marvelous pride of a man's mind. Hence it is that the Apostle adviseth us to be wise with sobriety. As if he had said, a man may be drunk with his own conceits; as when a drunkard hath gotten his brains well steeped in Wine and Bear; then whatsoever he conceits in his mind, must needs be as true as Gospel. So it is with a carnal mind. Though arguments be never so plain, and Scriptures never so pregnant; yet a carnal wretch will carry himself against all, and say, it is not my Judgment, I am not of that mind. This is the height of our mind, as if he did say, I do not think it, let the word of God, and his Ministers say what they will to the contrary; they shall not persuade me of

it. Doest thou find this in thyself, then it is an undoubted argument, thou never hadst a heart truly humbled. See what the Apostle saith, If a man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought to do. You think you are as wise as you need to be, and you are not children yet. You that thus lift and set up yourselves in your own conceits, whatsoever you be, you know nothing as you ought to do. And therefore the Apostle speaks of some that were puffed up in their own conceits, intruding into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up in their own minds. You conceive and imagine thus and thus, and will not believe the Minister of God whatsoever he saith, therefore you are puffed up, and this is not a heart truly humbled and kindly wrought upon.

A carnal man presseth into some imagination, as to his own proper possession. As the old proverb is: The fool will not leave his babble for all the City of London. So a carnal heart saith, I cannot be otherwise persuaded. I say, then the case is clear, is it so with thy judgment, and carnal reason? Then as yet thou wert never under the power of this truth, thou shuttest up doors against Jesus Christ, he cannot come in to inform thee, thou art so full of thyself.

[*Obj.*] But some will say, how doth this carnal reasoning lift up itself against the truth of Jesus Christ?

[*Ans.*] To this I answer, the lifting up of my carnal reason, makes itself known in three particulars, and by these you shall know when your conceits carry you aloft from the truth of Christ.

First, A carnal reason being thus puffed up, it is not willing to know the word of God, nor his truth, especially those truths that are troublesome and tedious to him; preach and speak what you will, but preach not that. He either wisheth himself deaf that he could not hear, or the Minister dumb that

he could not deliver those truths. The Lord sent the Prophet Isaiah to preach to the people, and yet to seal them down to eternal destruction, and therefore the Lord saith, Go tell this people, hear but understand not, see, but perceive not, make the heart of this people fat, they wink with their eyes. As it is with a blear eye, that is not able to look against the Sun, but shuts for fear the Sun should hurt it. So, a carnal proud mind is not able to look into the truths that may trouble it, and that would awaken his blear eye. And in another place, the people do entreat the Prophet Isaiah, to go out of the way, and to turn aside out of that path; cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us. As if they had said, We cannot endure this holiness, we cannot brook this exactness, you bid us to be holy or else God will destroy us, get you out of that path, they were weary of those blessed truths. A double example we have of this distemper of spirit in holy Scriptures. As in Job, Where the wicked say to God, depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. The drunkard desires not to hear of any horror of heart for his sin: and the hypocrite desires not to hear that he must be sound, and sincere, and keep touch with God in everything; and so all ungodly men go against the truth of God, which crosseth their lusts and corruptions. And in Timothy, it was the tang of a cursed distemper of spirit in a company of wretches in this age. The text saith, The time shall come when they shall not endure sound doctrine. And here it is to be noted, that a company of carnal Gentlemen and base refuse people of other degrees are come to this pass, that let a plain searching truth be discovered, they turn away from it, and cannot hear it with patience; but if any man will tell them some fine stories, Oh, this pleaseth them admirably: they cannot endure sound doctrine that searcheth the heart, and awakens the conscience, they cannot brook that: now, an humble heart is of another mind, it is willing to hear anything from

the Lord, and any message from heaven; and the humble Soul saith, Speak on Lord, thy servant desires to hear: the word never so troublesome, and the truth never so much crossing his lusts, he is well content to hear it. Nay, he desires that especially, and he is calmed with it. Mark what Eli said, Keep not back from me, but let me hear whatsoever the Lord hath said unto thee. A humble Soul comes to this pass, and saith, If there be any sin or any wickedness in my heart, good Lord discover it, and, if there be any duty to be done, Lord let me know it. And as Cornelius said, We are all here present before the Lord to hear whatsoever thou art commanded us of God. So the humble Soul saith, Whatsoever trouble it brings, I yield to the truth, and desire to hear it.

Thirdly, As the carnal reason shuts his eye, and will not look upon the truth, so in the second place, if it be so that it must hear that which it would not, what is the next shift that it hath, he will not suffer himself to be convinced by the truth, but when the truth comes in with plainness, and power, he labors what he can to gather up objections and cavils against the truth, that he may oppose the power of God's word, that since it is so that he must hear it, he labors to make it false. This is considerable. Unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness shall be indignation and wrath. Who are they that are contentious; not only they that contend with their neighbors, but they that contend against the truth, for so the words following do import so much, Which obey not the truth. One man hears a close point, and then he goes away, and saith, I will not believe it, I know reason, and I will be bound to confute it, and all this is nothing but a smoke: and he deals by the truth, as men do with an enemy in this case. First, they labor to keep him out from their confines, and if they cannot do that, then they levy forces to drive him out from their land: So it is with a

company of carnal men; they would not look upon the truth to be informed by it. Well. Hear they must, and hear they shall, if they live under the power of the Gospel, but if they must hear it, they are contentious, and advise with this carnal friend, and that carnal Minister, and if they can get any man to plead for their lusts, that they may arm themselves against the blessed truth of God, they think themselves happy men.

If a Minister come home to the heart of a carnal wretch, that will buy, and sell upon the Lord's Day, and say to him, Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath; then he goes to some carnal man that buys and sells as well as himself, and then he will have an army of forces against the truth of God. As the Apostle saith, As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these men resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, and reprobates concerning the faith; how is that? When Moses came to Pharaoh, to deliver the people of Israel, and when Moses showed some signs and wonders; Pharaoh would not yield to the Miracles, and therefore he called for Jannes and Jambres, and they made some appearances of Serpents, as Moses had done, and so Pharaoh's heart was hardened: even so, When the Word of God is plain, and the evidences of it are uncontrollable, then a carnal mind, sends for carnal quarrels, and pleas, and objections; and this he doth to oppose the truth of Christ, and to make an army against the blessed ordinances of God. They count it a matter of favor, if any man will deliver and rescue them from the truth.

As when this truth comes, You must not buy and sell upon the Sabbath, but you must be holy, as God is holy, &c. If this truth be troublesome; oh they cannot bear it, and they would fain be rescued, they account this truth an enemy to them, and if any man will deliver them from the truth, they think him a God; and they admire at his judgment, and say, such a man is

wise, and a deep Scholar, and he saith thus and thus, he will defend this as well as I: thus a man is fortified against the truth.

But a humble Soul will not do thus. After the Word and Truth of God is revealed in this kind, and all reasons answered: The understanding of this humble Soul, gives way and opposeth not the truth. Give a humble Soul Scripture for that you say, and he hath done; and lets all carnal counsels pass: and all matters objected, and he saith, I am fully persuaded of it, the truth is plain, God forbid that I should quarrel with it. This is for the understanding.

3. Thirdly, If the truth be so clear and plain, that he cannot gain-say it, then he turns aside from the authority of the truth, and will not suffer it to take place in his mind. This is the last shift which a carnal heart hath.

As, when a debtor is arrested, at first, he grapples with the Serjeant, but when he seeth the Bailiff, or Serjeant, is too good for him, he labors to make an escape, and trusts to his feet, rather than to his hands. So, it is with a carnal wretched heart. When he cannot but confess, and yield that the truth is plain, and that he cannot grapple with the truth, then he falls flat against it: when his Serpent, is eaten up by Moses Serpent; and all carnal pleas are eaten up by the truth, then he is fain to withdraw himself from the authority of it.

From hence comes all those shifts: we tell people they are miserable, and in a natural, and damnable condition: Oh say they, God is merciful: oh but (say we) the mercy of God is such, that as he pardons men, so he purgeth them, and if mercy will save you, mercy will purge you too, and make you forsake your sins, do you think that mercy will carry you, and your peevish proud lustful hearts to heaven: No: he will not; then say they, we will repent

hereafter: and then we tell them again, harden not your hearts, today if you will hear his voice, take mercy now while it is called today?

God requires repentance now, and now you must humble yourselves and repent. Yet the Soul goes on, and saith, we bless God, we do repent, and when we swear we cry God mercy, and though we have been, and are sometimes drunk, yet we are sorry for it, then we make them answer, and say, you say you are sorrowful, but sound sorrow is ever accompanied with sound reformation. As the Apostle saith, This same thing that you have been sorrowful, what carefulness hath it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation and the like? And as the wise man saith, He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy. Then the sinner replies, no man can do thus. What, would you have us without sin? We must be content to do, as we may. Thus you see, they yield to the truth, and cannot but confess that it is plain, but they take away the power of the truth, and the command of it. You may see this in that cursed shift of a carnal man. When Balak sent for Balaam saying, Come curse this people, and I will advance thee. The Lord met Balaam, and said, thou shalt not curse them, then Balaam rose up early, and said to the Princes of Moab, get you home for the Lord refuseth to let me go with you: he laid all the fault upon God, as if he had said, I have a good affection to go with you, but the Lord will not give me leave. Well, when they came again, he said, tarry here all night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more. He would go to advise with God, to do that which God had formerly forbidden.

Thus the carnal heart goes to work, when he cannot avoid the truth, and he would fain have some reservations, and such exceptions, and he saith, is it not possible that I may be drunk, and adulterous, and covetous, and yet make a shift to go to heaven too, this is a wretched heart; as Balaam did, so

do many, nay, the most of the world do so; consider that place of Scripture, and let me have your judgments in it; he that hath this hope (saith the Apostle) purgeth himself as Christ is pure. He doth not say, he may and ought to do it, but he doth purge himself, and the Apostle Peter saith, be ye holy as Christ is holy in all manner of conversation. He doth not say, he may and should be so, but, be holy as Christ is holy, that is in truth and sincerity; as a child goes like his father though not so fast as he. And as an apprentice works as fast as his Master though not so well, and as the Apostle saith, abstain from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit: as if had said, if there be ever a harlot or alehouse in the world avoid it, and all those appearances of evil, come not near them. This is the condition that God requires. You hear all these truths, now let me call for record from heaven I would fain know what any wicked opposer can say against these truths; oh that I could know your minds a little! You that think a man need not be so exact and precise, nay, you blame your children and servants for it. I know not what you would say; except it be this: It is true, this is good, but doth any man do it? And it were to be wished that we could do it, and happy are they that can do it, a man may be a man though not so good as another man &c. away with those tricks, the text saith, he that hath this hope purifies himself, as Christ is pure, though not for the measure yet in the same manner. Thou and I and all of us must do it or else we may cast away all hope. The Lord be merciful to us; If your judgments were humbled I can tell what you would do, the heart that is humble takes the truth, and yields to the authority of it, whereas a carnal heart Lord's it over the truth; if it be thus with thee thy mind was never soundly enlightened, and as the Lord lives never humbled, never converted, and never brought home to the Lord, see what our Savior saith, why do you also by your traditions transgress the

commandment of God. They set their own carnal traditions cheek by jowl with the commandments of God, they made the Command of God without any royalty or power. They were content to give Christ the hearing, but they turned aside from the truth that should have prevailed with them. If ever thou wouldest have the word, work upon thee to do thee good, then, whereas heretofore thou wouldest not come in, nor yield; now show thyself to be humbled, and go thy way home, and let this truth take place in thy heart, and be delivered into the form of this doctrine now in hand, and when profaneness, lewd and ungodly sports come: then remember this, and say, I must purge myself as Christ is pure, did Christ ever thus and thus? Did he ever sit up till twelve a clock at night rioting and banqueting? It is a truth, (oh Lord) let it take place in my heart, and let it be fastened there. When the Lord hath a man in his fetters, and breaks the heart with horror, he openeth his ear to discipline and commands him to return from iniquity. He doth not leave a man there and say, this is the way and the truth, walk in it, but he saith, I must have that unclean heart purged, and that carnal company abandoned and so forth; and so the Lord saith to the Ministers, command that dissembler and that hypocrite, and that base wretch to come out from their ungodly practices, and to yield to me. Oh let the power and royalty of this truth take place in your hearts, as it will do, if you be Subjects of the truth. I charge you before God and his Angels if you know any command, obey it, and if you know any sinful course, remember the commandment is plain, you must purge yourselves as Christ is pure. Let this word prevail and have his authority over you, and be not carnal hypocrites to oppose it now, and so to be damned for it everlastingly.

