

Monergism

A DRY ROD BLOOMING AND FRUIT-BEARING

A TREATISE OF THE PAIN, GAIN,
AND USE OF CHASTENINGS

GEORGE HUGHES

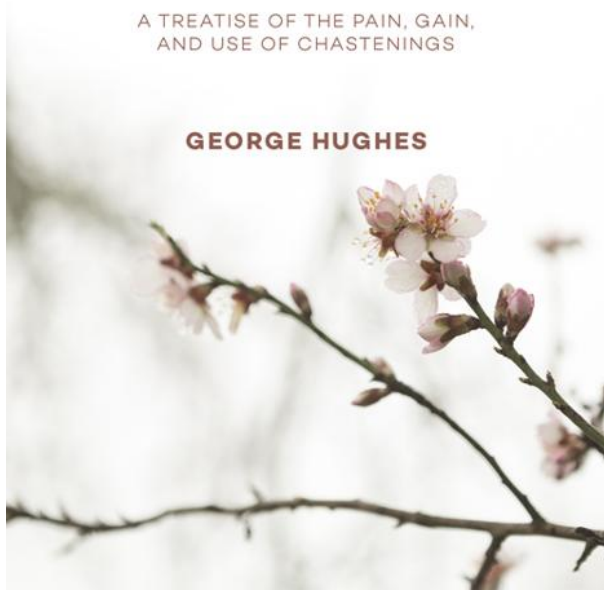


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A DRY ROD BLOOMING AND FRUIT-BEARING.

Or, A Treatise of the Pain, Gain, and Use of Chastening's.

Preached partly in several Sermons, but now compiled more orderly
and fully for the direction and support of all God's Chastened that
suffer either in CHRIST, or for CHRIST in these days.

By George Hughes,

B. D. Pastor of the Church in Plymouth.

It is good for a man, that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Lam. 3.27

My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Mat. 11.30.

London, Printed by T. Paine for John Rothwell at the Sun in Paul's
Church-yard. 1644.

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the archaic 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 facsimiles. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may if uncaught. My apologies in advance where this error does occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in archaic script in the original facsimiles.

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TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,

The Major, Recorder and Aldermen of the Town of Plymouth, with all that love the Lord I sus in sincerity even unto deepest sufferings in that place.

Honored and Beloved,

Gods Furnace of affliction, and refining Fire hath been visibly set up among you, as in other parts of this distressed Island, the furnace hath been as hot, and the flame as great, as in any of God's work-houses in the land: Me thinks pity should be showed, to you so deeply afflicted and tossed with tempest, by your friends. Your enemies, and the Churches oppressors will not spare to add to your afflictions, persecuting you as evil doers, and charging you with Disloyalty, a Crime more bitter than your sufferings, were the charge but just; unjust aspersions will turn to greater honor at the last, therefore may be present comforts; I pray both for myself and you, the abhorring of that Sin next to Rebellion against the Lord of Glory; I trust we shall strive equally against it, & be approved before the

Reproacher in the latter end. But why disloyal? If I may a little reason, because obedient to the lawful commands of the true fundamental power ordained by God over us? Such obedience cannot be Treason, unless that power be Traitorous; and before this Age it was never known that a true Parliament was a subject capable of the crime of Treason; and truer than this raised according to the fundamental constitutions of this Kingdom never was any, let the enemy himself be Judge. In this case it is safer to be accounted a Traitor for obedience to such a power, then to be one indeed by resistance of it. To the accusers return, The Mystery of Iniquity, as it covers sin in poisoning, so it hides the cause in persecuting; It pretends Christ, when it would convey into the Soul the very Hell of Antichrist, and it cries out Faction, Treason, when it would murder outright Christ in his Members; And this devise is too well known now, than that God's chosen should be deluded by it; wish them again to leave calling Traitors, and wait for the Chronicle in the next Generation, which will more truly tell the generations to come, who have been indeed Traitors in this Age: And tell them once more, it little concerns the Saints in this matter to be judged in man's day or of man's judgment; God's day and judgment are hasting on, unto which alone do we appeal: There shall they answer Christ and us, and until then we will patiently bear and wait for sentence from our Judge.

Your great suffering in the eyes of others both God and Men will find, I hope, better acceptance, and draw sweeter expressions for return: God hath not hid his face from you in yours deepest darkness; in the flame he hath kept your Bush from burning, and in the furnace yourselves and substance yet from consuming All that I pray for you is, ye may not be found unthankful nor unfruitful, but that ye may tread in the steps of God's bosom-son to learn obedience by all that ye have suffered, and return unto the Lord according to mercies received.

For your help in this course, I am bold to present this work to your eyes and hearts to be seen and studied: My first conceptions of it (I

confess) were occasioned by my own afflictions, for my own use, which though bitter to the flesh, I hoped to sweeten by the Spirit of these truths bound up in this Apostolical advertisement to the Christian Hebrews: and I bless God, my hope did not altogether fail nice in this matter. Afterwards my thoughts were enlarged to some Sermons upon this subject, with desire not to keep close these reviving cordials, but to impart them in measure for the comfort of God's afflicted; The desire of some of these to have those words under their eyes, which did but touch their ears, hath prevailed with me to compose all in this Treatise, & now to make it of public use. Yet in sending it abroad my hearts desire is to give it a special direction unto you, and my prayer to God, that it may abundantly be profitable to your souls: To the love and care whereof as I am engaged by the more special bonds of Christ; so if you may better prosper under chastening's by this first fruit of my labor on you, it will be my full rejoicing.

I present this work to you, and the afflicted Church, the rather at this season, to be both a remedy against present pressures, and an Antidote against the malignity of future troubles in the flesh, which the Holy Ghost seems to bid us to expect in these last days of testifying against the Antichrist, and his vassal creatures, if we be the Saints of God: he points at our time, and all that space remaining to the harvest of Antichrist, with that finger, Here is the patience of the Saints; Here and now trials enough shall be raised to exercise the patience of God's Saints, but no cause to undervalue Saintship for this. Blessed Saints in this time that store up patience, that keep the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; The victory and Kingdom shall be theirs. If any afflicted soul may by this Treatise be directed to its due exercise under the rod, and helped on to the receiving of the desired fruit, it is all I aim at, that God may be glorified in it.

Upon you (dearly beloved and longed for) I cast this seed with a great hope of a sweet return of a treble fruit, toward the rod, toward your God, toward yourselves, which I beseech the Father of mercies by the

word of blessing to perfect, & you by your obedience to help on, that we be not ashamed. 1. Towards the rod, I shall long and hope for your return of patience in a sweet bearing of it, that ye neither faint under it nor despise it; of obedience in a due hearing of it, that like the Be, ye may work honey out of every nettle; and of diligence or watchfulness to be conformed to God's Covenant, for which the Rod pleads, that it may be as the thorn at the Nightingales breast, your constant Awakener unto God.

2. Towards God, no less shall I desire and wait for, the eminent Piety, Holiness, and zeal for his cause in the power of them, to give him Glory his Peculiar, in word, in ways, in worship, this he will have, either from you, or upon you: How well spent are we, if we be consumed and God glorified? Saints are but Lamps or Candles of God, they burn and shine to show his beauty, and at last are done, go out sweetly and expire in his glory. Such a Lamp is lately gone out with you, that is burnt & spent for Christ, his Church and you; His life was light, and that desired, his death darkness, not in yours only but the kingdoms Hemisphere, and that lamented: I cannot think upon such a public Man but with Honor, and though Envy bark, the memory of the just shall be blessed; I mention him only to move you to a repair of such a Light, Be all so; burn and shine, and spend state, and parts, and lives to become at last God's Glory in expiring.

3. Towards yourselves, I pray and wait for out of all your troubles the fruit of Love & Union; though in times of peace Christians may perhaps grow fat, and proud, and wanton, and kick with the heel, yet me thinks the rod and afflictions should tame them; Though in the palace the Martyrs may contend, the stake did surely make them friends: One scourge upon all backs for one cause, by one Adversary, will certainly whip the hearts of them together that suffer: Either ye are not all indeed sufferers in the same cause of Christ, (if so, let Hypocrites unmask themselves) or else ye must be of the same heart and mind; O let that cursed self die, and let Christ live in you, then ye shall be of one heart and of one mind. Self-conceit, Self-ends, Self-pleasing, let them perish; Is this a time to seek things for ourselves?

Seek Christ, serve and please one another in him; no way so holy and so prosperous. Let the rod have such an answer: or if by any other arguments I may, let me now beg you into mutual love and sweet accord; I will strive by the Apostles strength: Beloved, if there be any consolation in Christ, any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill my joy to be like-minded in the Lord. With this hope I send this token to you, in this hope I am hasting towards you, your union and mutual love in Christ will be my joy, your divisions from him my greatest grief: Honor Christ, and comfort me, and bless yourselves in yielding this fruit. Take now this pledge of my love and use it. I also shall bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that while ye are reading, the Spirit of life and light may fall upon you, and change your hearts into the likeness of every Truth; He teach and stablish, and comfort, and perfect you unto God's Heavenly Kingdom; Into his bosom I now commend you through the Beloved, In whom I must subscribe myself,

Lond. May. 11th. 1644.

Your unworthy Pastor, desirous to be your faithful servant for Jesus sake.

GEORGE HUGHES.

A DRY ROD BLOOMING AND FRUIT-BEARING,

OR A Treatise of the Pain, Gain, &c. use of God's Chastening's upon his own Children, issuing from this Text, Heb. 12.11, 12, 13.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

And make straight (or even) paths for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

THE FIRST PART

Of the Pain of Chastening's.

SECT. I.

The scope and inference of this Scripture-ground leading to the work.

The Text in its scope is a Lenitive prepared and prescribed by the highest and most able hand to ease the smart, and cure the fainting's of his chosen portion under all afflictions: Such care doth God express to the true seed of Abraham the Hebrew his old Friend in their deepest sufferings.

The inference is thus; The Apostle had finished the main doctrinal part of this Epistle touching the glory, sufficiency and efficacy of the great Minister of the Gospel, chap. 10. v. 18. The summary drift of all which was, That every Soul both of Jew and Gentile for all things toward God must only & wholly acquiesce or rest satisfied in that one Jesus Christ the Son of God, by whom alone the Father hath revealed

his bosom-thoughts and purposes concerning that one way of saving poor sinners: This ground work being laid, he thence laboreth to draw them to practice and duties suitable to such a Doctrine; (1.) To nearer acquaintance with God by this new revealed Christ. v. 19, 20, 21, 22. (2.) To boldness and constancy in the profession of this Son of God, v. 23. (3.) To mutual care for stirring up each other to walk worthy of such a Ministry, and not to sin against this revealed truth, with mighty arguments to enforce it, from v. 24. to 32. (4.) To patience under any cross that may accompany this profession of Christ; he toucheth their past experience of scoffs reproaches & spoiling's of their goods, he adviseth to store themselves with patience for the future, for as much as they should find need of it. & from the certain and speedy coming of their Redeemer encourageth them to faith as the only rise and main support of patience which closeth that chapter. In the whole 11th c., he reports the effects & notable exploits of this victorious faith in many, Worthies of their own nation, that made them endure to the nullifying of torments, and astonishment of their bloody persecutors, therein exemplifying the power of faith working patience. In the 12. chap. v. 1 he resumes with greater strength from the cloud of witnesses his former counsel and presseth them to run out with patience the race that was set before them, with the addition of some forcing considerations. (1.) From the leader in this course, Christ the Son of God, to whom all must be conformed in sufferings that bear his name, v. 2.3, 4. (2.) From the Author and inflictor of these smart rods, it is God the Father, and he takes not this pains in chastening any but his children v. 5 6.7.8. (3.) From the end of these chastening's, it is not from pleasure as earthly parents may do, but for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness; & should we decline such rods? v. 9.10. (4.) From the future, certain event which every exercised soul shall find from all sufferings in Christ, & for Christ, this is the peaceable fruit of righteousness, one main clause of the text; and would a Believer lose this for escaping the cross? Sum we up all premised in these collections, God's care is very tender to his afflicted; Christ their hope may be the occasion of many strokes unto them; patience will be needful to overcome the bitterness of their afflictions: Faith is

powerful to make patience victorious; and the future fruit of sufferings will encourage grace to hold out its course unwearied. Now to fall close to the text and matter.

SECT. II.

The order, parts, and letter of the Text discovered.

The spirit of Christ seems to order this scripture by way of anticipation to silence some risings of flesh in these Christian Hebrews, which might easily appear against this bearing work in such returns as this. [Ob.] Alas! What flesh and blood can endure those burdens unto which you would have us subject ourselves? do you think there is no smart in them? [Sol.] The spirit here answereth, yea sure God knows that every chastening is smart, and worketh grief, but is it not sweet too? Take this with that, and then judge what cause ye have to withdraw from these sufferings. In the Text then these generals are observable.

1. A proposition concerning the true state and issue of all God's chastening's upon Christ's members; which is double.

1. By way of concession, granting that which the afflicted say, concerning the evil of their sufferings; True, no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous.

2. By way of correction yet to their misconceit as if nothing but bitterness were in them, therefore he adds, nevertheless, &c. v. 11.

2. An Inference of duty, which is twofold.

1. Of encouragement, lift up the hands, &c. v. 12.

2. Of direction for rectifying ways and walking, make straight &c. and this urged by a double motive.

1. Inconvenience of neglect, the lame may be so perverted

2. Convenience or benefit of doing, so the lame may be healed, v. 13.

The proposition of concession yields the pain, that of correction gives the gain, and the inference brings home the use sharpest chastening's to the soul. These three are the chief heads which I shall here treat of for the support of God's afflicted. As for the letter I shall open it in all, as they fall into an orderly prosecution: Here only of so much as concerns the first proposition. Three terms are here considerable; (1.) The Subject, that is chastening, which for the notion is such a smart correction as a father would use to his child, be it by what instrument soever; and here notes the affliction or evil of what kind soever that God is pleased to exercise his children withal, even his smarting rod. (2.) The Attribute two ways expressed. 1. Negatively, it is not joyous; 2. Affirmatively; but it is grievous: In the letter, it is given in genitives of the several affections, no chastening is of joy, but grief, that is, matter of joy, but of grief; sorrow, not mirth is the affection proper to this evil of affliction; therefore full enough rendered in these adjectives, not joyous but grievous. (3.) The manner of attribution, It seemeth to be so, the words are not so positive, as to say, no chastening is joyous, &c. which hath made some to gloss irrationally the uncertainty of this Attribute, as if it only seemed to be grievous for present, but indeed were not so; This is not the mind of God as if he did mock his afflicted, but he grants really to them as much as they feel, that the rod is truly grievous for the present; therefore this seeming is of sense by which it is felt to be so, not of uncertainty. So that God speaks plainly in the letter to us, and grants as much as flesh can say it feels.

SECT. III.

The first conclusion and its explication.