2. As the reason must be subject to God's will, so the will and affections must be humbled, and the frame that is contrary to this humility, is this;

when the will and heart of a man (and that part whereby you say, I will have this, and I will not have that) when this part doth not yield to the authority of God's word, when there is a kind of Sovereign Command in this waywardness of heart, and the heart would challenge a kind of monarchical authority, and would not be overtopped by the truth of God. This cannot stand with any saving work of humiliation. The general is thus. As the people said, we are Lord's, we will come no more unto thee, we know what to do. And as it is said in the Psalmist, our tongues are our own we ought to speak who is Lord over us.

[*Obj.*] But some will say; how shall we know, that our corrupt hearts, wills, and affections do thus over-power the truth of Christ? And challenge to itself a sovereign command? Here is the main wound, and, and women that are weak in their reasons, are wonderful refractory in their wills.

[*Ans.*] We shall know it by these three particulars.

First, The heart is weary of the command, and wisheth secretly there were no command of God to cross him in his course, and to hinder him in his way of sin. I will not declare what I have heard wicked wretches say in this kind, because I will not teach men to be wicked. He wisheth that there were no righteous God to bound him. The adulterer wisheth that there were no such Law as this, he that burns in his lusts here, shall burn in hell. And the drunkard wisheth that there had never been any Law made against that sin, and he saith, it is pity that every man may not drink what he will: and the unjust person that would be stealing and pilfering, he wisheth there were no Law against that sin, and when the Word and his Conscience works, and the Law makes havoc in his heart, and labors to throw him to the wall, Oh he is weary of it.

Now a carnal heart thinks it the greatest plague in the world, to be paled in within the compass of God's commands, that he may not do what he list, but still, Word, and Conscience, and the Ministers check him.

When the Lord required, Sacrifices at the people's hands in Malachi; They thought it a wearisomeness, and snuffed at it. What every morning Sacrifice? And every evening too? What a wearisomeness is this. So, you ought to have morning, and evening prayer in your Families, how are your hearts affected towards it? Do not you say, what a wearisomeness is this? Why do you tell us of prayer, and of humbling your souls? This is a burdensome thing; this argues a heart that is above the truth, and that would be free from the truth, and justle it to the wall, therefore the wicked are (as it were) in bonds and fetters, as the Apostle saith, they did not like to have God in knowledge. As if he had said, it is a vexation to their Souls still to have conscience calling, be holy and humble, and be not proud, nor drunk, nor adulterous, their consciences flies in their faces, and the word galls them, they do not like to have this in knowledge. And therefore the Lord deals with them after their desires, and he gives them over to a reprobate mind, and to a heart that shall never embrace the truth. You that have no delight to hear of your duties, and wish there were no minister to control you, the Lord will satisfy your desires and give you up to a reprobate sense. As if the Lord did say, you are weary of my wisdom, and goodness, and weary of my word and commands, I will ease you of that burden, you shall have hearts that never shall be moved with my spirit; go all you damned lusts and reign in him, rule over him and make him a slave and bring him down to destruction forever.

2. If the Lord comes and will needs be revealed to him, then a sturdy heart lays violent hands upon the command, he disposeth of it, and will not let the

command dispose of him; he hinders the power of the truth that would draw him to God. As the Apostle saith, they withhold the truth in unrighteousness. The word in the original is, they imprison the truth; as if the Apostle had said, you know you should not be loose nor covetous nor drunk; is it so conscience? Are you drunk, loose and covetous still? When the conscience saith, I will be loose, and covetous still, and you will have the vengeance of God to follow you and go to hell too. They do imprison the truth: The covetous man imprisons the truth, and he must have his covetousness still; and the truth is imprisoned at the suite of the adulterer, and he must be unclean still. And so, the oppressor must lie, and dissemble, and oppress still, and therefore he justles the truth and will of God to the wall. He takes the wall of God's will. As the people said, there is no hope but we will walk after our own devices, and we will do everyone the Imaginations of his evil heart. They said most desperately, we will do it; hear it and fear all you whose consciences do convince you of it, and you know that thieving and stealing, and pettishness, and peevishness, and all your profaneness is forbidden; what saith your hearts to this? Who disposeth of your wills in this case? Do not you say, we will do what we list? As when Samuel had made an excellent sermon and told them the danger of having a King, they said, nay, but we will have a King over us. So it is with many of you. Is this humility? The Lord saith, you shall not, and you say you will: oh fearful! Is this humility? Ask but common reason; you say, we must have and we will have it, we have had our liberties and we will have them, and so destruction too.

3. Thirdly, This is the lowest and least kind of rebellion, the Soul is content happily to do what God requires, but it must be upon his own conditions, and his own terms. This is the last, and it argues no saving work

of preparation for Christ. The hypocrite is content that God shall have his glory, but he must do it. And a man is content to be painful in his place, provided he may have ease, and honors, and parts, and preferments; and be respected, but when these fail, then God hath broken his condition, and he will none. Thus God is at his dispose, and stands to his agreements. This is a cursed hypocrite. You can be content to hear, and pray that you may have some corruption, and that under the name of profession you may be adulterous and loose still. The God of mercy send some vein of good motions into your hearts, to awaken you if it be possible. Thus it is with some Ministers that are content to be painful in their places, so long as they may have honor, and be respected, but if they miss of their end, they give over all. If there be any such here, you are hypocrites, and shall never be comforted upon these terms.

CHAP. VI. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

Now I come to the third passage of this trial, namely, what it is that disposeth of our lives. A man's life and conversation must be at God's disposing. If the heart be distempered, and the reason be thus lifted up, then the actions of a man's life must needs be answerable: If those wheels go false, then the actions of a man's life must strike false. As they said, they would walk in their own ways. And as the Lord saith, I will bring their fears upon them, and my soul shall loath them because they did choose their own devices. That is, whatsoever their own corrupt hearts would have, that they will take; and that way they will walk in. Not according to God's will, but according to their own rebellious hearts. So that, all the practices of a man's course, are nothing else but as so many distempered behaviors of a rebellious carnal mind and heart. This disordered carriage discovers itself in three particulars.

1. First, when a man's life and conversation comes contrary to God, and goes abreast against the Almighty: as they did or whom the Apostle speaks, Having their understandings darkened, have given themselves over to all

lasciviousness. They do not what God will, but what their pride and idleness will. The wise man saith, He that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. And the Apostle saith, When you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. What's that? Holiness and God's command had nothing to do with them, that never took place in their hearts. Do you think these men's hearts are at God's disposing? See what the Apostle saith; Fashion not yourselves like unto this world. I only appeal to men's consciences, what strange apparel, and hair laid out, and what Spanish locks be there nowadays? Who disposeth of these things? Oh forsooth, they are newly come up, and they must come up to thy head, and arms and all. These strange fashions do argue strange distempers of spirit, and do you think that God rules in those hearts? And minds, and God over-power those affections? When as they will not give him leave to meddle with a hair, or a lock, or an excrement: this is my judgment in this case. If it be so, that the Word of God may not take away a lap, and an excrement, our shame, and those things that are scandalous, then surely the Word of God must not pluck away our lusts. No, no, you are as far from subjection, as heaven is from hell, and as the devil is from the God of Hosts. The Lord speaks plainly by the Prophet Zephaniah, He will visit all those that are clothed with strange apparel. When the fire shall flame about your ears, and the enemies come to pluck your feathers from your Caps, then you will remember this. You would not have God to dispose of your clothes, and hair, and the like, and therefore God will now dispose of your lives and liberties, and when you lie upon your straw, and see that you must not go gay to heaven, you would then be content that the Lord should dispose of you, and look graciously towards you; and then you will recommend your souls to God. But then the Lord will make you answer and say, who had the

disposing of you before, a drunken, adulterous, and fashionable Soul, therefore let them succor you now, get you to your fashions, and let them make you fry and roar in the fashion, he that will not have these base trifles to be at God's command, surely he will never have his heart at God's disposing, and therefore neither mind, nor heart, nor life.

2. Secondly, If God will over-rule wicked men a little, and pull down their trim fashions, and will gripe the Usurer, and send the thief to remember his Chests, and if the Lord say, you shall not be rich, nor honorable, as you would: though you seek them never so fast.

Yet secondly, they use all carnal shifts, and sinful devises to come from that woeful condition into which God hath cast them. A man cannot endure to be poor, and therefore he will steal, cozen, or oppress, and take any course to lift up himself.

3. Thirdly, Sometimes a man is content to be at God's disposing in an outward conformity, and he will do the duties that God reveals, and leave the sin that God forbids, and gives a charge against: but why will he do this? He doth not these to honor God, but for some by and base ends. As when the hypocrite prayeth, God doth not make him pray as the first moving cause of the work, but his hypocrisy: and so the dissembling professor, that will profess for advantage, to draw people to his house, or to sell off his Wares more readily. And that people may say, Oh he is a marvelous honest man; yes, and a covetous wretch too, and he makes Religion as a stalking Horse, for his lusts. You are not at God's disposing, unless you be at his command in all these.

Thus you see the pride of a man's reason, in his will, his heart and life, wherein you see the desperate villainy of a man's nature, and all is opposite against the God of heaven. If every bird had her feathers, and the worm her

silk, and every creature their own, what would become of the man that is proud. This is base enough, yet this is nothing to that Mass of haughtiness, and Luciferian wretchedness that is in the heart. That a poor creature should set his will against God's will, and his way against the way of the Almighty; before whom the Angels stand amazed, and the devils do tremble. God saith, I will have this, and the Soul saith, I will not have it: God saith, thou shalt not walk in this way, but the Soul saith, I will walk in it; God saith, thy reason, thy will, thy life, and all shall be subject to race, but the Soul saith, they shall not. Is not this infinite intolerable haughtiness? What, to make God no God, and that he must have no will, no providence, and no rule over a man's life. Oh you that are guilty in this case take notice of it. And, let me exhort you all that have heard the Word of God this day, and are poor ignorant men, and profane, and carnal hypocrites. Ignorance rules one man, and his corrupt lusts rules another man, but there is no good rule at all.

You have the Word of God and his counsels, and you have seen the way set out, now what remains, but that you be entreated to go home and humble yourselves in secret, and say, this is my proud reason, my proud heart, and this is my proud carriage, it is I that would not submit to the command of God's Word. And let every servant come in, and say, this is my proud heart, my Master, and my Mistress may not speak, but I give word for word: this is my fault. And you wives reason thus: Now the Lord hath revealed the pride of my heart, and this is my proud reason and will, that would not yield to the command of my husband though never so warrantable. Let the child also humble himself, and say, when my father counsels me, I turn my deaf ear; and my mother is but a woman, and therefore I would have my own will, and walk in my own way, this is my vain mind. How many be there present here this day, that are not willing to

know some truths. You know you have made many conspiracies against the Word of God in the middle of the night, because your honors, ease, and liberties lay at the stake, therefore the Word must not rule, If it be thus, then to this day you are carnally minded, and stout-hearted and vain. Go home therefore I charge you, and as you tender your own good, go into your private chambers, or else into some fields, and there get down your knee, though your hearts will not bow, and say, good Lord, I know and confess it to this day my carnal mind hath not been brought under, and this vain and idle conversation hath not been ordered by thy word: I have known much, and gone on in rebellion against thee, and it is a weariness to me to sanctify the Sabaoth, and hearing, praying, and other holy duties are a burden to me: to this day my heart is not prepared for mercy, good Lord, to this day I am a wretched carnal man.

This is something, Now there is some hope. And the Soul goes on further, and saith, Good Lord, what will become of my Soul, am I God's to dispose of; no, no, pride and peevishness hath ruled me, and I must clothe myself as Pride would have me. This is somewhat indeed. And the adulterer saith, If the adulteress come, I must go though I die for it. When the drunkard comes to pull you out, tell him of this, and say, Who hath disposed of you this day, and all your life, a drunken wretch, and a base quean. You have heard the word of God checking of you, and yet nothing would do, Oh now at last yield, and say, The Lord hath not disposed of me. Now therefore labor that God may dispose of you, and let the mighty God pull down that mighty heart: Challenge the Lord with his promise, and give him no rest till he have mercy upon you. And you servants, humble yourselves, and say, We have been proud and idle together, now let us mourn and pray together. The time shall come when you will be content that God should dispose of you, and

you shall desire the Lord to look graciously towards you, and that God would take away your corruptions, and that pride which accuseth you, and all those abominations that have been a shame and disgrace to you, therefore now resolve with yourselves, and say, Lord, take away this sin, and subdue that corruption, and do thou rule and reign over my heart and life forever: let the power of thy truth carry me, and turn me from my wickedness, and over-power this proud will of mine, and whatsoever vanity is in my life, good Lord take it away, and frame me after thy mind. When this time comes, say, That a poor Minister did wish you good, and that you had a fair offer. If you will be at God's disposing, in mind, in heart, and life, the Lord will prepare a place for you in heaven, and rank you there amongst his blessed Saints and Angels for evermore.

If another man's servant come to demand of you meat, drink, and wages, you will say, You have not been at my command, therefore go to the Master that you have served, let him pay your wages: So it will be with you, if you go to God for mercy, and comfort in that day, the Lord will send you to your lusts and new fashions, &c. but if any man be God's servant, then everything shall be fitted for him, and though that day be troublesome to the proud and haughty spirit, yet it will be a comfort to the godly, that they have submitted themselves to God's word. For, then Christ shall fill their minds with wisdom, and their wills with holiness, and their lives shall be made honorable and acceptable before him. Think of this, and labor to bring your hearts to it, that God's will may be your wills, and if you be humbled, you shall and must be forever comforted. Thus much of the trial of the truth of our humiliation.

Now I come to the second part of the use, that is, to examine the measure of our humiliation: for (as I conceive) all the difficulty of a man's course

lies here, and the cause why a man receives not the assurance of mercy from God that he desires, or that comfort that he might, it is all from hence (I say) because he is not empty. For if the heart be prepared, Christ comes immediately into his temple, and the less we have of ourselves, the more we shall have of Christ. This is marvelous useful, and therefore you must know that though the heart be truly humbled, and laid low in itself in truth, and the thing is done, yet there remains a great deal of pride in the heart. Take a mighty Castle, though it be battered down, yet there remains many heaps of rubbish, and happily some of the pillars stand many Winters after: So it is with this frame of Spirit, in a high imagination, in these Towers of loftiness. Though this Dagon of a man's self be fallen down, yet still the stumps remain, and will do many years. And it will cost much horror of heart, and much trouble before this haughtiness of heart will be every way pulled down, and made agreeable to the good will of God. Though this distemper is marvelous secret, yet a man may take a measure and scantling of it, and he may know how much of this cursed rubbish remains in his heart, by these four particular rules.

First, look what measure there is of carnal reasoning against the truth of God when it is made known, what measure there is of it either subtly coming in upon the heart, or else that doth violently transport the spirit against the spirit, so much need thou hast of Humiliation, and so much thou wantest of it. This is a clear case. Every Saint of God is willing to know the truths that he shall doubt of, and is content to yield himself to the truth that shall be revealed, and of which he shall be convinced, yet there remains much carnal reasoning against the truth. As the Apostle saith, Let no man deceive you; intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly

puffed up in his fleshly mind. The ground and root of this carnal reasoning, or the measure of it may appear in two causes.

First, There is a kind of perverse darkness in the heart, still sticking in the mind and understanding, even of a gracious Godly man. And from hence, namely, out of this mistaking of the mind, follows all that carnal reasoning: that, howsoever the Soul is satisfied, yet it will not sit down, but still it sticks in this carnal reasoning, and the sinner cannot conceive the truth, nor fathom the compass of it, by reason of his own weakness, therefore it is long before he will be persuaded that it is truth, and that he is bound to yield to it. When the wisdom of the truth is so plain and evident, that he cannot resist the clearness of it, yet because he cannot conceive of it, he thinks, that he is not bound to yield thereunto.

[*Obj.*] But some will say, should a man yield to that which he cannot conceive?

[*Ans.*] To this I answer. When the mind is so far enlightened, that he cannot gain-say anything in reason, though he cannot compass the depth and bottom of the truth, yet he should yield to it, and rather go with reason, then follow his own imagination, when there is no reason for it. Just so it was with Nicodemus. When Christ spake of the work of regeneration, he said, Can a man be borne again the second time. Well, Christ opens the mystery of regeneration, and the secrecy of it the second time, and when Nicodemus could not comprehend what Christ had spoken, yet he would hold his own, and said, how can this be, I cannot conceive it; because he could not comprehend it; therefore he throws all away. Mark how Christ hits him in the right vein, and strikes him to the bottom, and see how he tames him: Art thou a Master in Israel and a Doctor in Law, and yet art such a novice in this work of regeneration; down with that proud heart of thine.

Lay down all thy carnal reasoning, and become a fool, and so thou may understand this truth that is communicated to thee.

This is ordinary amongst us, for a man to say, I cannot believe it, I see it not, and I think not so; and yet they have no reason at all to carry them, but because they cannot comprehend it by that light which they have, therefore they will not yield to any reason, because they cannot see it by their own light, they will not use God's spectacles (as I may so say) look how much of this carnal reasoning thou hast, so much pride thou haste, and this is very much, especially in the most ignorantest Souls.

Secondly, because of the weakness, and feebleness of their judgments, which are not able to hold a truth when they have it in their hands, but it goes away like lightening, and because the minds of these poor creatures, are over-worn with many thoughts, and cursed reasonings, and troubled therewith, they grow unable to help themselves against those distempers. And hence it is, that though the Word of God be let in, and made clear, yet a man stoops to those conceits, and cursed reasonings that have been attended to, so that they take of the power of the truth. As it is with a Ferriman: he applies the Oare, and looks home-ward to the Shore where he would be, yet there comes a gust of wind that carries him back again whether he will or no: So many a poor humbled creature, that is truly wrought upon, and hath a true title to Christ; he applies his Oare, and would have assurance of mercy from Christ, yet the over-whelming of carnal reasonings, and cursed suggestions (that are either cast in or stirred up in his heart) throws him back again, and take of the power of the truth; insomuch that he can see nothing, nor yield to anything for the good and comfort of his Soul. I take this to be the ground of all the trouble that befalls a broken heart. Let any man under heaven give me the reason of this; why any Soul that is truly

burdened for sins as sin, and hath found God marvelous gracious to him this way, why (I say) after all his cavils are removed, and all his objections are fully answered, and all controversies are ended, and this often done; yet a poor broken hearted creature, will still recoil to his former carnal reasonings again, the reason is, because all the answers that were given are now forgotten, and all his cavils, and carnal conceits will be fresh in his mind as ever they were, partly from the haunt they have had in his mind, and partly from that self-willy waywardness of the heart, that is content to go that way.

They that have been long over-whelmed with these cursed carnal cavilings, they will rather labor to oppose a direction, then to hold it and to walk in the comfort of it, only because of the weakness of their understandings, and their carnal reasonings are so violent against them. Upon this hinge it is that (as I take it) all the objections of a company of poor broken hearted do hang, and by this means they keep out that comfort which they might have, and in the strength whereof they might walk all their days. I might propound many instances, as thus; come to a contrite Soul, and say to him, why walkest thou so uncomfortably seeing thou hast now a title to mercy and salvation in Christ? See what he replies, I a title to mercy? Nay, I am utterly unworthy of that title, it is a great gift and few have it, and I have been a vile wretch and an enemy to God and his glory, what, I a title to mercy? We reply again. God gives grace to the unworthy, he justifies the ungodly, and not the godly, and if he will give you mercy too, what then? He replies again, What mercy to me? Nay, it is prepared, for those that are fitted for it, had I such a measure of humiliation, and so much grace, if I were so and so fitted, and if my heart were thus disposed, then I might have some hope to receive it: we reply again. But have not you been weary of your corruptions, and are you not content that God should do that

for you, which you cannot do for yourselves; this is the qualification which God accepts, and requires, and by which he fits the Soul for mercy; unless you have that other of your own conceits you will have none, and so you deprive yourselves of mercy; you have a child's part, and a good portion too, if your proud hearts would suffer you to see it. Then the Soul saith; I would have the Lord say to my Soul, be of good comfort, I am thy Salvation; if the Lord would witness this to me by his Spirit, then I could believe it: content then, only let us agree upon the manner how it must be done, and how God shall speak it. Will you then yield it? Yes, then know this, what the Word saith, the Spirit saith, for the hand and the sword, the Word and the Spirit go both together. For as the text saith, My Word and my Spirit are one. Then take the Word and lay thy heart level to it, and see it. The Word saith, Everyone that is weary shall be refreshed; Hast not thou been weary, and hast not thou seen sin worse than hell itself? The Text, the Word, the Lord, and his Spirit saith, Thou shouldst come: and the Spirit saith, thou shalt be refreshed. Oh saith the sinner, I cannot find this assurance, and this witness of God's Spirit, I cannot see it, and I cannot believe it: Thus he leaves the judgment of the Word and Spirit, and cleaves to the judgment of his finding, and feeling: and thus he judgeth God's favor in regard of his own imaginations, and not according to the witness of the Word and Spirit: the Spirit saith, Thou art fitted for mercy, but because thy ignorant blind mind conceives it not, hence it is that thou shuttest the door against the mercy of God revealed, and that would be settled upon thy Soul for thy everlasting comfort. Think of this, and say, Whether is it fit that my wit should determine my estate, or the word of God? Will you determine the cause, and perk into the place of judgment, and say, I feel it not, and I fear it? Is not all this carnal reason? Here they run amain, even a-breast

against their own comfort, and will not receive the Word that might convey what comfort is needful for them. I charge every poor Soul to make conscience of resisting the word of God, as you desire to make conscience of lying and stealing: This is a sin though not so great as the other. Make conscience of this carnal caviling, pull down those proud hearts, lay down all those carnal reasonings, and let the word of God rule you, and then comfort will come again. I take this for a truth; That, when the heart is truly humbled and prepared for mercy, and rightly informed and convicted of the way to salvation, the cause why the heart cannot receive comfort, it is mere pride of a man's spirit one way or other, it is not because he will not, nor because God will not, but because he listens to what his carnal reason saith, and not to the plain will and word of God. I say, make conscience of it, and then comfort will come again into your Souls.