Having thus understood the letter, remembering it to be a proposition of concession; Let us now observe in it these particulars, 1. Who grants this? It is the spirit of God. 2. What he grants? It is that which the flesh of the Saints feels, that no chastening is joyous but grievous. 3. What limitation he makes to this grant? That he surely puts in touching the time, it is so but for the present. 4. To whom he grants this? It is to his chastened or afflicted children; the result from all will be in this conclusion.

God himself accounts all the afflictions or chastening's of his people, not light but heavy, and allows them not joy but grief under their present pressures. To take the full weight of this, these four things must be more clearly opened, 1. The condition judged, no chastening is light but heavy, or not good but evil. 2. The affection allowed, not joy, but grief. 3. The Author or Judge of both, it is the Lord, by his spirit that grants this. 4. The due limitation for the time or season, it is so for the present. To the 1. The condition here judged and the sentence passed on it, is clearly carried in that speech of the Spirit, no chastening is matter of joy, therefore not good, not light or easy, but matter of grief, therefore evil, heavy, and smart. Two things must have some light here. 1. The Subject whereof this is spoken. 2. The Attribute or sentence given of it.

1. The Subject here is Chastening, one kind of the evils of pain, and, as will appear, the easiest of them all; To conceive aright of it, we shall distinguish to find it out, and then discover it more fully. The evils of pain in the Scripture dialect are threefold, so many different titles we have of them. 1. Some are called Judgments; These for the matter of them may be of any sort of pain (as all the rest) either

sword, famine or pestilence; but the form or special being of them, is made up of the principle or rise of them, which is the wrath of God, a Judge of the rule for the execution, which is the curse of the Law, and of the end of their inflicting, which is God's Glory in the creatures ruin on whom they fall; These are peculiar to the wicked only.

2. Others are called Chastening's, as in the text; These also in their general or material consideration, may be any kind of affliction or painful evil, but in their special nature, they are specified by the love of God a father the root of them, by the promise of grace the rule of their execution, and by the communication of holiness for God's glory to these afflicted, the certain end whereunto they are intended; These are proper only to God's children.

3. The rest are called Trials, which agree with the two former in the material part, the same evils upon state, name and life may be in all. The end gives the name to these, forasmuch as God intendeth and useth them as the Refiner his fire, to try the silver, to put a difference between dross and metal, to consume that and polish this;

So by these afflictions God trieth spirits, discovereth the refuse, rotten, vile and reprobate, to separate them to shame, and the choice, sound and approved souls to reserve them for honor: These befall good and bad, children and bastards, whereby the one appears dross, combustible matter, and the other gold of eternal durance: yet in fine to the children these prove chastening's, but to the outcasts insufferable judgments.

Chastening's then are the subject wherewith we are to deal, the nature and extent whereof are touched in the text. 1. The nature is in the name. It is such a correction as God the Father in care for the profit of his own children, is pleased to inflict upon occasion of their slips or wanderings, lest they should run into the condemnation of the world; which though it be smart, yet in comparison with the other, is the sweetest rod.

1. The extent is in that universal note, No chastening; which imports both universality of kinds, no kind of chastening neither bodily nor spiritual, inward nor outward; and of degrees also, no chastening at all by the least twig, or the greatest rod, from the Ague-shaking to the Fire-scorching, or rack-terrifying, none as good, but evil, all matter of grief, not of joy. Thus is the subject stated.

2. The Attribute here is the sentence given; these are not matter of joy, but of grief. In short, if we can determine what is the due matter of a Christians joy and grief, we shall easily gather the Spirits mind in this. The proper object or matter of joy to a man, is some human good in present possession; so the special matter of grief is some painful burden or sense of evil in present. Now then the present enjoying of the Christians good, is the matter of his joy, and sense of his peculiar evil, is the subject of his grief: Determine these, and we have all we seek for. 1. The Christians good primarily and in chief, is God himself, his favor, and the light of his countenance immediately is the chiefest portion that he pitcheth on. Let David speak for all in this, among the many searchers and suitors in the world for good, crying all several ways, Who will show us any good? He looks to heaven, and sayeth thus; Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. This makes gladness of heart, when it is seen, more than the richest harvest or fullest vintage. Again, the effects of this in the pledges of his favor, the blessings of the right hand and of the left, are as a secondary or derived good, which are sometimes carried in that expression, the light of God's countenance, the whole salvation of the Church is the content of that, in their own confession; Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. The fruition of all this is matter of joy.

3. The Christians evil is the want of all the former, the present apprehension of nothing but frowns from God, and sense of all the effects of them in smarting troubles: It is the saddest draught of an evil and calamitous condition to the Saints, that the Spirit hath made, to present God either absent, or far off, or angry and displeased, or hiding away his face; inundations of evils must follow

upon this. If this be then the Christians good & evil, let us see what chastening's are according to this in God's account; the Spirit speaketh expressly, they are not matter of joy, that is, not good in the present smart of them, no light of God's countenance, no smiles of his face, no sensible pledges of his favor are in the vinegar & gall while it is in drinking, but it is said, they are matter of grief, that is, evil and burdensome, frowns of God's brow, grimness of his face, weight of his hand, are only seen and felt in the tokens of his displeasure, the grinding pains that fall upon the creature; are not these evil and heavy? Thus God himself determines of these chastening's.

SECT. IV.

The Affection, Author, and Limitation opened.

1. According to the judgment passed on the condition, the Spirit rightly suits the affection, in the same breath denying one unsuitable, allowing another proportioned thereunto. 1. In this state of evil there must be no joy, that cannot be meet for a soul upon which God frowns; two things at least are prohibited in this.

1. Lightness of heart, and pleasantness of spirit, the secret tickling's of the soul which are fit to be in the day of good things, all this inward joy of heart must not be now; gladness goeth away, when plenty fails in harvest; and joy, when the vintage ceaseth? Who can rejoice in evil, unless sins hardened slave? 2. Lightness of carriage, in laughing, leaping, singing, and all cheerful deportment; this is suitable for a fair Sun-shine day, but not for the day of darkness; no singing, when God is chiding, nor leaping, when he is whipping, nor laughing under the rod for thee Christian, lest thou be taken to laugh

at it. See the Church declining such sinful Invitations in the day of God's revealed displeasure on her. By the Rivers of Babylon, the place of our chastening, we hung our harps upon the willows; no harping here, unless harping bowels, that make a doleful tune; nor could scorns, or threats, or any invitations, drive us to mirth or singing. Alas, how should we sing the Lord's song in the land of a stranger, the land of our captivity and severe correction? None of this therefore, none of this lightness doth God allow in his chastening time.

2. In this state of evil there must be grief. This is suitable, to be grieved when God is grieved, and for the grief we have laid upon him: As much is here allowed as on the contrary was prohibited, 1. Heaviness of spirit within, discovering that we are deeply affected with God's frowns and chastening's. The afflicted of the Lord have showed us this in expressions, as deep as their sense, My bowels are troubled, is one; bowel-trouble, bowel-sounding, bowel-harping, cannot but note deep impression of God's: If this be not enough, hear another word, My liver is poured upon the earth. O poor soul! The liver is the very blood of life, that is made there, and issueth thence, and this liver-pouring is nothing else but blood-dropping from within in sense of God's displeasure, as the tears did stream down from her eyes without: this is heaviness impressed. 2. Heaviness of carriage, or outwardly expressed, is under this affirmation and allowance also: weeping, fasting, mourning, clothing with sack-cloth, and all sad deportments are called for in the day of evil; God expects this and no other carriage to answer his rod. Hear the reply of that sweet Saint, to a kind of Court-reveling question, Why is thy countenance sad? It was half a Court-wonder the Kings favorite should be sad at the Kings elbow; but the Persian Empire could not comfort him, when God seemed to frown upon the Church and him: He returneth therefore thus, Why should not my countenance be sad, when the City, &c. God's rod must make sad hearts and faces too amongst his own people. This match is of God's own making between his rod and our grief.

3. Look we then next upon God the author both of this judgment and allowance; concerning whom, as in this matter he must be conceived as a Father, for none but a parents hand can chasten, so in this giving judgment upon the sad condition of his children, these farther considerations must be taken of him. 1. In his being as Truth itself, which cannot lie, neither deceive nor be deceived, it is he that saith, his rod is smart, and his strokes painful, calling out grief; great authority then must this sentence have issuing from such a Judge; against the Truth there is no prevailing, it wins or overcomes all opposites at last. This God-Truth speaks, none can gainsay. 2. In his working, as he is Heavens and Earths Creator, so he is the Rods former, the maker of darkness, and evils Creator. He the Lord doth all these things: can we deny him to be Judge of what he makes? He appoints every grain and scruple of the gall and wormwood that make up the afflictions of his people, not a jot more or less bitter can they be, then he ordains them. The maker of chastening saith it is grievous. 3. In his exact and constant intuition, view and knowledge of all that he hath made, he grows not careless nor forgetful of the work of his hands, that he should mistake in such a matter. If he call sword, famine and pestilence, sore Judgments, he knows them so to be: though it be too low for him to speak after the manner of men; yet as in others, so in this case he useth it for our profit: Seeing I have seen, or I have surely seen the affliction of my people that were in Egypt, are his words, who created all those burdens for them for their good, therefore must needs know the bitterness of them: God then the only Truth, Creator, and knowing Governor of all events, both sweet and bitter, good and evil, he saith, the chastening's of his children are grievous things. But doth he say it universally and without bounds? Not so, the following correction clears that, and no less the restriction in his very grant, next in order to be considered.

4. The Limitation restrains this judgment to the present time; no chastening is joyous but grievous for the present: as in the former part of the sentence chastening's are measured by weight, and all found to be heavy, pressing out grief, so in this expression they are measured by time, which doth something allay the smart, and make

amends for the bitterness of them; chastening's are painful, yet for the present only. This measure then more expressly dictates to us, The continuance, the shortness, and the expiration of the smart of these afflictions.

1. The continuance of the burden and bitterness of chastening's is for the present, that is, for all the present wherein they lie upon the flesh: This may be more or less according to the will of God inflicting either Jobs months of vanity, days of breaking, and nights of terror, which were many but not all, or Paul's present time of sufferings, which is the whole time of life; so long as the rod is kept on, that wholly is the present of its bitterness, and grief is permitted so long its abode answerable.

2. The shortness of the smart is carried in this measuring word also, it is but for the present, and this compared with time past or to come is a very little portion, so that for the present is but for a very little while; The longest present for term of life, by the Apostle is paraphrased, and not untruly, The now or instant time, nay; all sufferings at the longest here, are worthy of no larger expression with him, then the afflictions of a moment It is but as a point or minute of time that measures the bitterness of all chastening's in the account of God; It is but one short span that finds them longer.

Thirdly, the expiration of all this evil is certainly carried in this measure, for it lives and dies with the present time; now we know that every present looks to the after that is to come, and when it is come, that present ends, and expires in the succeeding time, and its end is good or bad, according as that succession brings: now the afterward succeeding this present is by the judgment of the same truth a good space of sweet fruits, of peaceful righteousness and living comforts; this end we are directed to look unto in the very notion of present grief. The Church bears the insulting taunts of her enemy the better in the sense of this, Though for present I fall I shall arise; this present of scorn must expire, in the succeeding after, and that will be my joyful resurrection above all these sorrows. With this

measure are we to take this sentence from truth itself; chastening's (though the best of evils) yet are they painful things to God's own children.

SECT V.

The demonstration of this Truth.

To prove that the rods were smart, were as needless as to hold a candle to the Sun, every man's sense speaks this out: The matter of proof shall be God's indulgence, grant, and judgment for his people in this case, of which many afflicted souls are hard to be persuaded, that the God of Heaven should be so sensible of, or have respect unto, or be affected with their afflictions, as to speak so feelingly of them, and grant so much unto them; Light to this may prove comfortable, I shall therefore show, 1. Quod sit, that God doth so. 2. Cur sit, why he doth thus towards his afflicted.

1. These three evidences will clear the first; God's notice of his people's burdens within himself, his respect to the afflicted, and his carriage to their adversaries the instruments of their affliction. 1. That God tenderly accounts the burdens of his people heavy, may be evident from the notice and observation he takes of them, which is exact and full; if any expressions after the manner of men may help us to conceive this, we have variety that God useth, and yet all fall short of that which God doth in this respect, because the observation of God is beyond the expression of man: yet if seeing, considering and looking upon the afflictions of a people argue tenderness, or if hearing, hearkening to their groans prove a carefulness, or if telling the Pilgrims wanderings, or bottling or booking the mourners tears, show a right valuing of their sad condition; this God hath done, this

he doth, this he will do for his people, 2. He doth not only note thus the griefs of his people, but is suitably affected towards their sufferings, in his own way above creature comprehension, because he cannot suffer from any object; his affection is all act, and to be discerned by the effects upon the creature; yet these things in the language of men are spoken of him. 1. His pity to his chastised: he speaks himself of mourning Ephraim, My bowels sound or are troubled for him, and it is said of him, his soul was grieved for Israel, straitened or shortened, put to distress or pain from them; strange expressions for God, and strangely true beyond our imagination; nay as if being God he could not be pitiful enough, because he could not suffer he sends his Son to be made like unto his brethren in the flesh, that he might be feelingly merciful to the tempted. 2. His care to measure and moderate the afflictions of his people, that they exceed not their strength, and to make way for escaping when they overcharge. He is faithful in this, and therefore tenderly yielding to the moans of his afflicted. 3. His tender bearing with, kind interpretation of, and gracious pleading for, all the hasty words, froward and unseemingly carriage of his children under their sad pressures, which fellow-creatures would scarce endure: So God pleads for Job against Satan, Seest thou my servant Job still holdeth his integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy, or swallow him without a cause? So he excuseth all Jobs hasty language, which by his unfriendly comforters were turned to his reproach, and charged as brands of his hypocrisy, yet after all God giveth him this witness against his mistaken friends, Ye have not spoken of me the things that is right, as my servant Job hath: It is God's return as was Elisha's to his servant about the Shunamite, in her sad unseemly & passionate carriage holding the Prophet by his feet; Gehazi is presently at her to deal roughly with her, and thrust her away, but Elisha is more tender, Alas, let her alone, for her soul is bitter or vexed within her. This is a Spirit from God, like himself, yielding to the infirmities of a chastened soul.