The second trial of the measure of our humiliation, is this. Look to thy discouragements. For as the discouragements of thy course are, so is the pride of thy heart.

If the stream run again here, there is much pride, if little discouragement, then there is little pride. This is nothing else, but when the Soul out of the fear of evil that it either feels or expects, and the price that it puts upon itself, and that it looks for from itself, it is nothing else but the sinking of the soul below itself. As the Author to the Hebrews saith, Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you grow weary, and faint in your own minds. The word in the Original is, as if their sinews were shrunk. This is an undoubted argument and evidence of so much pride as this doth appear. When a man is driven to a desperate stand, and comes to lay a dispendency, and to lay himself too low, and is not able to bear the blow that God lays upon him: for, were the Soul as willing to

take the want of good if God deny it, as to take good when God gives it, it would not be so discouraged. The heart is content to have good, but if God take away this good, he is not content to be at God's disposing therein, but if this good go away, he sinks and is discouraged, and this argues pride. The heart desires to have riches, and especially honors in the world, happily God denies this, and throws filth and disgrace upon his person, and now the Soul is desperately down and forlorn in himself: So much as thou hast of this, so much pride thou hast. Why art thou not content that God take away anything? The truth is, thou wouldest be at thine own disposing, and that which thou wouldst have thou art not able to want. Now because this is a thing that we must take special notice of, know therefore that this discouragement appears in these several passages, and pride vents itself in them all.

1. First, This keeps a man from coming to the work, when he is called to it. Though the Word of God is never so plain, and his calling to it never so clear, yet he is loath to come in at God's call, and when he is come he is quickly weary, and saith, what do I hear? Ask God that, because he thinks, he shall not find the success that he desires, therefore he is loath to come to it, this is horrible pride. Thus it was with Jonah: he was sent to Nineveh, and because he thought God would show mercy to them, and he should be accounted a false Prophet; therefore he would not go, but turns to Tarshish, he was not able to bear the crossing of himself.

Secondly, It damps the Soul, and (as I may so say) it knocks of the wheels of a man's endeavors, when he sets upon the work, and it kills him at the root. As the Prophet David saith, Why art thou cast down within me oh my soul? Why art thou so disquieted within me? As a man that awakens from a swoond, he wonders at himself: so did this Holy man. Thus it comes to

pass, that the Soul recoils upon itself, and the heart gives in, and he (as it were) trips up his own heels, that, howsoever a man is able to do duties, yet by reason of discouragements, he is not able to put forth that which he can do, for fear he should not do that which he would.

3. Thirdly, this discouragement marvelously distempers a man after the work. When the work is done by others, if they find acceptance, and have good success, this comes like cold water upon the Soul, and then he goes away and saith, Oh he is fit for nothing, and he is unable to do anything, as if a man should say, He hath no light because another man's candle burns clearer than his: but after his own work, all his care is what will become of the business, and how his labor, and how his Sermon took, what approvement of his gifts, and what admiration of his parts, and if the acceptation of others answer not his desires, then his Soul sinks down, and he is even weary of himself, his work and all. If no man commend him, and the work is not approved, then he complains of himself this way and that way, and begins to disparage himself, only to fish out commendation from others, and to see what they will say, if they commend him, then he goes away rejoicing, if not, then he sinks, especially if he have not grace to go in secret by prayer, to quicken up himself with some promise after that drunken fit. So the truth is plain, it is wonderful to see what pride there is. One man is sick of the sullen, because the breath of men departs, and he falls short of that which he expected. Though I should prepare myself never so well, yet if the Lord did stop my mouth now in the pulpit, let me be humbled, but comforted and contented therewith.

The third Trial of the measure of our humiliation, is this discontentedness in a man's occasions, and so much of this as there is, so much pride thou hast in thy heart, where this discontentedness grows, there is this bitter root

of pride also. The nature of a proud heart is not able to bear any superior, and if it be checked, it falls to strange murmuring, and gain-saying. This discontentedness lets out itself in five particulars, and there is a world of pride in them all.

First, the Soul will grudge at the dispensation of God, and snarl at the providence of the Almighty, as if God had forgotten himself. He quarrels exceedingly with the Almighty, if God answer not his will, and his hearts desire. When the Lord had prevailed with the people's hearts, and they had humbled themselves, and the Lord had turned from his wrath; see how this man falls out with God! Oh, saith he, I thought so much when I was in my own country, that thou wouldest save this people, and I should be accounted a false Prophet, and thus my glory lies in the dust. You think God is beholden to you for your prayers, and fasting's, and you say, how is it that after all our prayers yet we have not comfort, such a man is cheered, and such a poor creature is refreshed, and yet they have not the parts that we have, and they have not prayed as we have done, thou hast showed mercy to them, and therefore why not to us too. This is horrible pride.

See how a proud soul justles God out of the place of his providence, and brings the Almighty to his bar, and to his judgment; and the heart begins to reason inwardly, and sometimes vents it outwardly, and saith, had the Lord given me that grace and fitted a place for me, I could have done much for God, and some good to his Church, and I could have ministered much comfort to others: this is the English of it. As if he had said, had the Lord been so wise (to devise a means to effect this glory) as I am, then great matters might have been done. This is to make a man's wisdom above God, and his mercy, grace wisdom and all. Oh! This is devilish pride.

Secondly, It slightes all mercies received, and all that God bestows from day today; because he cannot have what he would, therefore he cares not for it, and he regards not what he hath. As Haman said, all this honor and these riches avail me nothing, so long as I see the Jew Mordecai sitting in the gate. This one thing denied him, made him no to regard whatsoever he had; and it was not only so with Haman, but even with good Jonah. When God had prepared a gourd, because he took it away again suddenly, Jonah took on exceedingly, and forgetting all God's mercies in the depth he quarrels with heaven, and when the Lord said, dost thou well to be angry; yes (saith he) even to the death, thus he commends himself. The reason is, the Soul is like a sullen child, who because his coat is not guarded as he would have it, therefore he is discontented and will have none at all. Therefore the Soul saith as they did of the two little fishes, here are five barley loaves and two fishes but what are these amongst so many people. So the Soul saith, oh! He hath nothing and he can do nothing, and God frowns upon him &c. but, hath not God given you a care and conscience to reform your lives? And hath not he done this and that for you? Oh yes, but whats this to that I might have had and that I would have? Oh, down with that proud heart.

3. Thirdly, The discontented Soul will quarrel with his own condition whatsoever it is, though he had a condition of wax as the Proverb is, he is never pleased nor quieted, but he hath strange Imaginations in his mind, and strange liftings up of his own conceits, and he saith, If God had set me in such a place answerable to my gifts and parts, then such a thing might have been done: but God hath put him (as it were) under a clod, and therefore he hath no care of himself as God hath had no care of him: nay, let him have that condition which he desires, and he falls out with that too; Rebecca

could not be contented without children, and yet when she had conceived, and the children began to strive in her womb, she said, if it be so, why am I thus? So it is with a proud discontented heart. He must have this, and he will have that, and if there be any weakness, he sinks down in his sorrow.

It is a strange passage of good Joshua: when the Lord had discomfited the host of Israel by the men of Ai, see how he complains, saying, Alas, (oh Lord God) wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, would God we had been content to dwell on the other side Jordan. As if he had not begged God's blessing, and had not seen God's hand in succoring of him before, and yet now because he had not what he would, he takes all in the worst sense. And as Moses said, when the Lord had called him to go before Pharaoh, send by whom thou shouldest send. As if God must not dispose of him, because he had not that eloquence which he desired.

4. Fourthly, as he quarrels with his condition, so he becomes weary of his life, and will needs die in a pet, because God answers not, and his humor is not fitted, therefore he will away from the world, no man shall see him anymore, neither will he see any man. Thus it was with good Elijah, when he said, Lord take away my life, for I am no better than my Fathers. So it was with Jonah, and with Job. You women think of this. It may be your husbands will not speak to you as you would have them, and then you wish; Oh, that you had died in such a sickness, &c. Down with those proud hearts. The Lord hath given you life, and continues it, that you may seek to God, and yet you will needs die in a sullen fit: its mercy that you may live to seek mercy.

5. Fifthly, in conclusion, when the Soul hath thus quarreled with God, and slighted all mercies, and quarreled with his condition, and is grown weary

of his life and all, then the Soul comes to a desperate distraction in himself, and a wonderful thought seizeth upon the Soul of a discontented man, that his heart is almost driven beyond himself, and out of this comes a great deal of madness in the wicked, and it doth much hurt to the good too. His thoughts run in a marvelous hurry one upon another, and makes the Soul unfit to do any good to others, or to receive any good from others. Here is the cause: when God hath opened your eyes, and the wrath of God first began to pursue you, then you could have been content to fall into a river, and to make away yourselves; Now, what if God will have you bear his hand, and will not give you grace yet, why do you quarrel against God? Oh, sit down and humble yourselves with meekness, and calmness, and wonder that you are not in hell; what if you had been damned long ago? Thus it was with Rachel, she would not be comforted because her children were not. So it is with thy Soul, thou must have what thou wilt, or else thou wilt not be comforted. Now, there are two objections against the former truth, which I must remove and answer before I go any further.

[*Obj. 1.*] The discouraged sinner begins to justify himself in his course in the apprehension of his own insufficiency, and he saith, I see by daily experience that I am not fit for the place where God hath set me, and it goes of marvelous heavily, the Lord takes away the hand of his providence in strengthening me, and the hand of mercy in comforting me: what would you have a man to do? Is it fit for a man to bear up himself, in a kind of senselessness of the hand of the Almighty? Or, is it not rather fit to see the hand of God in his displeasure, and to sit down and lick the dust, and to be so far from venturing upon the work, as to let it alone. This is the plea of a discouraged sinner, and therefore he thinks he doth well, to sit down Rachel like, and not to be comforted, but to let his Soul fall in sorrow.

[*Ans.*] I confess, it is true. The heart truly humbled ought to be. Nay, it cannot be brought to see it self in every kind, so that it judgeth itself unworthy of the least mercy, and worthy of the heaviest judgments, it cannot but be contented in abasement; but yet there is a great difference between a heart truly humbled, and a discouraged heart. And the difference appears in two things.

The Soul thinks he doth marvelous well to be thus discouraged, and that there is no other Humiliation but this. Know therefore this double difference.

First, This Humiliation leaves the Soul more calm and better able to under-go a light blow when it hath borne this. Whereas after discouragement the Soul is more full of trouble, and more unable to bear any trouble, because it hath sunk under this: If the Lord denies to the humble Soul that which he would have, it makes him more able to bear the want of anything: but the discouraged Soul flies off, and is less able to bear the hand of God in the want of anything. Humiliation seasons the vessel, and makes it more wide, and more fit to hold liquor, but, discouragement cracks the vessel, and makes that it will hold nothing at all. And, humiliation is like the Tentures that stretcheth the clothe, and makes it more smooth and plain: humiliation stretcheth the Soul, and makes it more humble, and meek: but discouragement rends the heart, and makes it more unfit to undergo that which is laid upon it. As Saint Paul to the Hebrews saith, you have forgotten the exhortation which saith, My Son despise not thou the correction of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. The Word faint, that is, discouragement is spoken of by our Savior, When he was moved with compassion towards the people because they fainted, and were as sheep scattered abroad having no Shepherd. So I say, do not suffer

thyself to be so far scattered with these troubles, that thy heart be unable to gather up itself again. As it is with some stubborn child, when his father comes to correct him, he snuffs, and falls into a swoon with grief, whereas another child is quiet and takes the blow quietly, and goes away contentedly without any manner of fainting. So the heart truly humbled, is like the child that takes the blow quietly; but the discouraged Soul faints, and is not able to bear the hand of God in this kind.

Secondly, the second difference is this. As Humiliation ever leaves the Soul calm and quiet, after the hand of God hath been upon it: so it makes the Soul more ready, and puts a kind of ability, and cheerfulness in attending upon God in any service, without any hankering after his own ends, and without this quarrelling, and this drawing back from the Lord. So, that because he hath borne the hand of God, therefore it is much more ready that the Lord should dispose of duties, and the success of them, seeing it hath found God going out with him heretofore; and he saith, the truth is, sometimes the Lord did deny me that mercy which I desired, and blessed be God for it, for by this means I found my proud heart humbled and brought down; therefore if God will have me do any duty, I will do it, and if he cast shame and disgrace upon me in it, I am contented. This is a heart truly humbled: but, the discouraged Soul not receiving that strength and assistance in his duties that he would have, he is marvelous untoward, and unwilling to come to the like service anymore. For fear he want success, and shall not be able to bear the want of it. Humiliation (as it were) levels the heart, that the Lord Jesus may take place there; but this discouragement delves the heart, and makes it more unfit for Christ. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Christ, that every valley might be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low. The high way wherein Christ went is

the heart, and the ditch or valley, was the desperate discouraged heart, and this fainting of heart unfits the way for Christ, as well as the mountains and hills. As, Humiliation levels the heart, and makes it fit for Christ, so this discouragement delves and unfits the Soul to be quickened, and to give way to a Savior, and to entertain him. Humiliation takes off the knottiness of the heart, and makes it run faster in the way of God's Commandments, but discouragement hangs a back bias upon the Soul, that, as a back bias holds a boole that a man cannot make it run right to the mark: so this discouragement is like the back bias, and thats the reason why a discouraged heart comes so awkly to holy duties, as to conference, fasting, and the like. If a man go to fasting, and prayer privately, if God give him not that success that he would, and he cannot do it as he desires; oh, how hardly is he drawn to it again: but the humbled Soul saith, blessed be God, though I had not that strength, and that success that I desired, yet if the Lord shall call me to the like duties, I will go again though I cannot do as I would. So then, know that there is no ground for discouragement; thats a sin: be contented, yet forever humbled.

[*Obj. 2.*] In the next place, the discontented person thinks his way reasonable, and it is warrantable for him now and then to be discontented and therefore he saith, what would you have a man do? You know it, and I find it, that God hath denied me many abilities in those duties which he calls for at my hands, others have gifts, and power and abilities, but I am weak and feeble, and can any man, nay, should any man be contented with this: would you have a man content with his sin? I cannot believe it, thus, because they see such deadness and untowardness of heart therefore they conceive that they do well to be discontented, and they cast all the fault upon their sin.

[*Ans.*] This is a desperate hindrance to all good duties, and therefore I answer it thus. It is true, the Lord allows it, and warrants it that thou shouldest be displeased with thy sin, not to be under the power and rule of it, and the humbled heart is at the dispose of God, nor at the dispose of sin, but yet be wise in this case. It is one thing for a man to be discontented with his corruption, and its another thing to be discontented with that condition wherein he is.

Thou mayst (and oughtest to be) discontented with thy pride and corruption; and with thy unbelief, but, take heed that thou be not discontented with the weakness of thy gifts and parts. This is damnable pride; and it is an argument that thou art not content to be at God's finding, and this is thy disease twenty to one.

Now, that thou mayest know whether thy discontentment is for thy corruption, or for thy estate and the weakness of thy parts, I show it thus: he that is discontented with his sin, will never sin in his discontentedness. As we use to say of immoderate sorrow. If any man lose a friend and begin to grieve and sorrow excessively, we use to say, take heed that you mourn not out of measure. Mark what he replies; may not a man sorrow for his sin? To this I answer. Art thou sorrowful for sin, and wilt thou sin deeply in thy sorrow and resist the good will of the Lord? No, thou hast lost a friend, and means, and therefore thou mournest.

This is carnal sorrow, and in this thou never sorrowest for sin, he that is sorrowful for his sin, will not sin in his sorrow, it is for thy condition that thou art so sorrowful and discontented. Is it not so with thy Soul? That thy heart is tossed up and down in a restless disquiet, and art thou not out of the command of thyself? And art thou not hurried up and down in a confused

lumber in thy mind because thou art not fit for duties? If it be so with thee, then thou dost sin desperately in thy discontentment.

It is a rule in war; If an Army be once scattered and dispersed, it will hardly come on again, because it is put out of rank and order. So that Soul is discontented with his estate, that is made unfit for duties, and unwieldy in them; that discontentment which unfits a man to be at God's disposing, it is not the work of humiliation, but a work of pride. But it is so with thee, thy discontentment makes thee unable to bear God's hand, and the want of anything, and makes thee more unfit for duties, and it is not for sin, but for thy weakness in gifts, and for thy condition, and therefore thou art possessed with this pride of heart.

The fourth and last note and trial of the measure of our humiliation is this. If thou wilt know how much pride is in thy heart; then consider how thy Soul stands in regard of the word and truth of God that crosseth thy beloved lusts, and those corruptions to which thy Soul hath cleaved in the time of thy wretchedness; and in this there are two passages.

First, see how thy heart behaves itself, in regard of the strict commands of God.

Secondly, in regard of the keenest reproofs, and the sharpest admonitions that are suggested into thy heart. See how thy heart is able to bear the reproof of an enemy, or the admonition of a faithful Minister of God, when he meets with thy darling lust. When thy heart comes under these commands, and these reproofs, if thou find thy heart swelling, and bubbling against the truth, and thy heart begins to be angry with the Word, and Minister and all, then know this, that certainly so much of this as there is in thy heart, so much thy Soul wants of Humiliation. Is not this pride that the Soul should lift up itself against the Lord of heaven? And take the way of

God's Word? And when the frothy frantic heart of a man will bear down the command of God? and let the command of God fall to the ground, rather than let a corruption fall, is not this infinite pride?

You may take notice of this distemper in several passages. When the Prophet came to that wicked King Amaziah, and said to him, Why hast thou sought after the Gods of the Heathen, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? Then the King said to him, Art thou made of the Kings counsel? Forbear why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the Prophet said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my counsel. Amaziah was naught, and God did deal with him accordingly: So, when God's Word doth meet with men's hearts, and lusts, they are mad, and if it were not for shame, and fear; they would pull a man from the Pulpit.

[*Obj.*] But some may say, can the Saints of God be thus transported with this vile distemper?

[*Ans.*] Yes, this choleric distemper of heart, sometimes creeps in upon a good Soul, but the difference will appear afterward. Aza was a strange man; though Divines hold him a good man: When Hanani the Prophet dealt plainly with him and said, Thou hast done foolishly in resting upon the King of Aram, &c. See how the King entertains this; He was wroth with the Seer, and put him in prison: But see what befell the King. He never saw good day afterward: he fell into many sins; so the Lord leaves a man to his corruptions; and after that he fell into a strange disease in his feet: A strange thing that God should leave a good man in this misery; thus he died, and all this was for opposing the Word of God. This is the nature of a peevish choleric spirit. The humble spirit doth not quarrel with the Word of God, but receives it with meekness, and with a quiet still spirit. If any sin be

revealed, and if any duty be commanded, he bears the Word without contending, unless it be now and then, for flesh will have his bouts. Look home therefore into your own hearts, and families: how can you bear the checks and reproofs of a Master or Mistress, when they say, you are idle. And so, you wives, when your husbands reprove you, is not all on a light flame? Oh, this is infinite and intolerable pride. You may be good servants, and good women, but its strange if you be so.

[*Obj.*] But you will say, how shall a man see a difference in all these?

[*Ans.*] I say, the Saints of God, and the sinners, the faithful, and the faithless, all have this in their manner and measure; but this corruption is poison in the heart of a good man. Its true the Saints of God are sometimes discontented and discouraged, but when they see it, they are content that the Word should work upon them against it, and they complain of these wretched hearts, and when they find this discontentedness, they quarrel with themselves for it, and a good man would even pull out that heart which quarrels against the Word of God, and he saith, is not this the Word of God by which we must be saved? And is not this the power of Christ? And shall I be angry with it? God forbid: But, these distempers are natural in a carnal man, and though he be reproved for a foolish fashion; yet he will hold his corruptions still, he pulls, and the Minister pulls, the Minister would pull down his proud heart, and take away his corruptions, but he will have his pride, and foolish fashions, and his corruptions still: then keep them, and perish with them, and know that thou art a wretched man: the humble heart contends with his corruptions and sinful distempers, and he is not quiet therewith. As it is with a treason, If it be revealed to a Traitor, and a good Subject: the Traitor keeps it secret, but the true Subject reveals it, and complains of the Traitor, and the Treason; and calls for justice against them:

so it is with a gracious good heart. He seeth these cursed distempers, and sometimes finds bubbling's of heart against the Word of God, and this shakes his Free-hold; yet, when a good heart seeth the Treason, he doth not join with it, but he complains to the Lord of it, and saith, Oh treason Lord, this vile heart will be my destruction, good Lord, reveal it yet more to me, and take away all these corruptions; take thou the possession of me, that I may serve thee here, and be with thee forever hereafter. Thus much for the use of Examination.