2. His carriage to the very adversaries of his people, the instruments of their sorrows, speaks his tender indulgence towards his burdened

ones, and argues that he grants the rod is smart and painful; see it and judge of it in these particulars. 1. In his limiting and restraining the Adversaries which are his rod, that not a stroke more shall be laid on but what he commands himself for his children's good: The wrath of man shall praise him, so far therefore he will use it, but the remainder of wrath, that which takes away his praise, he will constrain; So he bounds Satan in afflicting Job, first touch not his body, then touch not his life; God yields there is bitterness in the afflictions of his servants, therefore he will not suffer them to overflow. 2. In his reprovng of men for their unkind and merciless carriage to his chastened people; see how he handles Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, for dealing so harshly with his afflicted Job, he chargeth them they spake not right, and no less than a sevenfold sacrifice can purge away their sin or folly, and that too by the intercession of despised Job, sure he is contrary to what he reproves, and if man's folly think afflictions light, God's wisdom accounts them heavy. 3. In discovering his wrathful displeasure upon the pursuers of his afflicted; what matter were it, how afflictions were multiplied, if there were no burden in them? But God is angry with them that increase the sorrows of his chastened, therefore he must think them grievous: Hear what he speaks for poor afflicted Zion's, and Jerusalem's sake, I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. God's displeasure then upon the distressers of his people declares his grant that their chastening's are grievous.

3. Why God giveth this Judgment of indulgence, and alloweth this carriage under their chastening's, the two great causes Efficient and Final will soon determine. 1. The Efficient is God-Love himself, who from eternity hath purposed the discovery of himself in the notion of his good will and pleasure to these souls whom he thus indulgeth; This love being declared in giving them to Christ, in accepting them into Covenant, in calling them out of the world by his Word and Spirit, in chastising them as children, must now look to the perfecting of his purpose in their appointed glory: therefore needs must it work so towards them in all conditions, that they may be

furthered in all to their determined end; hence it is, that he chasteneth them, when they need chastening, and supports them, when they need help, & pitieth them, when they are pained, and indulgeth them, when they begin to faint, and discovereth thoughts of compassion to their griefs, when they think themselves forsaken. This love made him fall upon Ephraim neck in the midst of his bemoaning's under the rod, Ah poor Ephraim, ah dear child, the son of my delights, how hast thou been chide and whipped, and yoked and distressed, and none regard thee? I remember thee, since I spake against thee, I know thy burden is heavy, surely I will have mercy on thee; Love makes God of this mind.

4. The End which God aims at no less necessitates this present judgment, and in respect of us is twofold only that I shall now touch.

1. More generally for all, to leave a rule of truth unto his creatures, thereby to order their judgments and affections what to think and what to do to their brethren in like case of afflictions: for God doth not judge so because it is truth, but it is truth, because he doth judge so, he makes truth in his creatures, he finds none else to steer himself by: nothing more clear then this, that God layeth himself a rule to his creatures, in his Attributes and works; As in that, Be ye holy as I am holy, so in this, Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful; otherwise vain creatures are apt to call heavy light, and bitter sweet, and put off thereupon all bowels towards the Lord's chastened; God saith chastening's are heavy, yet we might know it, and say so too, and subscribe unto it, and express suitable, indulgent affections to our afflicted brethren.
2. More special for his chastened ones, and that is to be a standing comfort to them at every cross, when lovers and friends may stand far off, and none regard their sad condition; though creatures think our burdens nothing, and show no pity to the afflicted, it is no small refreshing that God knows our sorrows, and judgeth them grievous, sit for his compassions. David was often put to the use of this, and sound no little comfort, when an exiled pilgrim he wanders heavily driven from house and home, and sprinkles his steps with tears, and yet no man pitying or taking him in, then he is comforted with this thought, Lord thou tellest my

wanderings, and bottlest up my tears. Again, when his spirit is overwhelmed with grief, and he looks on the right hand, and beheld and no man would know him, no man cared for his soul, then he can see and say, O Lord thou art my portion and my refuge, thou carest for me, and countest my burden heavy. Thus therefore God showeth his certain judgment of his people's chastening's, that in case of creature comfort failing to show himself to be above all, that it might be a standing cordial to the afflicted soul.

SECT. VI.

Some Corollaries, or inferences for instruction.

Within the bosom of this sentence past by God lieth this useful truth, As God that chastens his own judgeth their sufferings grievous, so he himself spares not to put his holy ones to grief; He knows the rod is smart, and yet he lays it on, though he pity he will not spare to grieve his children; He that knows its grief, himself inflicts it; He chastens, yet pitieth them for their pain, he pities, and yet he chastens and sets on sorrow: It doth not gainsay God's gracious indulgence to afflict his people. Three things God eyes, Their sin, Their profit, His own Covenant, all which enforce the union of God's indulgence and correction.

1. God indulgeth, yet scourgeth sons with an eye unto their sin, not for satisfaction, this were a detraction from Christ, who alone can make it: And what can the pain of the body recompense for the sin of the soul? But for correction, having marked former errors and miscarriages in them: It is no less then Atheism to deny God such a sight of sin in his children, testified by his chastening's, and intended

not so much to afflict the soul as sin; as may appear in these aims of God therein.

2. To render sin more evident to the creature, which perhaps before lay hid and unobserved, or mistaken to be better than it is; but when the deserved rod comes and grieves the flesh, this discovery is presently made. All the grief is sin, which either hath provoked this painful chastisement, or at least made a way for it, that the glory of God may appear in the manifestation of sins bitterness by it. None knows the fire better then he that hath been scorched, nor can any better tell what cold is, then he that hath been frozen, and benumbed by it: and no man can speak of sin so well, as he that knows it in the smart. It is a truth unquestionable, Man suffers for his sin: sin then is his suffering, and its malignity in the smart of this. Jacob never so smelt the stench of his sin in the neglect of his vow at Bethel, as when it made him stink amongst the inhabitants of the land. Manasseh never thought sin so burdensome, as he found it by the iron chains in Babylon. So David seeth his sin to be the racker of his bones. And Paul acknowledgeth it his death. Thus sometime God teacheth men the knowledge of sin by its bitter evils, as Gideon taught the Elders of Succoth with thorns.

3. To render sin more odious to his people, doth God put them to grief: He that loves wine, its likely he doth not love poison, and if one cannot be had without the other, if reason be left in the man, the loathsomeness of this will mar the pleasantness of that, and make both equally odious. It is usual with God to put gall and wormwood upon sins desired Teat, to wean his people's affections from it, that they might feel it the bitterness of their souls, and hate it. When thorns and adulterating seducing lovers are bound together, the Church forsakes both these and them; when Idols have no better companions but bread of adversity, and water of affliction, they shall have a quick dispatch from the chastened souls, with indignation they shall say, Get ye hence.

4. To render sin less pernicious or destructive, and to give the speedier, and the surer death unto it, God grieves the soul, which he so much tenders; Flesh and sin are so nearly related and united, that one cannot be, but the other must be also; neither can that lie weakened, or afflicted, but the other likewise suffers, when the chastening hand of God layeth on the corrosive upon the Flesh: when this weakens flesh, it weakens sin; and when it kills flesh, it kills sin, that it may save the soul from sins malignity in reigning, and in killing. It is the Apostles sure word, We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. The life and power of sin brings condemnation in the world, God's chastening kills that life, and prevents that condemnation in his own afflicted: See then indulgence and severity in God's rod towards his own in respect to sin: it is great mercy to lance that he may not kill. With these purposes did God intimate his care of correcting the promised seed. If his children forsake my Law, &c. then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; yet I will love them too, though I make it smart: See chastening and yet indulgence, love and yet the rod laid on.

5. God puts his children to grief, though he count it grievous, with an eye to their further profit; the full success is given in that expression, That they might be partakers of his holiness. But this falls in the second part of the treatise, touching the gain of chastening, I shall therefore reserve it for that place.

6. God weighs the smart, and yet he whips his children, with respect to his covenant made in Christ with them. The sum thereof is, to be God to them, that is, to be all good to them; the goodness of their End, their Portion, Inheritance, eternal life and glory; and no less their goodness in the way, their guide, their rule, their strength, to bring them to their appointed end. Now in drawing the lines to glory, one constant passage both to his natural Son in the flesh, and his adopted ones in affliction. Christ taught this of himself to his misconceiving Disciples, Ought not Christ first to suffer, and then enter into his glory? The Apostle no less for the general state of

Christians affirmeth, We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. It is then a clause in the covenant, as the Lord will perform all good to his people, so to let them taste the good of the rod; he knows they will need it as much as daily bread: and therefore though it smart, yet will he so manage it, that it shall work together with his love, the good of his promises to their poor souls: so far then, and no further, will he afflict, but to show himself faithful in his covenant to his own. Therefore in the midst of all the stripes he speaks of to be laid on the seed of David, the children of promise, he orders and measures all by his covenant and truth to them: However I visit them with scourges, I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail, nor make void my faithfulness to lie, My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing which is gone out of my lips. I must chasten them upon their failings; yet no otherwise then that thereby my covenant of grace may be accomplished to them. God's Amen-covenant implies the rod as useful to its end: when God corrects, he saith not Nay, nor contradicts his Yes to love and save his people, the scourge saith Amen to save the soul, as much as the staff of bread, or comfort. David sweetly acknowledgeth this, and accepts of his chastening thankfully, I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are righteousness, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. To prove thy Amen, or settled truth in thy promises of grace hast thou chastened, therefore is it good for me. Learn this then Christian, and be encouraged; thy God, who knows and grants thy burden heavy, and pities thee, he, he inflicts it, and puts thee to present grief for future comfort, his Amen-covenant assures this.

7. Another inference floweth from the former truth, if chastening's be grievous to the souls, whom yet God indulgeth, dreadful, astonishing, confounding and intolerable must judgments be upon the souls that God abhorreth; pack these considerations together, and then see if their burden be not inexpressible: Their rise is the wrath of God, a consuming fire; their rule by which they are executed, is the curse of God, a word and sentence more bitter then gall or wormwood; their subject, all the outcasts of God's family; their end, God's glory in vengeance upon, and perdition of ungodly creatures. Woe then to

those inhabitants of the earth upon whom judgment is poured forth before the Lord, no wonder if Cain cry out, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Hear and fear sinners, lest wrath implacable beat you as stubble before the whirlwind, and judgment unsufferable seize on you, and smite you to everlasting torments; Judgments here in the flesh, are but earnest of greater to come, and in their time to be revealed upon the workers of iniquity. There is no striving with the Judge, Job doth but think himself the mark of his displeasure and is in horror, but ye are indeed the very, But he shoots at in his fiery indignation, except ye return: no more is left for you; Repent, or die.

SECT. VII.

Conviction of sin to divers from the light of this truth.

And doth that God indeed that makes the rod, and useth it on creatures, count it smart, and grant their grief? Sinners then are they, who suit not with him in judgment and affection about this matter. Three sins I shall touch to discover them, if it may be, to remove them, all against God in his commands; yet something distinct by their immediate objects: one against ourselves, another against our brethren, and the last more directly against God.

1. If painful chastening call forth grief, and God's indulgence to us, direct us to a pensive feeling of our own smart, sinful then is that Apathy, or senseless stupidity under burdens pressing our own flesh; natural light confutes that Stoicism, there can be no patience where there is no sense of evil, much more divine judgment and practice to the creature. I shall not stay long in convincing these; they are all either foolishly hard Nabal-stones, drunkenly besotted, though they

be stricken, yet they are not sick, and though beaten thoroughly, yet they feel it not: or else they are maliciously hard against the rod, Pharaoh-hearts out-daring judgments. The content of all their living fellow-creatures will convince the first, and the experience of all the hardened rout will teach the last, that they are sinners; and in fine, the conquering judgments of the great God, will conclude both to have been rebellious. These sin against themselves.

2. If God's thoughts and carriage toward his people's sufferings, be a rule for ours among ourselves, then the tenderness and indulgence of his, taxeth the harshness and stiffness of ours toward God's afflicted to be transgression: unnaturalness in our carriage toward our chastened brethren, is the sin displayed, and reproved by God. It was Jobs note in his sad condition, To the afflicted pity should be showed from his friend; nature hath this impression from the most High, therefore he convinceth the pitiless bowels of sin, He forsaketh the fear of the Almighty: God's fear and unnatural affection are inconsistent. This sin showeth itself in neglecting, or want of feeling, in slighting, or want of pitying the griefs of the Saints, & more eminently in aggravating, or adding thereunto; of the one the Widow-Church complaineth, Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Hardhearted passengers, merciless spectators, do ye look aside from the afflicted? So it is sometimes, the slipping foot, which is wrenched and grieved, is as a lamp despised, or a light going out very unsavory in the thought of him that is at ease. Of the other many of the Saints cry out, one saith, None careth for my soul; another, Lover and friend are far from me. A third begs heartily, Pity me, O my friends; and complains sadly, My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. The last is the greatest sin to add to that affliction which they should ease, and this not unusual in friends of the better sort, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, Church-friends, men of skill and understanding to speak for God, Christian-friends, from whom God's afflicted do expect support; and yet these may prove miserable comforters. 1. By over-severe animadversion of the chastened soul's sin, which yet God hath pardoned, or an unjust charge of that which most it hates; nothing more odious than hypocrisy toward God to

Job, and yet he is made to own it by his friends. 2. By making God an enemy to the afflicted, urging his power and justice against his chastened, to kill them, which he puts forth to support and save them. This may be in some degree the infirmity of the Saint, as it is height the malignity of the wicked; God doth not leave any such a pattern; the groaning defense or Apology of burdened souls, and God's sentence for their clearing, may muzzle the mouths of such unkind observers: It is Jobs defense, and a just one, Will you speak wickedly for God? And talk deceitfully for him? God's name must not be pretended falsely against the poorest creature. And it is God's own sentence at last for Job against his accusers, Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. A sweet justification of the guiltless, laying sin at the unkind reprovers door: See then, here is sin against our brethren.

3. If God indulgeth his scourged children, the soul that answers not his indulgence, is in this, a sinful child. Impiety against a correcting, yet a yearning Father, is a sin in equity condemned from this present truth. This is expressed either in excess of spirit rising up against the rod, despising God's chastisement; or in defect of spirit, falling under the scourge, while the soul considers not God's love in it, or indulgence with it. Ephraim was faulty in the first, when he kicked and flung under the rod, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; and Rachel in the second, when she refused comfort, and undervalues God's sweet indulgence. Sinners against God are they whom either severity in the rod doth not humble; or if it do, goodness in the same cannot revive, let us hear and fear thus to transgress.

SECT VIII.

Counsel to duties enforced by this Truth.

Let this then be granted, that God doth weigh the burdens of his afflicted, and tenderly allow them grief under their sad pressures, two duties will be enforced upon Christians hence, one towards God's chastened ones, the other respects themselves.

1. God's way and work binds Christians to conformity in mind and practice; see we then our brethren scourged, some groaning under sense of wrath and sad desertion, others wracked with grinding pain, some wasted with pining sickness, others pained with sores and breaches on their flesh, some in wants, some in wanderings, exiled from their house & home, some spoiled of goods & some of name, & some of liberty, the iron entering into their souls: Doth God look upon such in pity? Doth he grant their bitterness and allow their moans? And should we stand aloof off as bowel-less spectators? Or else look off, that it may not move us? Or else slight it with a tush, its nothing? Or else unkindly charge it as good enough for them, and so smite the afflicted reproachfully on the cheek? God forbid: If we be his people, surely his thoughts must be our thoughts and his ways our ways in this matter: Accord we ought with God in a pitiful judgment, sense and carriage toward his distressed; think as Christ thinks their burdens heavy, feel as Christ feels their smart with them, and in pity help and bear as Christ helps and bears their burden for them, this were to fulfill his law.