[*Use 3.*] Is it so that the heart truly humbled, and prepared for mercy is content to be at God's disposing as you have heard? Then, what shall we say of those that lift up themselves against the Almighty: this discovers the fearful condition of every such Soul. It is certain, the haughty Soul is furthest of all from Salvation, how prove you that? He that is furthest of from Humiliation, he is furthest of from the beginning of grace here, and from perfection afterward: the gate of grace is merely here; for, except you become as little children, that is, except you be humbled, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; a proud heart is far from grace now, and from happiness in the end of his days. For the discovery of this man's misery, let me lay open four particulars: and I would have myself and you to consider them, that our proud hearts may be pulled down.

First, Pride is professedly against God, and is the most directly contrary to the whole being of God, and that in the whole man.

Indeed, all sins are nothing else, but a kind of crossness to the Lord of Hosts, and a kind of thwarting of some Attribute or other in God: As, falsehood crosseth the Truth of God, impatience crosseth the patience of God, and injustice, crosseth the Justice of God: So that, these sins go against the Almighty in their measure, some against one Attribute, some

against another: but a proud heart, smites at the whole Essence and Being of God: Nay, he doth as much as in him lieth, labor to take God out of the world, and he would be God himself, and have no God but himself: The Lord doth principally Attribute two things to himself, which can be in none but himself. God is the first of all causes, and the last End of all. All things were created by him for himself, He made all by his Will, and Wisdom, and by his Wisdom, and Providence, he governs all for himself. Before anything was, God was, and all must return tribute of praise, and thanksgiving to God. A man may be like God in Mercy, and in Justice, though not so perfectly, yet sincerely; and a man may be like God in other of his glorious Attributes, but God only is first and last. If it be a creature, then it was made: but here is the venom of a proud heart, he would be first and last. He doth all by his own power, and he will promote his own praise in all that he doth. As the great King Nebuchadnezzar saith, Is not this great Babel that I have built, by the might of my power, I built it, there is the first, for the honor of my Majesty, there was the last. So, it is not the wisdom, and pleasure of God that must stand, but his own proud heart: it must not be what God commands, but what he would have, all of a proud man is against the Almighty.

The Saints of God have wondered that the Lord is able to bear a proud man that thus out braves God in regard of his special prerogatives; it is a wonder that God sends not some lightning from heaven and even stamp them to powder, and send them down packing to hell suddenly, I take this to be the sin of the devils that are now chained up in eternal darkness until the judgment of the great day, nay, I take this pride of a man's Spirit, of his mind, his reason, his will and affections to be another old man of sin.

Drunkenness is a lime of this old man, and so is adultery and other sins, but pride is (as it were) the old man itself.

This is the broader, the Spawn and the very mother from whence the sin against the Holy Ghost grows, and there wants nothing but the illumination of the truth to come in upon the heart; when a man's understanding is enlightened, and this Illumination comes upon the heart, and he is violently carried against the truth with indignation, this is the sin against the holy ghost.

Secondly, as Pride is opposite to God himself, so it is opposite to the covenant of grace, believe and live; for the truth is, that which we call infidelity and the ingredients of it, are pride; as the Apostle saith. Where is boasting then? It is excluded, by what Law? By the Law of works? No, but by the Law of faith. If there be believing, then away with carnal reasoning and with pride.

Therefore I may say by collection, if faith exclude all boasting, then pride or boasting opposeth the covenant of faith. Faith is excluded by this pride of a man's Spirit; and by this swelling of heart: and the holy Prophet Habakkuk saith, the Soul that is lifted up himself is not upright within him, he that swells and bubbles up in his heart and puffs up himself against the word of God, he hath no upright Spirit within him, but the just man shall live by his faith; above all, see that place in Isaiah, hearken to me all you stout hearted ones of the world which are far from righteousness. Let me speak to all you stout hearted men and women that are here this day; you that swell against the truth of Christ, and will not come under the power of God's ordinances, you are far from righteousness. The further you are gone in this sin, the further you are from the righteousness of God. A stout-hearted man is a thousand miles from righteousness.

Drunkards and adulterers are far enough from it, but a proud man is (as it were) twenty-hundredth-thousand miles from it; he is far from the covenant of faith.

Faith goes out for all that it hath to another, it reacheth up to heaven for all, it wants meat and nourishment, and therefore it goes to Christ for all, and pride only rests upon itself for all; faith gives the glory of all that it hath to another, but pride takes all the glory to its self. Faith goes to another for strength in what he doth, but pride rests upon itself for strength: So that, though all sins hinder the work of faith, yet, pride hinders it more than anything. You that think it a brave matter to be proud, and you must not buckle to the Minister, and you must do what you list, you are stout-hearted men, but you are far from believing men. The more faith, the less pride, and the more pride, the less faith.

Thirdly, as pride opposeth God himself, and as it opposeth the covenant of grace, so it follows from the two former, that the proud Soul upon these conditions (that it is in) shall never receive any grace from the Lord. Set your hearts at rest for that. You may swell, and lift up yourselves, but if ever you receive the work of grace, and mercy upon these terms, I will be your bond-man forever. For, he that is professedly contrary to the grace of God, that gives all; and he that is contrary to the covenant of grace by which all is conveyed, let him set his heart at rest, forever receiving any mercy. The Lord himself is not able to endure the sight of a haughty spirit, he cannot look upon him, much less will he live with him. He beholds the proud man a far off, he drives a proud man far from heaven. The Lord deals by a proud man, as a man doth that is carried with indignation against his enemy, he will not look upon him: So it is with the Lord, he will not be within the ken of a proud man, and if the Lord do come near a proud man, woe to him that

he doth so. The Lord resists the proud. He whets all the sharpest arrows of his vengeance, and shuts them all against a proud man. You broken hearts consider this. The Lord gives grace to the humble, but the proud man must be content with his portion, he shall be resisted, not received, he shall be resisted, not converted, nor saved, nor sanctified. He may bid farewell to all grace, he shall never have it upon those terms: and as God intends no good to him, so a proud man comes not within the scope of mercy, nor of that redemption which Jesus Christ hath wrought and purchased. Christ came not to call the righteous, that is, them that look loftily in regard of what they do. You stout hearted people, think of it. The Lord Christ came not to call you. The devil calls, and you may go to him: but Christ came to call and save the poor broken-hearted sinners. It is said of Christ, That he was anointed of the Lord, to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel, to whom? To the meek, &c. You meekened Souls shall hear good news from heaven. But there is not any one syllable of one promise in all the Gospel, that any proud spirit can conceive to belong unto him. If I could separate all the good from the bad, I would have the good to stand by, and hear these good news that I have for them, and if you proud hearts will come in and yield, they may be yours too: You that tremble at God's Word, and are willing to do what God shall command, if there be any such here this day, as I doubt not but there are many, then know, that the Son of man came to seek and save you; it is good tidings. Nay, in the Lord Jesus Christ are all the Treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and out of this fullness of holiness, and happiness, he fills all your meek hearts, and he will give all grace according to your necessities; here is news of salvation, life, and comfort from heaven. But to whom is it? Christ came to seek, and save them that are lost: that is, them that are lost in their own apprehension: but the proud man

was never lost in himself. A lost man in the Wilderness is content to be guided into his right way: but the proud man saith, he will be filthy and fashionable still, therefore he was never lost, and Christ never came to seek nor save him.

All the means of Grace that God gives, will never benefit a proud man. So that now, it is as possible, nay, more possible for heaven and earth to meet together, then for a proud man to come to heaven, except God give him a heart to stoop. No man can receive benefit by the word, except he be under the power of it, if the wax be not under the Seal, how can it receive any impression? As the Apostle saith, They were delivered into the form of that doctrine propounded. The form of the Gospel took place in their hearts. There is no Soul can get any benefit by the Gospel, but he must receive what it reveals, and what it commands, he must do, and what it forbids, he must labor to avoid, but a proud heart is above all means, and therefore the word will not, nay, it cannot work savingly on him. As those wicked ones said, Our tongues are our own we ought to speak, who is Lord over us. What reproof shall awe me, saith a proud heart, I will be led by my own lusts. Your own reason leads you, and your own wills rules you, your own minds, and your lusts: and what your hearts will have, they must have. You stout hearted ones that are resolved not to yield, nor to come under the grace of God: you will not have your affections framed, nor made more teachable, then, seeing you will not be taught, be forever deluded, go your way, and be forever hardened, and forever cast off from the presence of God, and go down to the bottomless pit, you will have your own wills, therefore go to your own places, for that's all you can have. You that are the faithful of God, and know any such, mourn for them.

Fourthly, Again. The destruction of a proud man is both certain, exceeding heavy, and it is like to be marvelous fearful. There is nothing to be expected and hoped for, but total ruin, and that suddenly and inconceivably to every proud spirit, that bears up himself against the blessed God of heaven. Let me open it thus. A proud man is marked out for God's Judgments, and is made (as it were) the white against whom all the arrows of his vengeance are fully bent. When Amaziah would needs out bid the Prophet in his advice, and said, forbear, Why shouldst thou be smitten? I will forbear (saith the Prophet) but know what shall befall thee, I know the Lord hath purposed to destroy thee, because thou wilt not hearken to my counsel. You that are acquainted with your stout-hearted husbands, and wives, and friends, and know how your children bandy themselves against the blessed truth of Christ; go in secret and bemoan their estates, and pray for them, that if it be possible destruction may be prevented: go in secret and say, it is my husband, or my wife, or my child, that yields not to the direction of the Word, and therefore howsoever we may live a while together, yet I know God hath decreed to destroy him and her. Think of this with yourselves you that are proud, and say, If I will not be exhorted, then I shall be destroyed, I cannot avoid it. Oh, me thinks if every proud spirit, would write this upon the palms of his hands, and upon the tester of his bed, that he might see it wheresoever he goes; how would his heart sink within him. When thou goest abroad, say, for ought I know I shall never return home, God hath decreed to destroy me. And when thou liest down think thus, for ought I know I shall never rise more. It is not the word of man, but of the Almighty. When the Lord would (as it were) frame a path for destruction, he sends a proud heart. If once the Lord intend to destroy a People or Nation, he gives them over to pride of heart. The sons of Eli did not hearken to the voice of

their father, because the Lord meant to destroy them: he gave them over to proud hearts. Nay the proud Soul is not only the aim of God's wrath, but as the Lord determines destruction for him; so, he brings destruction first upon him. When the Citizens said, We will not have this man to rule over us, then the King was wroth, and said, bring hither those mine enemies, and slay them before me, &c. There was no delay, nor no mitigation of the punishment to be granted. Oh think of this, all you proud spirits. Indeed, the Lord will confound all the wicked in the Day of Judgment, but he will execute even the fiercest of the Vials of his vengeance against a proud man; and when the Lord shall say, where are those wretches mine enemies? Then the Ministers of God shall come in and say, this man was a drunkard, and this man an adulterer; Yes (saith the Lord) I will plague them anon, but, where are those mine enemies? Those stout-hearted men and women, that hated to be reformed? Let me see those damned and destroyed forever. And for ought I know, God hath a strange indignation in store for them. Nay, it shall be so executed upon a proud man, that there shall be no reclaiming of it, and God will not be persuaded to pity him. They shall call upon me (saith the Text) but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. So that, it is no wonder though a company of rebellious wretches have no comfort upon their death beds, and though a thousand devils seize upon them, and hurry them down to hell, its no wonder, I say, cry and call they may, but God will not hear them. Nay, the Lord will laugh at their destruction, and mock when their fear cometh; It is a grief for a man to be in misery, but to be laughed at, that's a plague of all plagues. But, to have mercy rejoice in the destruction of a man, this makes the plague out of measure miserable.