All this is urged strongly upon the seed of Christ, and with such engagements as they must yield, or be content to deny their interest in God's eternal love, thus speaks the Apostle, Put ye on, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies; See how he doth engage them, if ye be Elect of God chosen from eternity to glory in himself, or if ye be Saints sanctified by the Gospel of his Son, or if ye be beloved of God, of Christ, or would have a proof of it in yourselves, oh put on the bowels of mercies: each word hath weight, Mercies are sweet themselves exercised to men in misery; bowels of mercy more, the tenderest mercies are meant by this; no fuller Emblem of pity, tenderest pity, then bowels, yearning, and sounding bowels: but the putting on of these adds yet more propriety and measure of this

grace; his mind is, cloth or clad yourselves with bowels, that ye may be sure to have them as the clothes upon your backs, and put them on all over you from top to toe, it is a robe long and large enough, bowels upon head, let mind and thoughts be bowels, the tenderest mercies, bowels upon face, the ear bowels, pitiful when it hears their sorrows, the eye bowels in looking and weeping over them, the tongue bowels in speaking tenderly and sweetly to them, bowels upon all the members, the hand bowels pitifully to support, and all bowels compassionately to deal with the afflicted. These thoughts may perhaps quicken us to this. 1. It is the Law of Christ, that we should thus bear each others burdens, what Christian then will not submit? 2. It may be our own condition to come into the afflicted souls stead, what bowels then should we desire? 3. It is an evidence of Election, the state of grace, and of being in Christ's body; and who would not gladly be found there? It is duty from Christ's command, It is equity from our own lot. It is comfort from the evidence of a greater good: take then this close, dear Christians, pity, ô pity God's afflicted ones, and be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.

2. This Gods indulgence teacheth the chastened themselves some duty under the rod in return to the hand that smites them, hereunto our next counsel is to drive them; suitable demeanor to a chastening Father is the duty, that doth concern us, and God's allowance is command and direction enough for us in the present case. Several Items are given in the context for our behavior under chastening; some negative, as Despise not the chastening's of the Lord; This is an extreme of patience in excess, to hardness, obstinacy, overlooking, slighting and contempt of God's scourge: And again, Faint not when thou art rebuked of him; This is an extreme in defect, to fainting, languishing, and hopeless drawing out of spirit, under God's rebuke; God's Sovereignty and power in chastening forbids the first, and his grace and tenderness in rebuking should heal the other. Other positive notes of duty are also added for the chastened soul, as Patience, in feeling, bearing and waiting for the blessing of the rod, and Filial subjection unto the Father of spirits by reverencing his power and submission unto his will in this matter; but the

consideration of these will fall in other places: therefore no other duty shall be touched here, but that which God's allowance in the present truth discovered put's into our hands, when God smites or scourgeth, grief not joy is now our duty; It is the match which God hath made between his chastening and our sorrow; laughing and lightness at this season may argue despising of the rod: but yet to persuade smoothly to this duty, the rubs in the way must be removed.

1. Apostolical practice and counsel seem to cross this direction; of their practice, thus we read, We glory in tribulations, and this is the height of joy in the worst condition: of their counsel it is thus written, My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. If these be true, smart and joy are the fittest couple.

To take this block out of the way, let us remember all afflictions in the world fall under the threefold notion forementioned, and accordingly variety of affections are suited to them. 1. Judgments are the terriblest of evils that God inflicts, killing evils therefore paraphrased by tempests, whirlwinds, thundering's from heaven and roaring of lions, whereunto trembling in the creature is the duty suited, The lion hath roared, who will not fear? When evils issue from Almighty wrath, creature hearts must fear, and knees will tremble. 2. Trials are probation-evils, for matter or pain of them it may be, the same with the former, but in their formal consideration inflicted for proof of graces and of spirits; gold endures the hottest fire, and comes out of the furnace purer, where dross perisheth and is consumed, so grace, and gracious spirits endure and thrive under fiery tortures, when drossy formality, and gilded grace vanish and die away in such scorching trials. Just and due to this kind of troubles is the practice and advise of those heavenly Ministers, the highest joy and not least of griefs is now the meetest, and most honors Christ; when for his sake by cruel mocking's, scourging's, bonds, imprisonments, by stoning, sawing, wandering, and killing the faith and holiness of Saints shall be tried, not to give place for a moment, so much as by a tear, or secret melting is now proper to Christian

magnanimity; and it were unworthy of God, of Christ, of the Gospel to yield the least to these by mourning; the spirit of glory, which mounts up the soul above all these terrors, and makes it sit and sing aloft, is most honorable and suitable for this state; and of this only it is certain, the Apostles speak.

3. Chastening's are loving, yet angry strokes of God, marking out the sin and unevenness of his children's walking; all which naturally and properly teach grief unto the chastened soul, for grieving its father; and no less is godly sorrow due in this case, than glory in the former: this is all we strive for in former evidences; and no way weakened by the objection pretended.

2. Special charges which God layeth upon his servants not to grieve in this case, seem to cross the foregoing truth; So upon the death of Nadab and Abihu, he commands Aaron and the rest, uncover not your heads, there must be no sign of mourning with them: And to Ezekiel upon the taking away of the desire of his eyes his charge is, Thou shalt not mourn and weep: And to the lamenting mother, weeping to excess over her lost children, this word is given, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: All this was under chastening's, and yet here grief prohibited. (Lev. 10.6, Ezek. 24.16, Jer. 31.16)

It were enough for satisfaction to return to all these; extraordinary cases and excess in sorrow do not prejudice ordinary and measured rules of God; yet I shall reply to the several instances. 1. To Aaron's case, it was extraordinary, therefore not exemplary in ordinary scourges: Two great reasons are evident of griefs prohibition here. 1. Its opposition to God's glory, which he had now by a dreadful judgment gotten to himself upon vile creatures that did profane his Holiness; In such cases, the Churches joy commends God's Acts, their grief condemns them: so Heaven is invited to rejoice over the ruins of Antichrist. 2. Its inconsistency with God's service, which lay upon the hands of his ministers at that time; therefore upon no less than the pain of death was mourning now forbidden. There may be a

time when the dead must be left to bury their dead, but Christ's servants must attend on him and preach the Gospel.

2. To Ezekiel's case, it was extraordinary also, but in another kind, and to another end; for neither is it discovered to be an act of wrath upon his wife, nor that he was to refrain from glorifying God in his work of justice; but herein it was God's pleasure, that the prophet should be an extraordinary sign of the Lord's indignation against the Jews; that as his wife died, and he must not mourn, so they should be taken away utterly with a stroke, and God would not once be grieved for them. It is very sad to die unlamented by men, none to say, Alas my friend; but inexpressibly doleful, for God to laugh at a people's destruction. To teach man this, God forbids his servant grief, which otherwise were due; but this is not every chastened soul's case.

3. To Rachel's case, it is clear, she is called off from excess in grief, she refused to be comforted, neither was any excess allowed in God's grant; grieve we must, when we are smitten, but not exceed, future hopes of relief were to lay bounds to her lamentation, and so to ours. These then satisfied, if the regulating of this duty be desired I shall proceed to that, as the Spirit draws the lines in the present Scripture.

The material part of chastening, which is the evil, bitterness, and smart of the rod, requires grief as its yoke fellow; but yet this leaves it at large - neither regulated nor limited: The right ordering then of this affection, will be by rules issuing from the Author, Form, End and Duration of these kind of afflictions; whereunto it must be good to listen.

1. Chastening is a displeased Fathers Scourge, checking within, and smarting without; nay, in this case it is our heavenly Fathers stroke. It must be then a filial or childlike grief, answering to the Fathers correction. Now the notions of Father and Child in this matter, the one inflicting and the other suffering, must regulate both in their several respects, the one in smiting, the other in bearing and grieving. A child then smitten of his father, may and must grieve, as

becomes himself: a grief with shame, a grief with fear, a grief with subjection, beseems a child.

1. Shame and sorrow, this for smart, and that for sin against a Father, God requires in the case of Miriam, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Shame is as due for offense to fathers, as grief for the smart we feel. So Ephraim shames and mourns. 2. Grief and fear suit well a corrected child toward his father; grief with obstinacy and rebellion, is murmuring, not gracious bemoaning sin and smart, and becomes slaves, not sons. It is the Apostles note, Our fathers in the flesh corrected us, and we gave them reverence. It was indeed a duty for children so to do; and is it not much more due to the Father of Spirits? O let us grieve and fear, for he is our Father. 3. Submitting grief is suitable to a rebuking Father from the son of the rod. To cry and howl with sorrow, and charge God foolishly, or blaspheme him, is a reprobate state: Children will grieve, submit, and fall down at the foot of a displeased father, to honor him, and be guided by him; God looks for this at all times. If I be a Father, where is my honor? And reason yields it him, especially while pleading against his children with the rod; Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? Thus Father rod, and Children's grief are sweetly suited; let us do like sons.

2. Chastening is the rod of love: Grace or Love is the very differencing form of it, that singles it out from all other evils: Grief and love then is the answer to this affliction; loving tears, to loving checks: God doth rebuke, yet love; God doth afflict, yet love; God whips, and yet he loves: Now we must thus return, complaints and love, remorse and love, lament and love must be our rule. This is the composure of the clouded Spouse, she weeps and loves, and faints and loves, and groans and loves, scourged with the absence of her desired, yet displeased Lord. It was David's posture under God's chastening hand in his sad ascent to mount Olivet, bare feet, covered head, weeping eyes, and loving heart, his pressures heavy, and his love great to honor God with the nullifying of himself: Here I am, if he will have no delight in me, let him do what seems him good. Let

me be anything, or nothing, so he be glorified in his will done. It is Jobs strain under his pressures, espousing the love that put him to grief, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. Loves wounds and slaughter makes no enemies; believe, and weep, and love, are sweet returns to love chastising. Grieve and love.

3. Chastening is a profitable correction, God doth it for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness, this is the End, & the Rule then is, It must be grief and good, grief and amendment, reforming grief turning to holiness that answers such a rod. Moaning and turning are Ephraim's work when God is chastening. David relents and turns to his affliction, therefore in proof he sings, It is good for me that I have been afflicted; repenting tears, and returning sorrows, are sweet characters of God's chastened ones, and duties to a chastising father.

4. Chastening is but a present burden, the shortest time, if we look back to past, or forward to that which is to come, the Rule is just, present smart should have but present grief, and shortest scourging's shortest sorrows. The night may measure out our groans, the day must cut them off. The nature of evils points out the affection due, and their time its measure: and if, by divine Oracle, Sufficient for the day, be the evil thereof, (so Christ meets our affliction by the day, not to over-press his suffering members) then sufficient for that day, is the care and sorrow of it; the length of the present day must make even both smart and grief: God hath judged it, a day's space is measure sufficient for one and other. It may be sullen stubbornness, or childish frowardness, to keep a sobbing when the rod is gone. Deare Christian, see the indulgence of thy heavenly Father, and thy heart must love him; it is but present smiting, this days or hours smart that he inflicteth, and it is no longer plaints of tears that he expecteth; present, not future succeeding, wasting or consuming sighs that he requireth: Manage the days trouble with proportioned and suitable care and sadness. Bring not the morrows weight into this day's burden, The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. If providence lengthen out thy life so long, it can command it

to come in with joy; but if must be gloomy & cloudy too, thy God will have the present trouble past, before that shall come: As he never did nor will, while his covenant stands with day and night, clap two days together into one, neither will he join two days burdens into one upon thy back, nor ask of thee two days sorrows at once; one days grief well managed is enough at once. I shall leave thee, Christian heart, with this note to chew upon the rest, It is the hardest and sweetest work for Christians to keep close to present duty. O then yield, I will live, I will love, I will pray, I will walk, I will grieve, as the present call from God commandeth. Sum up all now, and take we the duty regulated, The chastened's grief to the chastening's rod: Grieve we ought, when God rebukes; yet as children to their fathers scourge, with shame, with fear, and with submission; and as children to their fathers love, with hearts enlarged, and love redundant, weep and love; and as children to their fathers aim, with holy change and fullest reformation; and as children to their fathers bounds, with eye to present time for present duty: keep this compass and it is well. Present, purging, loving, obedient, childlike grief, it is the duty fitted to God's present, refining, indulgent, and fatherly chastening's on his people. In all this ye shall not sin, nor will it need to weep again over these tears, nor grieve for thus grieving. Expect your comforts hence, and you shall have them.

SECT. IX.

Comforting encouragements from the present truth.

In the very worst of chastening there is some good, in the bitter there is sweet; in very pain, some ease; and in the fainting's a cordial, poor afflicted soul, to stand between thee and perishing under the hardest pressures. Look but upon this again, God indulging thy present

smart, and suck the honey, the sweet of heaven, reviving comforts by these frequented meditations.

1. Think, and think it seriously, and think it thoroughly, that in this matter you have to do with God; it is he, independent in his being and judgment upon creatures, that saith of thine affliction, It is heavy, and of thy sorrow, Alas poor soul, for it is bitter, none can blame thee. O thou afflicted! Put thy case now in the saddest state of chastening; How is it with thee? Surely comfortless enough, I am the man that hath seen sorrow, my dwelling hath cast me out, and my place knoweth me not, I wander as a bird from her nest, in danger of devouring every moment, yet no door is opened to me, man looks not toward my distress; I am consumed with pining sickness, spoiled of goods, my flesh worn with iron bonds, and I become a reproach and by-word, yet this is nothing to lookers on; nay, when I labor to hold fast my integrity, when I humble my soul with fasting, yet this is turned to my reproach; I suffer as an outcast of God and Men, lover, and friend, and kinsmen, get far off; nay, God is suggested to be my enemy by the adversary, and they persecute me as a forsaken soul; yet no man careth for me: and what more absolute misery, then in the depth of sorrows to be denied pity? Alas, dear heart, thy right and left hand comforts from the creature fail. But why lookest thou not upward? No thoughts of God in this matter? O remember, no soul truly miserable, but that whom God looks not after, write him wretched when God careth not for his soul. But, O thou chastened of the Lord, thy God stands by thee, he tells the steppes of thy wanderings, he bottles and books up thy tears, he weigheth thine affliction in scales, and knows, and says, it is heavy, he seeth the iron marks upon thy flesh, and treasures up all thy sighs; let the whole creation cast thee off as loft, yet this is comfort invincible, in thy affliction God knoweth thy soul: Weigh but his greatness, his grace, and his faithfulness, and then be comforted; His greatness shall not terrify nor dismay thee, but it shall help and supply thy weakness under burdens; his grace shall blot out sin, that gives a sting to thy afflictions; and his faithfulness shall establish thee in peace and comfort, when thine own unevenness would make thee fall. See Jobs

practice about these, when they were urged against him for his wounding by unkind comforters, and do likewise: Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me. Say thou so too, and be revived; shall his greatness set itself against me in my trouble, to drive me like a leaf, or crush me as a worm, when his grace hath accepted me, and his faithfulness is engaged to make good his Covenant of love unto me? No, no, though creatures prove a lie, stones instead of men, and oppressors instead of friends, they think it glory in revenge to pursue a Flea, a weak thing that cannot resist them, yet God is truth and the same forever, his power and grace and faithfulness are one undivided being, he will not so glory over his poor, weak chastened ones, but will put strength within them, and make them stand under their burdens, his strength shall be theirs to make them more the conquerors over all afflictions, for he knows their griefs: resolve then, Christian, and say, though creature-comforts fail, and creature-power doth rather oppress than ease me, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, he pitieth and will heal me.