If any man say this is false doctrine, and this is too sharp and too keen. Brethren, we dare do no other, and we can do no less, and you had better hear of it now while you may prevent it then to hear of it, and feel it hereafter when there is no remedy. But, here is the main wound of our Ministry, you will not stoop nor yield to our Ministry. We speak not in wrath and anger (as you imagine) but in mercy, we now preach against a proud heart, that you may be humbled, and find mercy, and so be comforted and saved forever. Therefore take your own shame, and the Lord prevail with those hearts which word and counsel cannot work upon. And the Lord now fit you for mercy, that you may receive mercy from the Lord. That's all the hurt we wish you. Oh, that you would so hear of these plagues that you might never feel them. The Lord hath an old grudge against a proud heart. Go away you proud hearts, fear and tremble. When you are gone from the congregation, do not say, What if he say so, we fare well enough yet, and we see none of all these judgments, and all this wind shakes no corn: no, no, once stoop and come in, and take the yoke of Christ, and the Lord make it easy. Go in secret and reason thus, good Lord, have not I only lifted up myself against man like myself, but against God? And against his ordinances? And hath God yet showed me mercy in sparing of me? And it is yet mercy that I may bow my body, though I cannot bow my proud heart, oh what mercy is this! You wives, thank God that yet he hath spared your husbands, and that yet they have breath and being here: pray to God, that they may lay about them for humble hearts, that so they may find mercy against the evil day. Our God is very merciful, but it is no contending with him. Did ever any man provoke the Lord and prosper? Come in therefore, shame yourselves, that the Lord may humble you now, and show mercy to you hereafter.

[*Use 4.*] The last Use is for exhortation: You see the woe and misery of a proud spirit. What remains then, only this. Be exhorted, as you desire to find favor with God, and to receive mercy from him, now be content to be at his disposing. Walk in this way, and aim at this mark, strive hard for it, and put forth the best of your abilities, that you may get humble hearts. You must not think that every lazy wish, and every desire will serve the turn, and that it will be enough to say, is it so that a proud heart is so far from heaven; I would I had a humble heart and so forth. You must not think that God will bring you to heaven before you be aware of it, and that a humble heart will drop into your mouths. The Saints of God have always had it before they received Christ, and thou must have it too if ever thou wilt have him, therefore make it a chief part of thy daily task to get it, And suffer not thine eyes to sleep, nor thine eye lids to slumber, nor the temples of thy head to take any rest, before thou hast this gracious disposition of spirit. You see the price, the worth and excellency of this blessed grace, do not now let this grace lie lay, cast it not into a bye corner, but in all your desires, covet this, and in all your hunting up and down after commodities, prize this more then all, and labor to get it above all.

I know one man hath his eye upon the world, and another on his pleasures, and every man saith, what shall we eat, and drink, and wherewith shall we be clothed? But do not thou say, how shall I be rich, or honorable, but how shall I get this humble heart? What's that to thy Soul, that thou art rich and a reprobate, and that thou art honorable and damned. If thou be once humbled, then thou art past the worst. It is the choicest good, and the chief of thy desires should be for a humble heart. Now to draw our hearts to this, there are three considerations that may be seasonable, and serviceable to this end. And they are these.

First, Consider, that it is possible to have a humble heart.

Secondly, Consider the danger if you have it not, I will not give a rush for all that you can do without it, though you live Methuselahs days.

Thirdly, Consider the exceeding benefit that will come by this grace.

For the first, It is possible for any Soul present (for ought I know or that he knows) to get an humble heart. This may be a provocation to us, to set upon this duty. If a man had no hope to get this desire, he would have no heart to use any means for it. A man had as good sit still, as rise up and fall, as the Proverb is. But, seeing it is possible, why may not thou, and I, or any man here get a humble heart? And therefore seek to the Lord for it, and say, there hath been many as proud hearts, and as stout as mine (though I have been like a devil for my pride) yet they have had this grace, and therefore (Lord) why may not I have it as well as they? Who knows but God may give me a humble heart too? Though my heart be now stout, and stubborn, and rebellious, yet Lord, I see no command that forbids me not to expect this mercy, and I see no truth that excludes me, no, the Lord saith in his command, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Yea, the Lord hath appointed means for the working of this grace, and hath ever blessed those means for the good of others, and why not me Lord? Lord, hast thou blessed these means to others? And made them stoop and yield, why wilt thou not bless them to me too Lord? Who knows but God will do it for me, as well as he hath done it for others?

Therefore go thou to God, and say, The truth is (Lord) I confess this haughty and this rebellious heart of mine will not come down, it is not in man's power to pull down my proud heart: No, it is not in the power of Angels to humble a proud heart, Lord, now take this stout heart, and humble it, and do what thou wilt with it, didst not thou tame the heart of

Manasseh, that Witch and blood-sucker that made the streets of Jerusalem to swim with blood? Didst not thou humble him? And didst not thou bring down the proud heart of that sturdy Jailor? And didst not thou tame the heart of proud persecuting Saul? Didst not thou make him come creeping in upon his knees? Lord, thus thou hast done, Lord, humble me too. Thus importune the God of heaven. Nay, press God with his promise, and with that engagement whereby he hath tied himself. The day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is lifted up, and that is proud and lofty, (saith the text) and he shall be brought low, and upon all the Cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the Oaks of Bashan. That is, upon all mighty, vile, sturdy, and unreasonable men; and what then? They shall be brought full low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. The day of the Lord shall be upon all flesh; press God with this promise, and entreat the Lord to remember it, and say, Lord make all those sturdy hearts yield. Oh that this may be the day, and that I may be the man, and that my heart may be the heart, that thy mercy and grace may only be admired and wondered at. Thus you see, that God may do as much for you, as he hath done for others; and it is possible to get an humble heart, therefore labor for it.

Secondly, as it is possible to get a humble heart, So, consider, that if you mistake yourselves, and fail here, the danger is wonderful desperate, and fearful, and therefore, use so much more care and diligence, not to be deceived therein. If you miss here, never look to be saved nor recovered hereafter. Miss now, and you are undone forever, its as much as your souls be worth: as your Humiliation is, so your Faith, so your Sanctification, and your obedience will be. If that be naught, all will be naught. It is observed by Philosophers, and Physicians that if there be any fault in the first

digesture, it cannot be amended in the next, if the stomach digest the meat ill, the Liver can never make good blood: So a wound here, can never be amended. If the bottom and foundation of a building, be not sound and substantial, though the frame be never so neat and handsome, yet there is no mending of it, it must be all pulled down, and the ground-work made more sure; and therefore, when men set up some main pillars to uphold a house, they dig them deep and low, and set them strong: So, if this work of Humiliation be not deep and low enough, all the frames of a man's profession will fall down, there is no mending of it. If the foundation of the house be sound, though the thatch and spars fly off, there is some help: but if that be naught, the house will down whatsoever the other be: So, many weaknesses may be succored, and the heart may be sustained under them all, if this work of Humiliation be good, but if a man once prove false here, thy faith and obedience will be naught, and the Spirit of God will never dwell in thee, nor quicken thee. See what our blessed Savior saith, Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c. This gate, or this entrance into life, is Humiliation of heart. When the Soul is loosened from, and bids farewell to sin, and himself, then the gate is opened. And as it is in other ways; If there be but one way or gate into a house, and the traveler misseth that gate, he loseth all his labor, and must go back again: but if he once get in at this gate he is safe enough then. So it is here, There is a most narrow way of God's Commandments, and there is but one way or gate into this happiness, it is narrow, and a little gate; and a man must be nothing in his own eyes, and if you miss this gate, you lose all your labor, and shall never come to Salvation. If a man could hear and pray all his days, yet, if his heart be not humbled, he and his profession shall go to hell together. In Saint Matthew the conclusion is very peremptory; when the Disciples were contending

who should be highest; Christ set a child in the midst of them, and said, Except you become as little children, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of heaven. You may do anything with Infants, and all that they have to do, is to cry. Unless you have humble hearts, you cannot enter into heaven. He doth not say, You cannot be great men, or, you cannot go far into heaven, but he saith, You cannot enter. So then, the danger being so great, and the mistaking so full of hazard, and seeing it is possible to have it, therefore let us use all diligence to make this work sure.

Thirdly, consider the marvelous good that God hath promised, and which he will bestow upon all that are truly humbled. And let all these be as so many cords to draw us to look for this blessed frame of heart. We have need of all the motives in the world. I know it is a hard matter for a man to lay down himself, and his parts and all his privileges in the dust; I say, it is marvelous irksome and tedious to the nature of a carnal man; but, it will quit all his cost in the end. When we shall taste of those sweet benefits that come by a humble heart, and have gotten Jesus Christ and mercy from him, then it will never repent us that we have spent so many tears, and made so many prayers, and used so many means to pull down the pride of our hearts; Oh brethren, think of it. See and consider the admirable benefits, and the exceeding great good that will come to you thereby. The good things that come by a heart that is truly humbled, they are specially four, and with those the truth and substance of whatsoever the heart can crave and desire.

The first, benefit of a humble heart, is this, by this means we come to be made capable of all those riches of the treasure of wisdom, and grace, and mercy that are in Christ: and not only of the blessings for a better life, but of all things in this life so far as they are good for us.

First, we are made capable of all those treasures of wisdom, grace, and mercy that are in Christ, and for this cause was Christ sent to preach glad tidings to the meek as you heard before: all the Gospel, and all the glad tidings of it do belong to a humble soul. And the Prophet Malachi saith, Behold, I will send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come into his Temple. John the Baptist was Christ's harbinger, and he made way for Christ, and when the way was prepared, Christ came immediately: We are the Temple of the holy Ghost (saith the Apostle.) Now, if the heart be once prepared and humbled, look then immediately for Christ. Are you not content to have Christ dwell in your hearts? If you will be humbled, and so prepared, there is neither want of love, nor speed on his part. This should marvelously lift up the heart of every man, to seek for this blessed grace. If thou art truly humbled, care not for the love of men, the love of Christ will satisfy thee. And though thy father and mother cast thee out of doors, and thy husband tumble thee out of his bed, yet if thou be truly humbled, Christ will be instead of father, and husband, and all comforts to thee. God hath but two thrones, and the humble heart is one. So the Text saith, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, &c. If the Lord Jesus come to dwell in thy heart (and that he will do if thou be truly humbled) then certainly he will provide for thee all needful comforts for this life. See what Zephaniah saith, Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. When all things threatened desolation and destruction, see who they were that had safety promised, only the meek.

[*Obj.*] But some will say, Is it not better for a man to be proud with the proud, and to play the Bear amongst Bears, and the Lyon amongst Lions, and to shift for one?

[*Ans.*] No (saith the text) seek meekness. The humble Soul may take this to himself as his part and portion: If there should be desolation amongst us as there is in Bohemia, in the Palatinate, and in other Countries, the humble Soul shall be hid. When the mighty tall trees are blown down by strong winds, the little shrubs may be shaken a little, but they stand still; they are safe and sure, when the mighty Oaks are either horribly shaken, or pulled up by the roots: So, if ever you will seek safety and deliverance, seek meekness, and then you shall be hidden. When the proud heart shall be weltering in his blood, the Lord will provide a shadow to succor, and to comfort you. If Christ dwell in your hearts, he is bound to all reparations.

Secondly, as Humiliation of heart doth estate a man into Christ, and his merits, and all provision in this kind, so, it gives him the comfort of all that good which he hath in Christ. There are many that have a right to Christ, and are dear to God, and yet they want much sweet refreshing that they might have, and as the Proverb is, They never see their own, because they want this Humiliation of heart in some measure. To be truly humbled is the next way to be truly comforted. The Lord will look to him that hath an humble contrite heart, and trembles at his word, that is, an humble Soul, a poor Soul, a very beggar at the gate of mercy; the Lord will not only know him (for he knows the wicked too in a general manner) but he will give him such a gracious look, as shall make his heart dance in his breast; thou poor humbled Soul, the Lord will give thee a glimpse of his favor when thou art tired in thy trouble, and when thou lookest up to heaven, the Lord will look down upon thee, and will refresh thee with mercy. It is that which God hath

prepared as a sweet morsel for his child, he will revive the humble. Though the proud man shall sit and swelter himself in his trouble, yet the Lord will not only be in the house, and heart of a humble man, but look to him and revive him. It is the condition to which the Lord hath promised consolation, and this Humiliation of heart is the main terms of agreement, upon which God hath ever showed mercy. Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. As when men sup together and eat in the same dish, it argues a sweet rejoicing in the familiarity one of another. I know you would fain have much comfort; the Lord now knocks, if you will but open the door, he will come into your hearts, and he will bring his own provision with him, even the sweet cordials of his grace and comfort, and he will refresh you with those consolations which the eye of man hath not seen, and the ear of man hath not heard, &c. only the Saints of God shall feel them. Every valley shall be filled, (saith the text) and every hill shall be brought low, and the crooked things shall be made straight, and then all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord. When shall they see it? When those things are done that are there promised. John the Baptist was to make way for Christ, and the Text saith, Every valley shall be filled, that is, every desperate discouraged heart, and every mountain shall be levelled, that is, every proud heart shall be humbled; and then all flesh shall see the salvation of God; here is the cause why we find not the assurance of God's love that we might and ought to have; there are mighty mountains of carnal reasonings, and strange mists of discontentment between Christ and the Soul; and these keep of the light of God's love in Christ, which else would shine in our faces for our everlasting comfort. Now be humbled, and throw away all those distempers, and then the Lord Jesus who comes with healing under

his wings will comfort you, and you shall see the salvation of God. There is a Christ, and comfort in him, if your Souls be humbled, you shall see it, and find the evidence of it. When the Sun is near setting, because there is a mountain between us and it, therefore we think it is set when it is not, whereas if a man were on the top of it, he should see the Sun clear: So it is with all those mountains of carnal reasonings, they stand between the Lord Jesus and thy Soul, and that's the reason why thou seest not the light of God's countenance shining upon thee.

Thirdly, we also may have glory in this comfort that we have in Christ; as our Savior saith, Whosoever exalts himself shall be abased, but whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted. He doth not say, If such a man and such a woman humble themselves, but the words are universally to be understood; whatsoever thou art, be thou humble, and the Lord shall lift thee up. It is impossible that the exaltation and glory of a humble Soul should be hindered by men or devils. Let the devil and all his instruments labor to cast shame and disgrace upon thee; nay, be thy condition never so base and mean in the worlds account, be thou humbled, and it cannot be hindered, but that the Lord will exalt thee; the Lord hath promised it, and thou being as thou shouldst be, the Lord will do what he hath engaged himself to. The Lord many times for want of this, leaves men of great parts, and gifts in the lurch: they fret and are grieved exceedingly, because such a poor man finds acceptance, and is approved of, and yet no man looks after them; If you know any such, tell them it is by reason of their pride, they seek their own honor and not God's, they are not humbled but seek to exalt themselves, and God will abase them. Let them fawn and flatter, let them flatter and dissemble never so much, (as most men do to get honors,) yet God will abase them. And for this cause God blasts one man's endeavors,

and withers another man's gifts, and brings him to shame, because he is proud; whereas the humble Soul that is content to honor God in his abasement, the Lord will set up that man in mercy and goodness, the Lord will teach the humble in his way. Doth the Lord care for any man's parts or gifts, or for his honor and respect? No, the Lord hath chosen things that are not, that is, things that in the eyes of the world are accounted as nothing, those hath God chosen, to confound the haughtiness of the hearts of proud men in this kind, See how David answered Michall when she mocked him, and said, Oh how glorious was the King of Israel this day, &c. Is not this a goodly matter for the King to do? See how he answers her, it was before the Lord who chose me rather than thy father and all his house, and commanded me to be ruler over his people, and therefore I will play before the Lord, and if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile. Thy father was naught, and thou art so too, and he is gone to his place. The meanest in all the place will honor the humble heart, but though happily the people may fear a proud man, yet they will never honor him in their hearts.

Fourthly and lastly, we have blessedness in all that appertains to a humble heart. Whosoever humbles himself as a little child, shall be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven; He doth not say, he that is greatest and most lofty may haply be great, but he that is humble, and trembles at every truth of God, and every truth prevails with him, and every terror awes him, he shall be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. You take it as a disgrace to be reprov'd by a servant, or an inferior, but the humble Soul, takes it whatsoever it is, and is willing to be reprov'd by any; and he that doth thus, shall be in the highest degree of grace here, and shall be greatest in the glory of heaven, and be lifted up to the highest pinnacle of glory, the wider and deeper a vessel is, the more liquor it holds; So, Humiliation makes the heart wide

and deep: and as thy Humiliation is, so shall be thy Faith, and thy Sanctification, and Obedience is answerable, and thy Glory shall be suitable. Now to conclude all.

CHAP. VTI. THE CONCLUSION.

Do you consider that it is possible to have a humble heart? Do you consider the danger if you have it not? And do you consider the good that comes by a humble heart, and do you sit still? As he said in another case. Me thinks your hearts begin to stir, and say, hath the Lord engaged himself to this? Oh then (Lord) make me humble. Mee thinks your countenances say so; The Lord make me and thee, and all of us humble, that we may have this mercy. Let me make but this one question to your Consciences, and give me an answer secretly in your souls; when the Lord shall close up your eyes here, and put an end to your pilgrimage, would you not be content to dwell with Christ in heaven? Which the Apostle did account his greatest happiness, to be ever with the Lord; we shall be ever with Christ to comfort us, when we shall be no more with sin, to vex and trouble us: would not you be content to be with Christ? Me thinks your hearts say, that's the end and upshot of all, that's the end why we live, and pray, and hear, that we may be ever with him. And do not you meet with many troubles, while you are members of the Church Militant? I know you

have sometimes distempers without, and troubles without, would you not have comfort against them all? And what would you give, that Christ would look in, and ask how your Souls do, and say, thou art my redeemed, and I am thy Redeemer. No, you know, all flesh desires it. Would you not be content to have some honor in the Church? And to leave a good name behind you, that the disgraces which wicked men cast upon you, may not be as a blot upon your names? And when you shall be no more, and you shall bid a due to friends, and honors, and means; would you not be blessed, and though you would be content to be the meanest in the Kingdom of heaven, what would you give to be the greatest in heaven? Let me put a condition to you; get but humble hearts and you have all. Men, brethren, and fathers; if there be any Soul here, that is content in truth and sincerity to be humbled, and to be at God's disposing in all duties to be done, do not you make too much hast to go to heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ will come down from heaven and dwell in your hearts, he will sit, and lie, and walk with you; his grace shall refresh you, and his Wisdom shall direct you, and his Glory shall advance you, and as for happiness, take no thought for that. Everlasting happiness, and blessedness, looks and waits for every humble Soul; Come (saith happiness) thou that hast been vile, and base, and mean in thine own eyes, and in the contempt of the world, come and be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. Brethren, though I cannot prevail with your hearts, yet let happiness that kneels down, and prays you to take mercy, let that (I say) prevail with you. And answer me now, who would not be humbled? If any man be so regardless of his own good: I have something to say to him, that may make his heart shake within him. But, who would not have the Lord Jesus to dwell with him? Who would not have the Lord Christ by the glory of his grace to honor, and refresh them? And that he should set a crown of

happiness upon their heads? Mee thinks your hearts should earn for it, and say, oh Lord break my heart, and humble me, that mercy may be my portion forever. Nay, me thinks every man should say, as Saint Paul did, I would to God that not only I, but all my children, and servants, were not only thus as I am, but also (if it were God's will) much more humbled, that they might be much more comforted and refreshed.

The Lord in his mercy grant it. Let all parents labor to have their children humbled, and every master his servant. This will give them cheering of heart in that great Day of accounts: when paleness comes upon your faces, and leanness to your cheeks, then I know you would leave your children a good portion, then get their Souls truly humbled. Me thinks it cheers my heart to consider of it, if a man could get his own heart, and the hearts of all truly humbled; when he leaves the world, if he could but say, my wife is humbled, and such a child, and such a child, is humbled; how comfortably might he go away, and say, though I go away and leave wife, and children behind me, poor and mean in the world, yet I leave Christ with them. Brethren, though you care not for yourselves, yet care for your little ones, never leave exhorting of them, never leave praying for them, and for yourselves too, that you and they may get these humble hearts. When you are gone this will be better for them then all the beaten gold, or all the honors in the world.

There are many that have heretofore stood out against the Lord, and they would not come in, nor yield to the conditions of mercy, all those proud, haughty, and rebellious spirits that have stood out against God's Truth, his Word, and Ministers, and have stood out long, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty years, let all such fear and tremble, and now resolve not to stand it out anymore, but since the Lord offers so kindly to comfort you,

and to honor you upon your Humiliation; Now kiss the Son, be humble, yield to all God's commands, take home all truths, and be at God's disposing. There must be subjection, or else confusion: will you out-brave the Almighty to his face, and will you dare damnation? As you love your Souls take heed of it. As proud as you have been crushed and humbled. Where are all those Nimrods, and Pharaohs, and all those mighty Monarchs of the World? The Lord hath thrown them flat upon their backs, and they are in hell this day. Therefore be wise, and be humbled under the mighty hand of the Lord. It is a mighty hand, and the Lord will be honored, either in your Humiliation and conversion, or else in your damnation forever. Let all the evil that is threatened, and all the good that is offered prevail with your hearts, and though means cannot, yet the Lord prevail with you, the Lord empty you, that Christ may fill you, the Lord humble you, that you may enjoy happiness, and peace forever.

FINIS.