2. Think upon thy very smart, and think rightly, with the thoughts of God concerning it, and some comfort must arise; It is not abstracted pain, but pain with purging, pain with scourging, pain with refining; In short, it is thy smart, but sins death, the spirits purging, but the flesh its consumption. The most tearing physic is comfortable in its very torture, for then it kills the disease and secures the patient from dying by it. So great hath been the evidence of the good of such afflictions, that the Holy ones of God have made it their petition in the furnace, Lord let thy scourge abide, and sin be gone; it is good for us to be here, where sin doth least annoy us. It is true comfort under wounds of flesh to have spirit healing: This keeps those heavenly souls from fainting; the pain and perishing of the outward, is the reviving, polishing, and daily renovation of the inward man; whatever works ruin to that, and repair to this, is no cross but comfort. Such thoughts will ease thy pain and make thy burden lighter, refresh thy spirit and make thy joy the greater.

3. Think upon the bound, and measure of thy smart, it is some comfort to know it is short; It is but a present pain, a moment, a very now of affliction to be endured; and should this swallow up spirits and hopes too? Art thou a man but of a day, and hast an eternal spirit, and everlasting hopes presented? Let this refresh thee, thy pains are shorter lived then thou art, thy hopes outreach them, and thy spirit shall outlive them; give not up the Ghost then for present pressures. It was a Saints reviving once, Weeping may endure for a night, or for an evening, I shall outlive this to see the day, and then joy, singing shall return in the morning. To close this part of the pain of chastening, and leave some taste of sweet with the afflicted, and desire of more to be expected in the succeeding portion, add but this thought to continue thy attendance upon that which follows; Think upon the After, that sweet After, that long After, wherein all present grief shall be swallowed up, and all transformed into that After fruit, so that no remembrance shall abide of former sorrows; Comfort thyself a while with the thoughts of this, until more fully it be revealed; it is the next work, whereunto for thy greater consolation I shall proceed.

THE SECOND PART.

Of the Gain of Chastening's.

Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. v. 11.

SECT. I.

The true stating of the second proposition from the text, with its due partition, and partial explication.

The Spirits Method in giving sentence upon chastening's is to pass from concession unto sense, to correction unto faith: He grants the present, the now of pain unto their feeling; True, the chastening is for the present grievous, yet would he not, they should thence conclude nothing but bitterness in their chastening; He therefore suddenly corrects such misconceits, by adding an assertion of its after gain, commending it to faith to be realized and settled in the soul, for strength against sense of present evil, and victory over prevailing grief. Nevertheless afterwards, &c. The Sum is in this second conclusion. All chastening's (however painful, yet) are indeed very gainful things, or more largely in the Apostles own terms, All hastening's for the afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. Of which I shall treat in the former order: The truth, the manner, the certainty, and necessity of this gain issuing from the rod must be declared, then faith may work kindly on it.

1. The truth will eminently appear in the right unfolding of the terms in the text; they be generally two. 1. The Subject. 2. The Attribute. The subject in this proposition, is the Root, or Rise of all this gain, and it is only the dry Rod, that Chastening, which was opened in the foregoing part; which only we may remember in its formal consideration, is the rod of love, used by the Father of mercies upon his own children; The other part is the work here.

2. In the Attribute several particulars fall under inquiry. 1. The gain itself. 2. The condition unto which it is designed. 3. The season of its return. 4. The manner of its rise from the former stock. What may all these mean?

1. The full account of this chastening gain is given out in three expressions. Fruit, Righteousness and Peace. 1. The general nature of it is touched, in that it is styled Fruit, a word of no bad notation of

itself, unless specified by some adjunct, Fruit of sin, or Fruit of our own doings, &c. Two considerations it imports which do much commend this gain. 1. Sweetness of goodness; it must be good because it is fruit, unless made evil by some other bitter ingredient; it is therefore a common paraphrase of a sweet & good success, They shall bring forth fruit, when the Spirit would describe the prosperous condition of any: Fruit therefore is good enjoyed, wherein stands man's delight or pleasure; So then, when fruit is promised, sweet and good is intended by the rod, which when enjoyed is fruit, and being fruit is pleasant; This is no reproach, no chastening's.

2. Abundance or fullness is implied in this also; Fruit in this kind is a collective term; As the fruit of the land, is not one ear or sheaf, but the crop, and the fruit of the vineyard is not one grape or cluster in the usual speech, but many clusters or all the gathering; so not one sweet or good can be the fruit of chastening completely, but the harvest and crop of many goods and sweets: so that the weight of this general word commends thus far the gain of chastening's, It is a full cup of all good things for souls delight; And yet add one thing more, for honor of God's Scourge, if this be fruit of chastening, it is as firmly entailed on the rod, as the grape upon the vine, or the apple on its tree, or the cherry on its graffe; All this is carried in the term of fruit.

2. The special nature of this gain is Righteousness, the fruit is therefore specified lest any doubt its goodness, it is fruit of Righteousness; This specification is not from Earth, it is not fruit of ground, nor fruit of body, nor fruit of vine or fig tree, nor fruit of cattle, these are too low to grow upon God's rod, the word is from heaven, and thence the meaning of it must be fetched. Now as given us of God, the use of it is either proper, or figurative. In the proper use of it there be two significates. 1. God's work upon us, changing our conditions, not our natures, wiping out our guilt, not our stains, which is the gift of righteousness or our justification in and by the Lord our righteousness. This cannot be intended here, for chastening supposeth men the adopted and justified of God already; this then

cannot be gained by it. 2. God's work in us by the sanctification of our natures, even an universal frame of rectitude in our hearts conform to the revealed will of God: it answers to that holiness whereof God aims to make us partakers by his chastening, which in effect is the fruit of righteousness; it is summed up entirely together in those titles, the new creation, the form or image of Christ, and the divine nature: In its parts or members described, it is knowledge of God, faith in God, love to God, walking with God exactly in the right way and due seasons of his worship; it is obedience, meekness, patience, contentedness, humility, bowels, chastity, goodness, upright conversation, and whatever else is required to the integrity of a Christian, with these fruits of righteousness the Apostle prays the Church of God may be filled by Christ Jesus: These in their collection and growth are the fruit of scourging's; no despicable gain. Again in the figurative or metonymical use of this term, it notes all the inseparable adjuncts and consequents of this righteousness, in short, eternal life, kingdom of glory, throne and crown of righteousness, so styled because assigned to it: It pleaseth some to grant the former, but deny this to be the intended fruit of chastening's; I confess that more immediately issueth from the rod, but why should we not suppose life as near to righteousness, as righteousness to the rod? Nay it will be necessary with this entail to conceive this fruit, if we duly consider one rule which I think will not fail us, That whatsoever righteousness is promised, or expressed as a reward or consequent of a precedent duty, it may or must be understood with the latitude of all its effects. And therefore as containing heaven itself, such is the use of it in this place; so it is used elsewhere variously; to touch but one instance, Sow to yourselves in righteousness, break up the fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come, and rain righteousness upon you. Here raining righteousness is an effect proposed to seeking the Lord, breaking up harden hearts, and sowing in righteousness; here is one righteousness the reward of another; who can deny in reason, this rain of righteousness to be showers of greater grace and following glory upon their obedience? Like is the use of it here, and therefore we open to its largest bounds. To sum up this parcel, much gain was from the rod, in that it was fruit issuing

sweet and abundant good, but more that this fruit is Righteousness. The name and thing are of divine original, so that fruit of righteousness must be fruit of God, that is, excellent fruit; and two excellencies at least it notes here. 1. Divine nature, created indeed, and such as is communicable, but exactly conformed to Jehovah Righteousness the very image of it. 2. Divine bless, which is the confluence of all glories, communicable also, and depending upon this righteousness derived from God, and rooted in him. And is not this excellent fruit? Would any but a beast grudge to be whipped into God, into the divine nature, into the image of Christ? Who would not be willing to be scourged and beaten into heaven, into glory, into life from the ways of death? These are the sure gain of chastening's, but yet more good.

3. The inseparable property of this heavenly fruit, is peace; the term seems to answer to the former grief, vexation, or torture that might be in the rod, which disquiets the man, and fills the flesh with pain and trouble, this is but for the present, working of God's physic, the after fruit of righteousness brings peace, and settles and quiets all again: it is like a stomach settling cordial after a tearing vomit. The Syriac reads it by conjunction, the fruit of righteousness and peace, not losing anything of the gain; yet, me thinks, not uniting close enough that sweet pair by a conjunction, when the Spirit shuts up Peace in Righteousness, as the inseparable fruit of that, and so makes in a manner one of both, to show their undivided society: Peace as sure a fruit of Righteousness, as righteousness can be of chastening, is God's own discovery, The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. But what then is this peace? I shall not stay long in variety of translations of the word to search this, only to take the best; That is not good that reads passively, quieted or appeased righteousness, far from the word; It is nearer that renders it actively, quieting, or pacifical righteousness, for it brings peace with it: but nearest is the absolute reading of it, as in ours, peaceable, or peaceful righteousness, abundance, or fullness of peace hath this fruit in the compass of it. But what is it still? I shall return in short, as in the

general use of it, Peace is the confluence of all good, and therefore points out a prosperous state, when all things are in peace; so in the special application of it here, it notes all those kinds and degrees of good which only can be the cure of the several evils in the rod: for that way alone looks this peace. Now there be these sore evils usually in God's scourge. 1. Frowns and displeasure discovered in the face of a chastising God. 2. Smart, and trouble, and vexation upon a suffering flesh. 3. Doubts, and fears, and terrors, arising from both the former, in a tender and afflicted soul: in all is great bitterness. The fruit of righteousness, this peace, hath sovereign virtue against these, and cures them all. Great peace have they which love God's Law (such only are like unto it) and nothing shall offend them: they shall have no stumbling-blocks to vex them; great peace issuing from that right frame of heart, conform to God's Law, takes away all offense, no reigning grief to such. 1. This turns frowns of God into smiles, and displeasures into pity, when the rod hath got the victory, and brought home the wanderer to righteousness; then it is all peace, God frowns no more, but loves and pities: so he speaks to returned Ephraim, It is my dear child, he is my pleasant son. Peace then is God's smile and favor fixed on his chastened, righteous seed. 2. This peace hath a good or virtue in it contrary to all diseases, maladies, or sores that the rod can make, and therefore must carry healing in it; every yoke it easeth, and every burden it removeth; it is a salve for every sore, no pain can afflict the flesh, but peace can ease it: This is honor in reproach, supply in wants, health in sickness, a guide in wanderings, security in dangers, relief in injuries, life in deaths: this is a shelter against the storm, and shade against the scorching Sun; there is no malady whereunto this is not a suited remedy, it comforts all sorrows, and wipes away all tears from the eyes of God's chastened children. By this David may be kept secure, sleeping in the siege of ten thousand adversaries; this showeth him his acceptance with God, and easeth his terror, when he judgeth himself a reprobate, and an outcast from heaven. Nay this a sure guard against all the inroads of Satan upon the soul, and invincible shield against his fiery darts. This peace of God, and righteousness will guard, or

keep safe our minds, our bodies, our all in Christ Jesus. This is peace, the ease of every smart laid upon the flesh.

3. Once again, as no racking's so full of torture, as those of a doubting, fearful, self-condemning heart; so no remedy so sovereign against these, as the peace of righteousness. In a word, this is assurance, or confidence settled upon the righteous soul, that answereth every doubt, and quells every fear rising up from the apprehension of God's displeasure in the rod; it is so sweetly styled, the service, work, or effect of righteousness is assurance. It doth indeed assure God, assure life, assure deliverance, assure glory to the soul against all cavils; it puts every good out of question, and makes the heart live confidently above every cross; see now the gain of chastening, Fruit, Righteousness, and Peace: the rod brings forth a fruit, that destroys itself, sweet abundant grace and glory, with God's smiles, grieves ruin, and hearts assurance to triumph over every doubt and evil: who would think that such a dry stick should bring forth this blessed fruit? Yet thus it doth. But now to whom? That is the next quaere.

SECT. II.

The condition of the fore-going Fruit opened.

2. The character or condition of those souls, who only find this fruit of the rod, is thus expressed in the Text, To them that are exercised thereby, to them this fruit is yielded from the rod; There is much weight in this clause, and yet I find it little considered, our gain or loss by all afflictions, depends upon the Yea or Nay of this. It will be fit therefore to see what is in the letter, and then take more seriously to thought the matter intended. Three terms there are in this clause.

1. The Subject, the men here pointed at.
2. The Condition, Exercise.
3. The Occasion, or Incentive of it, the Rod; no difficulty here but

about the right taking of the condition: It is for the most part only rendered passively, They that are exercised thereby, that is, they that suffer, and are pressed, and afflicted by the Rod, and so used to sorrows; but this cannot be the mind of the Spirit here: For then all that suffer afflictions would have this fruit of chastening. which we see eminently false, many the worse and not the better by the rod; but all that are exercised as here meant, fall not short of this blessed fruit. It must needs therefore have an active signification implied here to this purpose, To them that are exercised thereby, that is, all such as by the rod are provoked and stirred up to exercise themselves duly under God's chastening, for obtaining the fruit promised; so that not only passion is here noted, a mere suffering of pain, but action, stirring and Christian exercise moved by the rod, to work together with it for the desired fruit. This is in the letter. But now it will be more expedient to look into the nature of the thing; what may this exercise be, whereupon depends so much advantage to Christians? The discovery of two things, the Manner and Matter of this action, will satisfy that quære, both which will be supplied from the words duly weighed. 1. The manner of this action (because the shortest) shall be first touched, to show how Christians should buckle themselves to this work; The very word of Exercise teacheth this in three particulars. 1. The original expression issueth from a term denoting Nakedness, or a naked man, and therefore hath been properly used in profane Authors, to set forth such exercises, which men acted in their shirts, or naked, as wrestling, running, foiling, or fencing, wherein garments or clothes would be a great incumbrance; activity, nimbleness, intention of spirit, are intimated in this form of exercise. He then that would find this fruit from the rod, had need labor in his shirt, cast off all carnal incumbrances, and wrestle it out with God; holy activity and sweat of the brows, great intention, and fervency of spirit become the practitioner in this work, to gain the prize, and obtain the fruit promised: what is done, must be done with all the might of man, in this business. Idle husband-men, let seed, and ground, and season, be never so good, in vain expect a crop where no labor was. The greatest pains this way, brings the greatest gains.

2. Exercise in this place notes frequency of action, it is no working by spurts and fits, that will make a man thrive in this way, or become eminently fruitful: Exercise and use are here Synonymies, He is exercised indeed, to whom it is usual to study God's mind in the rod, and who is daily like the Be, sucking and making honey out of it; As the daily influence of God's love, is called the exercise of his loving kindness to his creatures; and the common thief is said to exercise robbery; so the soul that meets God's scourge, and chastening every morning, and falls to work about it, is here the truly exercised Christian. The daily laborer thrives the best.

3. Exercise here intends constancy and continuance in labor until the fruit comes: many plucks may be had at a bucket, yet to stop before it be full up, is but to lose all former labor; draw home we must and reach the mark, if we mean to carry back the price of our high calling: to work two days, and leave off the third, when we should be perfected, is as fruitless as never to begin. As in all the ways and works of God, constancy crowns the action, In those is continuance, and we shall be saved: continuance and salvation are yoked; so no less in this, He that endureth to the end shall be saved, that is, he that abides in bearing, in doing, in working after God's mind under the rod, the safe fruit of righteousness, life and peace, shall be to that exercised soul. Thus must their labor be ordered. But then what is the work itself?

2. To come to that, Let us diligently consult the text again, it is said, they are exercised by it, that is, by this chastening they are awakened, provoked, and stirred up to the work or exercise suitable to the condition under which they are, and to the end or fruit which they desire. Now both the Rise or Incentive to this labor in the rod, and the end of it, which is here expressed Righteousness or Holiness in God, sweetly point out unto us together the variety of work that must take us up for exercise in this case.

The rod that awakens and puts upon this work, points us to it, to ourselves, and unto God for special exercise; so Holiness unto which

chastening is intended, no less directs us to look to the rod, to ourselves and to God, for some special work; if we would be partakers of it: Hence then we may gather the exercise that doth concern us is threefold. 1. About the rod that smarts. 2. About our hearts that feel. 3. About God that doth inflict and chasten. 1. Much work there is to do about the rod, if we expect the appointed end, or fruit, it is all taken up in hearing, bearing, and doing after the rods voice.

1. There is hearing work for the soul; for there is a voice or speech in every chastening, and a special duty is it to understand the meaning of the rod, which yet cannot be had, without hearkening or listening thereunto: The one is therefore asserted a truth from God, and the other commanded a duty to him: upon a wise heart that would have profit by chastening, The Lord's voice crieth to the city (the wise will see his name in it) hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. If it be inquired, what voice the rod hath? It is fully replied, The Lord's voice crieth in it: But what is the matter of all this cry? In short, virtually it takes in the whole contents of God's covenant, and calleth for all restipulations due unto God from a covenanted people. It is spoken of the rod, which is the sword; I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my Covenant; vengeance absolute of wrath it takes up on reprobates for their rebellion, but only a smart exaction or correction of love upon his chosen, to convince them of former errors, and awaken them to future care in obedience to his Covenant. Whether it be vengeance to one or chastening to another, this is certain, the rod carries in it the voice of God's whole Covenant, and requires obedience to it, where it comes, God appoints it for this purpose: That one Notion under which word and Rod are signified, even Judgments, is enough to evince the substance of one to be carried in the other; The word of covenant is Judgment, that is, a right word of truth to bring to God, and the rod as Judgment also a right stroke upon the creatures default, to require the abuse of so right a covenant. The rod then doth speak, though it be a word in a blow, for God who sends it; therefore is the chastened souls duty to hear, that is, to listen, to study out: and understand, and to believe

what the Lord speaks in his chastening's. But what crieth the rod more distinctly?

These three words plainly are uttered in every scourge, and must be so heard, by the wise soul that would be fruitful under the rod. 1. The stroke cries aloud unto the soul, Thou hast sinned, thou hast sinned; affliction could never fall upon a creature, where sin had not made entrance for it: and however God seeth not iniquity in Jacob so as to lay to Judgment to the rule, to cast away his people forever, and forget his covenant of grace to them, yet in every rod he notes their corruptions to convince of them, to lay strokes of death upon them, and keep from them for time to come. It was the cry of Israel's fall before Ai to Joshua; Israel hath sinned, and no less David's family troubles and Kingdom shakings sound in his ear, did the matter of Uriah: every chastening speaks the same to God's Sons.

2. Another note the whip sounds out, God is displeased, God is displeased: though in love God take up the rod, to keep his children from the world's condemnation, yet every stroke shows a frown upon their sin: Though David be God's dear, and Solomon his beloved one, and Ephraim his joy, yet his displeasure is against their sin. God loves his Saints, but not their sins, and were he not displeased he would not smile, God sparing Miriam showed that he loved her, but spitting in her face, argues his indignation against her folly. Notably doth this appear, when the cry of God's afflicted returns, Why hidest thou thy face from us?

3. The plain voice of the rod to the chastened soul is, Return, Return, because you strayed abroad, God sent out his appointed scourge after you, to call you home, and to set you right in the way of life again: when Ephraim was unruly in this kind, the scourge pursues him, and whips and cries, Come back Ephraim, come back; and at last he hears it, & replies, Turn me my God and I shall be turned. Thus every rod cries repentance to the chastened child; and his work it is to hear, to understand, to be convinced, and believe all this revelation by the rod, if ever that excellent fruit of righteousness appear.

2. There is bearing work also for Christians in reference to the rod; The necessity of this patience is urged by one, and the perfection of it advised by another Apostle, to give men possession of the promise, and render them entire, wanting nothing. The Church commends it to her children, It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth; good to bear, and to bear betimes, and she resolves to do it in conscience of her own guilt deserving it, I will bear the indignation of God, because I have sinned against him; this is the way to that desired gain, He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness; see the success of bearing smart.

But how must we bear, to be sure of this?

Three words will direct safely. 1. We must bear feelingly, that is, feel and bear, or else what patience here? Little hope of whipping a dry post into green, alas there is neither life nor sense in it, the Anvil-bearing may make worse and harder, never soft nor better. It is stupidity, not patience, where there is want of sense; no thank for bearing, where no pain is felt: poor Job feels and bears, and takes all kindly from the hand of God; in this he did not sin.

2. We must bear freely and willingly; forced suffering against our wills is not worth the name of patience; over-powered strength may bear in policy, when it must yield of necessity, but little thanks for such a bearing in respect of God; to choose to bear rather than not, when God chastiseth and his will is so, to take up the cross, when flesh might find the way to shift it, Christ calling thereunto, this is action, and truth of duty, not dull passion, or patience perforce. Correct me O Lord, and that in judgment, measured by the rule of thy saving truth, was the desire of a gracious soul, rather than be left unrebuked and hated.

3. We must bear waitingly also, if we expect the fruit; to grow weary after some strokes born, is but to forfeit all former pains to loss; to hold out and endure bearing to the utmost point of the will of God is the only way to get the crown: It is therefore a true paraphrase of the

condition in the text by an Antient, to be exercised is to bear, and to hold out: The practice of that good Prophet and people of truths suits sweetly with this rule, yea in the way of thy judgments O Lord have we waited for thee; that is, in all the journey round or circuit of God's scourges, though he take rod after rod, and lead them from fire to fire, and from water to water, they keep him company throughout the way, and wait unweariedly till the fruit do come, that they may be exactly skilled or learned in righteousness. No hope of healing the wound, if the plaster lie not long enough, nor expectation of harvest by the husbandman, till winter be past and the season come: thus bear the rod, and the rod shall bear his precious fruit.

3. There is yet more doing work about the rod, to complete this exercise, and help on the desired gain: to hear and bear the rod will prove but idle work without doing, or bestirring ourselves in action suitable to its demands; these three Acts I shall commend for completing your exercise about the rod, and enlarging the entailed fruit.

1. Kiss the rod in your Fathers hand; no storming, no snatching, nor biting at it, if you consult your peace: Ask ye what I mean by kissing the rod? I shall shortly tell you, Honor it as the Scepter of God, set up above you; Fear it as the sword of God, sent to require all failings against his Covenant; Love it as God's medicine appointed for healing your sores, and preventing death, and condemnation, the kiss is but the token of love and homage due. Manasseh did thus under the iron rod in Babylon and prospered.

2. Cast away the sin that hath provoked God; say unto it, whatever it be, Get thee hence; and within yourselves parly, What have we anymore to do with evil? Elihu sweetly notes this to Job in his affliction, Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend anymore; That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. It was the speediest way the woman took to secure Abel, & make Joab retreat, to throw the Traitors head over the wall; no other way to calm the sea

but by casting out Jonah, nor shorter course can be found to still the rod, and ripen the sweet fruit of holiness, than to thrust out that sin that angers one, and contradicts the other.

3. Embrace the covenant of God for which the rod pleads, This is the message about which the scourge is sent, to teach you your folly in transgressing, and wisdom for a timely embracing the covenant of the Lord. That rod which made Jacob stink in the nostrils of his Neighbors, tells him of his forgetfulness of his vow at Bethel, and minds him to purge his family, and haste to perform his covenant with God; upon obedience to this his fear was removed, his smart eased, and his grace strengthened. God's Covenant embraced, brings Righteousness and Peace with it, This is the First piece of our exercise about the Rod.

SECT. III.

The exercise about Hearts, and about God, opened.

2. The next work to be done for perfecting the pleasant fruit of the Rod, is about our Hearts, upon whom the strokes are laid. Now being stirred up and excited by the scourge, to this exercise, the Heart-work will be taken up in these particulars, Heart-weighing of the Rod, Heart-breaking under it, and Heart-bending to it; by these the chastening is furthered to its end.

1. It will be our duty to lay to heart the affliction inflicted on us; in other terms if you will, to consider and cast in our thoughts the evil incumbent, what it is, whence it comes, by what provoked, to what intended, this is that heart-weighing mentioned. It is the Preachers rule of wisdom, In the day of adversity consider. Now, if ever, it concerns men that have hearts to use them. Silly Doves, and

heartless Ephraim's, must pine away and perish in their troubles, they have not hearts to bethink themselves, nor to work good out of their evils: but men of hearts must do more wisely, if they resolve to be gainers by the rod. A solid consideration of the Nature, Author, Motive and End of chastening, becomes that soul, who would be afflicted for his profit. The Lord himself presseth this on some, Consider your ways, when he pleads against them with his scourges, that is, Set your hearts on your ways, bethink yourselves what you have done to pull these burdens on you, and what must be done for removal of them. And no less doth he complain of others, that they lay nothing of his judgments to heart, nor so much as once do say, What have I done? He that seeth the mystery of the rod, and understands the deeps of God in it, is in a way to reach the sweetness of it, but of the foolish inconsiderate heart, that either sottishly neglects, or rashly runs over the study of affliction, there is as little hope it should be holy, as that it can be wise; skill in the mystery of the rod, as well as of the word, is requisite for holiness. This heart-work then is needful, to think, and think, and study thoroughly this work of chastening.

2. It must be no less our exercise to plough or break up our hearts, with God's chastening plow-share, if we hope for that good fruit to grow upon them. Thistles and weeds are the best return that fallow grounds make to the blessings of heaven, until the plow turn it up, and fit for the seeds, and future bearing: no better can the heart of man yield in spirituals, until God plow and fit it for his hand. This though the mighty Spirit of the Lord can only do, yet such instruments as Word and Rod, he useth to dig through our flesh, and calls no less for our concurrence with him in the work. Thus saith the Lord, Break up your fallow ground. It must be then our exercise as well as his hand-work; this is nothing else but heart-renting, heart-afflicting, and heart-humbling; such a one is a sweet soil for holiness, and a desired rest by God, to come and dwell there, and fill it with himself. Requisite is this heart-breaking exercise.

3. It is work also heart-bending to the scope of God's rod, if we would prosper; our hearts are not fully suited to the intended profit of chastisement by thinking, and by breaking, something else must be done to reach the mark: Inconsistencies with holiness must be removed, and disposition and resignation of the heart unto it, must be settled, stones must be picked out, and weeds plucked up, and ground manured and fitted for the seed, where we expect a full crop. Rebellious risings are these stones, careful, lustful thoughts and affections about the creature are these weeds, our hearts themselves unapt soil to nourish the seed of righteousness, all must be picked, and plucked, and cleansed, that we may see the holy fruit abound. Circumcising and washing hearts so oft enjoined, have the force of this duty in them; our hearts gain not on God, till God hath gained on them; when once our heart is softened, and our stiff made stoop and yielding, that our hearts lay down gainsaying, and are at the beck of rod, to go and do its pleasure, answering to God, Lord, what wilt thou have us do? Then come the showers of grace, then righteousness raineth down, then peace abounds, and the dry rod gives forth its pleasant blossom, and precious fruit. This heart-work then must needs fore-go the crop.

3. The last piece of our exercise concerns that God who is Father of his chastened, Lord and commander of the rod, to use it at his pleasure, to burn it when he will: our work will be to eye God in all our afflictions, as the sovereign that appoints them, that we may do him honor, if we look to share in holiness with him. It is Micah's expression upon God's cry in his rod, The man of wisdom shall see thy name, that is, eye and take notice of God's known and famous Majesty, and perceive he hath to do with God in this matter. I confess there are other readings of this passage; that of the Vulgar is wide from the letter, Salvation shall be to them that fear thy name, though the Jesuitical gloss seeks to maintain it for good. There is another reading which the Learned have, and our Translators express in their variations, Thy Name shall see that which indeed is, making it an Apostrophe to God, and intimating the reason of his cry unto the City, viz. his overseeing eye beholding what was there in being; this

cannot be denied to be very congruous to the letter; yet by several learned in the original, is the first reading only used, as is expressed. The difference ariseth from one word, which signifieth either substance, essence, and truth of being, or else wisdom, virtue of anything, and the Law itself, for the stable and settled being of these; the word in short signifieth anything that is solid and substantial; therefore translated to express wisdom, so that we must read then, Wisdom shall see thy Name, but not unfitly translated here, The man of wisdom, that is, the solid substantial wise man will eye the noted Majesty of God, when in the rod he crieth to him: but this looking to him is for a further work, to honor that Name, that seeth and hath found him out with his rod. It is a full expression by another Prophet, Glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the Isles of the sea, that is, in the hottest fiery trials, and in the remotest parts of your solitude, or exile misery, glorify the name of the Lord. His glory is dear to him at all times, he will not give it to another; and because it's stolen, or limited, or spoiled by creatures, therefore by fiery tortures comes he to require it. Now then, if ever, give glory unto God, unless ye would that he should glorify himself upon you in smiting to desolation.

How must we then glorify God in our afflictions?

In general, to glorify God, or give glory to him, cannot be by adding anything to him, but by acknowledging and manifesting the fundamental glory that is in him. Now the glory of God, is his excellency, wherein he out-reacheth, or over-cometh all created being; as his excellency of Power, excellency of wisdom, excellency of holiness, of majesty, of justice, and of goodness, is that which is unparalleled, that cannot be matched, and therefore truly glory: were this given unto God, that is, manifested to the world to be in him by his people, in their suitable demeanor to such a glory by their words, duties, ways, and conversations, while it is peace, our feet might be kept from stumbling upon the dark mountains. But when creatures deny this, how just is it for that glorious majesty to require it by his

rod? And now it must be yielded, or we yield ourselves to perdition. His glory he will have, and we must thus ascribe it.

1. By abasing, abhorring, and nullifying ourselves as unworthy to be, who have lifted up a word or thought against such a glory. Impudent pride of heart is in creatures, while they set their sin above God, which they do, when they obey it in the lusts of it; obedience is a debt to glory, and is there glory in sin, poor man, that thou shouldest obey it? Or is there none in God, that thou deniest it him? Is shame become glory, and glory shame? Thy sin thy God, and thy God baser in thy thoughts than sin? O abhor thyself in dust and ashes, that God may yet be glorified in thee. Job was never right until he came to this pass, I have heard thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Go we must as low, and let God be exalted in our abasement.

2. By justifying God in all the ways of his judgments, and proceedings against his creatures; if man suffer for his sin, as who doth not? Why doth living man complain? Yet see what sots sin makes us, to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and then quarrel with him for being angry, & so spoil him twice of his glory: Learn, learn, poor soul, of Jeremy, though his span-long thoughts could not reach God's exquisite proceedings in his judgments, yet this he lays down as undeniable, Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee. Or learn of David, Against thee, thee only have I sinned, &c. that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Say thou also, I have sinned, thou Lord, hast all the wrong, I have robbed thee of thy glory, for this am I scourged, and it is righteous: yet this is mercy, my just recompense is Hell; Thus should chastised sinners glorify their God.

3. By a suitable demeanor toward the glory of God's being, especially now under the rod: deepest trembling to highest Majesty, greatest fear to Supreme Holiness, fullest obedience to greatest Power, strongest faith to glorious Truth, and largest love to Excelling goodness are equal matches, if man be judge; All we are and have,

and can, is but his debt, who gave all this, and is more then all to our poor Soul. No less can such a glory crave than all the heart, and all the Soul, and all the mind, and all the might; and yet our all too little for the least of him. Manasseh began to study this at last, when shame was fallen on him, to honor God, it is best at first: Aime at this, strive for this, God's glory is our truest gain.

4. By going to this only living fountain, and drawing from him the blessing of the rod; He that prayeth, as well as he that praiseth, honoreth him, and declares him to be the Absolute and all-sufficient Author of all good. It is neither rod nor word that of themselves can make us fruitful in holiness, he only blesseth, and the fruit appears. It is his own word, I am the Lord thy God that teacheth thee to profit. Our profit indeed in righteousness and peace is the appointed end of chastening, but alas the rod itself cannot give this, no strokes can beat grace into a soul, divine light and life and wisdom and power only can effect this, to stamp holiness to the Lord upon any soul; The praise then is not to the rod, but to the Lord; This must be acknowledged by the soul that would be blessed in suffering, therefore must the Lord be inquired of by him for all this good; This praying work also blazons the glory of the Lord, and speeds a blessing on the rod, to make it of a sanctifying nature and virtue in us; This is our exercise, and thus the saints have constantly done and prospered. Sum we up now the whole work to take it at one view, The indispensable condition of the Saints receiving the full fruit of affliction is their activity, and stirring exercise under the scourge; work they must about the rod in hearing, bearing, and obeying the voice of it; stir they must about their hearts, in pressing, breaking, bending them to the will of the chastiser; Exercise they must to Godward in giving him his glory, by self-abhorring, by justifying his scourge, by a worthy demeanor to him & by a faithful seeking of the blessed fruit of chastening from him; to all this they must buckle strongly, as Wrestlers, labor in their shirts, as Artists, at it every day, and as Racers run till they reach the mark: this labor shall not be in vain, the full crop is entailed upon it, and inseparably follows it, in its

appointed season; Afterward the sweet fruit abounds: but how long after? That we shall see in the ensuing search of the season.

SECT. IV.

The Season of the fruit stated.

3. All the help the text gives us to find out this season is in that one large expression, Afterward, which yet considered with the rest leaves us not unsatisfied. It hath been noted of the fruit fore-mentioned, that completely taken and in its compass it is Grace and Glory, all the effects of God's favor here begun, and the perfection of it in heaven; for all this is life truly, and life is the fruit of righteousness: Accordingly this afterward may be of grace, & that is more near at hand, or else of glory, and that hath its stated time, the instant of our translation. But yet to give you a stricter account of this time-specifying expression, it is evident that it points at a future season for gain, contra distinct unto that present of the pain of chastening, and in this future notation three things are carried that concern this fruit, The Order, Speede, and Duration of it.

1. In this afterward is carried the order of this fruits appearance, it succeeds, not foregoes, it is after, not before the pain and Christian exercise under it: folly would brand that husbandman, who expects his crop, before he till, or winter be over; and madness in that Christian who looks for peace, before his exercise performed and rod removed: It was the method God keeps with his own Son (not in way of chastening, unless the chastisement of our peace) he must first suffer, and therein manage his suffering well, and then enter into his glory; the same order is to his members, first grief and exercise under the rod, then after fruit of righteousness and peace.

2. In this afterward is intended speed, that is, soon after, or immediately after labor this fruit is returned; The travelling woman's pain after laboring through some throws, brings forth the child anon; it is at the very heels of her travail: (unless it be a cross birth, whereof no fear in present case) so soon comes fruit of grace and peace upon the Christians travail under the rod; at least the beginnings or first fruit, though not the full expected harvest. It is a sweet prophetic note, about the miraculous and fruitful return of the Jews to Christ, after their long rejection and many pains, when they begin to exercise and labor under the rod and word indeed, As soon as Zion travelled, she brought forth her children, Nay if that be not soon enough after, take a nearer expression, Before she travelled she brought forth, before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child: Then she need not stay to labor: but understand it rightly, it is an expression, that noteth speed in fruit-bearing, yet not excluding pain in the due labor of the Church; but a rhetorical phrase it is to set forth the swiftness of the flocking of the Jews to Christ, as afterwards, Shall a nation be borne at once? This was never seen, but such an income shall there be of these unto the Lord much like to this; As if to express the quick deliverance of a woman in her pains, we say, she had her child, before she cried; joy came so speedily after, as if it had been before. I shall close this with an eye to the present matter, the harder labor under the rod, the speedier return of the desired fruit.

3. In this afterward there is duration noted, it is a long afterward, when once its come, always afterward doth this fruit abide with the exercised soul; It is like that in the Psalmist, Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory, that is, forever after never to leave glory again; no After shall follow this to cut it off, but this fruit shall be from generation to generation; eternity is long enough, and that of joy, to recompense a present, an instant of grief: ye have the burden of this note of time, it tells when, how soon, how long this blessed fruit of chastening may be expected. But how doth the rod bring forth? This will be satisfied in the last inquiring of the manner.

SECT V.

The manner of this fruit-bearing.

4. All that toucheth upon this in the text, is in these, it yieldeth, that is, the chastening yieldeth this fruit, or giveth it out from itself: What, doth the dry rod or smart upon the flesh, carry in it such spiritual effects as righteousness, &c. or else how can it give them forth? It is firmly asserted in the text, Chastening yields this fruit, which that we may take aright, two things are to be remembered concerning chastening. 1. The material part of it, which is nothing but the smart. 2. The formal part, and that is the spirit of the rod, or the spiritual energy, which it receiveth from that Hand of power, holiness, and grace that useth it toward the children of his bosom; when therefore we speak of chastening it is meant the Result of both these, not smart abstracted, nor spirit abstracted, but both united in this chastening and of this it is truly said, It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and in the particulars following I shall show you how. 1. Orderly, for as there are many ingredients in this chastening, Smart, and Love, and Spirit; It is Spirit that is active, working this good unto the creature, for Spirit must be in the cause, if Spirit be the effect: Now this mighty spirit works through smart, and through love to bring forth this fruit, yet in this method, observing these steps. 1. Through the pain and grief upon the flesh, as by its instrument it works privatively to take away stubbornness and indisposition unto righteousness; true, smart itself doth rather anger, but spirit and smart will make men yield. This chastening knocks down rebellion, weakens corruption, takes away gainsaying to the will of God; for there is the spirit that overpowers, and the smart that in bitters sin unto the flesh, so that it becomes willing to leave the dug though its delight, when nothing but wormwood is

tasted in it. This spiritual effect of chastening, lieth in that promise, By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin. Spirit in pain doth this first. 2. Positively, by love and smart it draws to God, and forms the fruits of love and purpose of the rod upon the heart. Now that love of the Father that doth chastise, carries all the effects of grace in it, righteousness is but his love, and peace his love, and life his love, that is, the issues of it, and the rod makes way through the flesh to bring these into the soul, and the Spirit through both perfects the effect, and leaves God's image more eminently stamped upon the heart, that more exactly we might subject ourselves to the Father of spirits and live. By this the prodigal was brought to himself, and Ephraim tamed and turned, and David established and perfected in the way of God. Thus then conceive the way of this increase; the Spirit by his power strikes out this bloom and fruit through the dry rod; that is but the stalk, yet such a stalk there must be, the Spirit is the seminal virtue that gives forth the fruit; and in this order, by the smart awing, humbling purging an untoward flesh, and by love adjoined drawing and conforming the soul to God, so making righteousness and peace to abound.

2. Freely doth this rod thus give the fruit; the very word imports it, yielding it from itself: No green tree yields its fruit more naturally, none so freely as this: For Grace is in it, which every way is free, and works most freely toward the creature. Nothing more free then gift, and that gift the freest, which comes only from and for the Donors self. Thus the love of God, through the rod, gives forth this gain: it is not by force, nor charm, that this dry rod is quickened, and made fruitful, only by Grace and Promise, because the chastising father saith, I will afflict, and they shall seek me early. It is not for thy exercise, but to thy exercise, that the Lord commands his rod to yield this blessed fruit.

3. Certainly shall this fruit be rendered from the Rod, to the exercised soul: It is not doubtfully delivered, it may yield, or it may not, but peremptorily affirmed, it doth yield. If the power, promise,

or truth of the Father of spirits, can give certainty enough, all is put to it to assure this fruit. He that works, and none can let it, hath thus spoken, For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it. What will he do? Even refine his people, and make them choice ones in the Furnace of Afflictions, righteous and glorious; nay, it stands him upon, otherwise his Name would be polluted, and his glory lost, in his Churches barrenness under the Rod. From all the premised explications we must take the state of the truth concluded; the sum whereof is this, God's chastening's, his smarting loving Rods for the afterward yield, that is, in their appointed time and manner, give the peaceable fruit of righteousness, both grace and bliss to them that are duly exercised by them. Ye see the gain of the Rod discovered.

SECT. VI.

The demonstration of this Truth.

Add we to these the Certainty and Necessity of this truth, then faith may freely feed and get strength from it: Each particular indeed hath its light in opening enough to convince of all being put together; yet to leave no doubt, the entire truth shall be demonstrated in its certainty, that it is so, and in its necessity, why it must be.

1. That this is true in the whole proposition, will be evident from two great Arguments, God's Revelation, and Mans Experience.

1. God hath spoken it, therefore it is certain. Take we some testimonies; This is divine, When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. These judgments in the earth, are chastening's to God's portion there, these inhabitants of the world, are not all, but some, and they the people of truths, whose souls are said to desire after God's Name (for the rest abide wicked) these learn righteousness, this is their gain, but how come they by it? Not by idleness, but exercise: they must go to school for it, and learn it. This also is his Oracle, He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Here's grieving and going, and working, and sowing in the day of man's affliction; but what return? He that goes forth, shall as surely come to his home, he that sprinkles his way with tears, shall come leaping and rejoicing, and he that bears and sows his seed, sowing to the Spirit, so shall he reap, for every seed he shall bring his handful, or for every handful he shall have a sheaf, abundance of righteousness, peace, and everlasting life.

2. The Saints have found it, and experience is a visible demonstration, then which nothing surer. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, saith David; and good for me, saith Job, and for

me, saith Jeremy, and for me, saith Daniel, and for us, say Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; all the Saints, Patriarchs, and Prophets, subscribe to this. And this stills David against distractions, Thy rod comforts me, what needs more witness?

2. The necessity why it must be so, depends upon one undeniable ground, that is, the supreme irresistible ordinance of God, then which nothing can be stronger to convince. The alone decree and ordinance of that great God, whose counsel none can cross, hath so linked this chastening cause to this effect, and this condition, and this season, that they cannot be separated. If we allow his Sovereignty in lesser matters, we may not deny it here, unless we ungod him. The same power that hath decreed the Winter storms, and Summer calm, the cold and the hot, the wet and the dry, the frost and the thaw, to fit the earth that it may yield its strength to the laboring man in the time of harvest, and none can alter one link of these, or change his mind; to that Sovereign might we must grant, that his counsel must stand whatever he determine: In an higher and more excellent way hath he ordained, that the rod to the laboring & exercised Christian, should hasten and give out the sweet fruit of righteousness and peace in the appointed season. His authority is the highest reason. Now that his Name and stamp is upon this truth to own it, and make it his, is visible in every piece of it, as before declared. It is all then his ordinance, and therefore our duty to believe, and love, and honor God in obedience thereunto.

SECT. VII.

The inference of some truths depending.

Having thus stated the Apostles Proposition, it will be profitable for us to gather those precious truths that fall from it: four fruitful lessons I shall teach naturally issuing thence. 1. It being in the scope a correcting assertion, to allay the bitterness of the former concerning present smart of chastening, and to rectify misguided thoughts, that from sense might be ready to conclude, nothing but evil in the rod, learn this truth, A right & perfect judgment of the state of chastening, cannot be made from present sense, but from future success. The judgment of faith is better than that of sense in this matter; this seeth nothing but present grief, therefore judgeth it all evil, but faith perceiveth love & faithfulness of God in his scourge, & discovers the ensuing good of it in the promise, therefore determines it good, very good, and nothing better; while Jeremy looks no further then present smart, he bewails himself, Woe is me, he takes himself as a man undone. So Job, while his sense is judge, curseth the day of his birth, as the other also. Sensual judgment upon God's dealings, misguides men to perverse thoughts of God's rod, and lets loose passion, and whets the tongue against the Almighty; Thus they tumble in the net, and are faster taken, and murmur themselves into greater torture: for God will have the mastery, and whip his own out of sensual rashness and complaints. I note this for the profit of God's own in this day of darkness; sense never deals well with God's word, nor with his rod; lay that aside, rectify your thoughts of the present troubles on the Church by believing; let faith look through the providence which now chastiseth us, it will discover the after part of it to be very good, so full of glory to God's people that they would not avoid the smart, to lose the gain. Ease and deliverance in this case, would be spurned away by a believing soul. It was Israel's sin to live by sense, to murmur in straits, to be barren in mercies. Unhappy sense, unhappy men that live by it! Sense makes Murmurers, Beggars and Apostates from God in time of trouble; but faith makes Martyrs, gainers, and fruitful, praiseful admirers of God in fiery trials: believe thoroughly, and then judge aright of God's chastening providence.

2. Look we upon the linking, of rod, of exercise & of fruit; all this gain is given in to exercise, this exercise is daily labor, this labor must be under the rod, this note is worth the taking; The more exercise under affliction, the greater fruit to God's people; the longest labor under the rod hath the largest income of peace and righteousness. The more pains, the greater gains in the trade. If there be a rich vein of metal in a mine, the longest, the hardest labor brings the greatest and the richest profit.

Now there is abundance of heavenly good hid in God's chastening, as much as his love can compass, and all this to be wrought out by exercise, therefore the longest travel will bring the largest fruit: Yet not the longest continuance of the scourge absolutely gives this advantage, but the longest that can stand with the Christians exercise; for there is an appointed time for the kindly working of every affliction, and excess in it may cut off a man's hands and bar from exercise, kill and not quicken to the work: As there is a stated time for the seed to lie under ground, & if excessively it be kept under, it dies forever and cannot get up to fruit, but within the set season the longer it lies, the root is deeper, and the fruit greater. There is a time also that the refiner sets for the golds trial, in the furnace, and within these limits the longer it continues, the purer it comes forth, but in outlying these, it loseth itself as well as dross: So in our present case, the time of the rod is measured for doing good, while Christian spirits are spurred to work, and quickened to labor by it, within these bounds the most continued labor brings forth the greatest crop; but beyond this stint the rod breaks and kills: These bounds of time our refiner the Lord himself only knows; but this we may build on, if it should be all the days of the standing of our Tabernacle, & all those days we stoutly exercise under our afflictions, as our strength is not over-wrought, so our return of fruit will be exceeding great. These suggestions will evince it. 1. God's enlarged thoughts of tenderness and respect to the long sufferings of his people, to have them relieved and eased; Note one instance to his dear Jerusalem, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord, &c. for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

How double? Neither she nor any creature can pay a single debt to God; but yet the Lord so indulgeth the long travailing soul, that he accounts every lash two, and provides treble comfort; Its not enough to comfort her once, but again comfort her, nay and again speak comfortably to Jerusalem: sure there is nothing lost in the longest sufferings, if God so account of his people's pains.

2. God's enlarged hand for return to the hard and long travails of his children; Hear his proportion, For your shame you shall have double; for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess the double; Everlasting joy shall be unto them. In this reading, we have good gains, two for one, in joy for suffering, in honor for reproach; No cause then of repenting bargain in this pains. But if we take another as may be fit; For your double shame and confusion, they shall praise their portion; (it is usual thus to change the person) as if he had said, ye shall be no losers by your multiplied afflictions, for your double shame, ye shall have a worthy portion, yourselves, and all that see it, shall commend it; or if this may be thought too little, eternity hath enough in its compass to satisfy you, everlasting joy shall be upon you. Make not hast then, brethren, from under the rod, but labor in the fires, your work shall be well rewarded, and long travels crowned with everlasting peace.

3. Remembering that this exercise is such stiff, frequent, constant labor, age and growth must needs be requisite to this; another useful note will issue hence: The right managing of afflictions to the full purchase of the sweet fruit entailed, is a manly work, and beseeming a grown Christian. Exercise truly stated is the character of distinction which the Spirit makes between men and babes in Christ. It is true, as in meats there is difference, milk for babes, strong meat for men, yet both eat and digest though not the same; So in works there is variety, slighter for Children, harder for men; yet both are doing: so in rods also, there is distinction, twigs for children, but cudgels and whips for them of stronger growth, yet both suffer; God hath so fitted correction as well as food and work for several ages in his Kingdom; but so to endure affliction, and manage it to the greatest advantage

as may be attained, to bring in the abundance of peace and righteousness, this will exercise the strongest Christians: less strength may gain a little fruit, but greater must be had and used to bring in plenty: grown knowledge in the ways of God, grown faith, grown patience, grown experience, and grown strength in grace are needful to a through exercise and a well managing of afflictions for the greatest advantage. The wisdom of the Father would not put weak disciples upon the strong service of fasting while they were as old garments ready to tear upon every little stress; nor would he have them venture on the hard conflicts with the world, nor on the bitterness of suffering until they were endued with power from above. How sweet is the proportion between abilities and work which God hath settled? Medications hence arise suiting all ages: Art thou strong to bear afflictions? Pity and tender the weak, that sink down under burdens, take them in thine Arms and bear for them. Art thou weak in suffering? Infirmity must shame thee, it is thine own fault to obstruct thy growth; yet God's pity may revive thee, he will not for all this overcharge thy life: And now up and be growing, blessings are promised from heaven, and means afforded on earth; O heighten thy mind to great gains, therefore to much pains and high abilities: This mark I drive at only in giving this note; not to dash the babes because the work is manly, but to put them upon growth, that they may be men and work strongly, so bear the yoke, and wear the crown.

4. Considering this precious fruit inseparably entailed upon this kind of affliction, take this note of discrimination between rods. It is judgment not chastening that leaves a man fruitless, or void of righteousness. No clearer sign of a man plagued in vengeance & under the curse, that to grow worse, or of a man under grace, and chastened in love, than to grow better under the rod: Saul and David are a pair of instances fit to exemplify both parts; he the worse, this the better by all afflictions, he running to the devil, and this to God in time of trouble; therefore he judged in wrath, and this chastised in love. Judge all the variety of scourges in the world by this evidence, such as the fruit is, such is the tree; the rod of vengeance if it harden and make worse, of chastening if it correct and make the soul better.

I do but hold this out to the world, as a black note of perdition, to Pharaohs, and to Ahab's, anvil-souls, that grow harder by every stroke from God: but as an Item unto Christians for special care in this matter for improvement of the rod, to gracious fruit: oh let not a cross, a loss, a sickness, a grief pass over you, but see some fruit of righteousness proceeding from it; such profit in holiness by the rod will prove you sons and not bastards: Make this good, that ye be not disinherited.

SECT. VIII.

Conviction of sin to many.

It will not be amiss in the next place to glance a little light to sinners from this truth, that if they will open their eyes they may see their sin and misery to escape them.

1. If exercise under the rod be God's ordinance upon his people, for gathering fruit, then idleness in affliction must needs be a sin; and such a one as will bring utter beggary and undoing upon the soul at last, while it opens a way to the scourge to wear & waste, and impoverish the creature & makes no resistance, nor suffers the man to make any shift for turning away the bitterness of the evil. God himself sets a mark upon these, and lifts a cry against them, that in the time of his shaking the rod, and scourging his creatures, are professed idlers, neither study the rod, nor understand its voice, nor search hearts, nor look unto God; nay not so much as say within themselves, What have I done? Absolutely stupefied are these, or willingly bent with Issachar to lie under every burden, and take no notice. Hear how God calls them, women at ease, careless daughters, sleepy dogs, neither shall they go without their doom, fear,

astonishment, and woes unutterable, shall awake them, and make them howl forever. I confess it may be an infirmity upon God's own, for a moment; but it will be their shame and sorrow at their awakening. It was much that Pagans should bestir themselves in a storm more than Jonah, and be his remembrancers to raise him from his sleep, that he might call upon his God; yet so then it was, but it cost him dear for it afterward, when he is imprisoned in the belly of hell, he was taught thoroughly never to sleep out an affliction again. Sluggishness may fall upon the Saints, but it is their burden, and abides not with them. But habituated and accustomed idleness, is the provocation, upon which God returns his heavy displeasure. I shall commend one word to these for their serious thoughts, a character of themselves, and presage of God's dealings with them, except they repent, Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not see; they wink, or sleep, here's their character: but they shall see, and be ashamed, the fire of thin: enemies shall devour them. This is their doom.

If it be work for God to be done under chastening, such as may help in holiness, then counter-working is sin, when men shall give God blow for blow, and stroke for stroke, they are busy under the rod indeed, but wickedly employed. Fruits of such exercise are Hardening, Impatience, Fretting, Fuming against God, more hatred of his ways, and blaspheming of his Name. Here's work enough, but all for the Devil, and to bring forth greater ungodliness: It was that foolish Woman's advice to her afflicted Husband, Curse God and die; Folly indeed to fight against God, to be scourged with Scorpions; and it was that wicked Jehorams practice, This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer? Seeing he is thus angry, as little care we for him, as he for us. See the proud creature. No more to these but this, God will have the victory, and will certainly out-curse you. Tremble, and return; if not, the everlasting curse shall get glory over you.

3. If gracious fruit must spring from the rod of chastening, then sinners are all unfruitful sufferers. No great difficulty to evince this, seeing it is against the command for such returns, as well as against

the helps ministered by the rod, to make men fruitful. Return, return, is God's call upon every smiting, and no less the love, smart, and spirit of the rod given out to them that will make use of them, are sweet helps engaging to work together with them, to bring forth the fruit of righteousness. It is sin indeed against grace, as well as against command, to be thus unfruitful, yet sinners there are of less and of greater guilt: the less, that riseth of infirmity, is dangerous indeed, but not deadly; to be lamented and abhorred, yet not desperate: such the soul will be ashamed of, and for it condemn itself and repent. This I only call for here; as for other scruples concerning these souls, I shall answer them among the cases. The greater, which is of strength and habituated obstinacy, is fatal; such is evident by men's content and delight in barrenness. I have but little to say to these; yet a message heavy enough. As love, and rod, and labor, and fruit, righteousness and peace, are inseparably linked in God's course of chastening: so wrath, and smart, and curse, are undivided from idleness and barrenness in midst of afflictions. The sentence is gone out against all barren ones under Word and Rod, cut them down, why should they cumber the ground? They are cursed already, and now fit for nothing, but to be fuel for everlasting flames to feed upon. Consider the terrors of the Lord, that they may not be to destruction, but correction. Repent, or die.

SECT. IX.

Counsel for duty hence concerning us.

In all this Concatenation of Rod, Fruit, Exercise and Time, there is but one thing that concerns us as duty, wherein, if we fail, all the rest are scattered, and become vain; True it is, God's hand must temper rod and love, to make a chastening; and he must bless this

chastening to produce kindly fruit, righteousness and Peace, and time or season in his power, but his ordinance calls in our exercise, as an indispensable duty, wherein we are to expect this blessed gain, and without which we shall be but as the barren field, and dry heath, nearer to a curse than a blessing, fit for nothing but the fire.

To this noble Christian Exercise then under the Rod, is the work now to persuade men, necessity lieth on us to be doing, either to escape (otherwise inevitable) destruction, or to gain that sweet and desired fruit entailed on God's chastening. As for the matter of the duty, not needlessly to repeat, learn it in the premised draught of the work: There is, hearing, bearing, doing-work about the Rod, there is considering, judging, breaking, bowing-work about the heart, and that great business of all, giving glory unto God. And in all these, if we exercise aright, our labor must be hard, even in our shirts, and frequent, every day must we be at it, and constant, no giving over until the fruit come.

But alas, what flesh and blood can endure thus to labor in the fires? Who can set about that Rod-work, heart-work, God-work, when he is under the lash, and no rest in the bones, nor ease in the flesh?

I shall easily grant, flesh and blood cannot do it; nothing but judgment is determined upon reprobate flesh, nor anything expected from it but murmurings, and sinking under the rod; yet from gracious hearts, who only can be the chastened of the Lord, better things are not only hoped, but must be returned. True, because there is flesh in them, lusting against the spirit, they cannot do what they would in this matter: It will be needful therefore to suggest some helps, to cool the fire, or to steel their flesh against smart or scorching's, that without distractions they may attend on their appointed exercise: these three directions only I shall move.

1. Have a watchful eye over the stings of the Rod to pluck that out, it cannot torment and vex when the sting is gone; thou mayest play with the Asp, and make sport with the Adder, when their sting and

poison are taken from them, no hurt can they do, nor by torture indispose to work. It is the right method, that Samson took, he first kills the Lyon, and then the Eater gives meat, and the strong gives forth sweetness: Honey and meat, not bitterness, roaring, and death, are the fruits of a slain Lyon; so ease and quickening, not torture and astonishment are the issues of the Rod without a sting; the affliction is as good as dead for hurting, when the sting is out.

But what is then this sting of the Rod? And how to be taken out?

Surely it is no other, but that which is the sting of death, that makes every evil of punishment an evil indeed, and that is Sin: could a man lie in the fires without sin, the scorching flames should not disease him, as to put him beside his work in glorifying God; sing and rejoice may God's servants in the stocks, when sin doth not make the stocks to pinch, nor the iron to strike anguish into the soul. Now the main strength this sting hath to strike and hurt, and torment, is from the Law; it is expressly so averred, the strength of sin is the Law; The Law? Doth that strengthen sin? Yea, but not sinfully; not by adding anything of the same kind, to make it more sin, but by aggravating the sinfulness of it, to make it more pain and terror: Thus the Law strengthens sin to vex the soul in these several ways. 1. By making it sin; for without the Law, whereof it is a breach, sin were not; where there is no Law, there can be no transgression, at least none to be imputed: but now the Law being given, and that in absolute holiness, rectitude and goodness, it makes every transgression absolutely vile, corrupt and sinful; yea, sinfulness in the abstract, the spirit, the heart, the hell of sin; it can be no less, being extremely opposite to the very heart and spirit, and heaven of holiness in the Law, and this must make the scourge strike like a Scorpion to torturing and astonishment: how terrible is it, merely to suffer as evil doers with sin upon us?

2. The Law strengthens sin to vex, by making known the sinfulness of it to the conscience: I had not known sin, saith the Apostle, but by the Law; and again, by the Law is the knowledge of sin: and such a

glance it was the Law gave him, that he was dead with the sight of it, Sin revived, and I died; It is torment for a man to suffer with his guilt cast in his face, written upon his fore-head, and stricken to his heart; no marvel if that soul faint.

3. And yet further the Law strengthens sin to torment a soul in affliction, by discovering the wrath from whence it comes, the curse of God that hath whet and sharpened it, to wound deadly, and that it is but the earnest of seventy times seven plagues more to come upon it for sin: Now dreadful is this condition. Alas, what soul can labor for good under the frowns and wrath of God, or give him glory, when the effects of his fury drive them like a whirl-wind? Surely none; care then must be, that this sting and strength of the Rod be destroyed, if ever a soul be fitted for that great exercise under God's chastening. Again, there is besides this another life, and strength of sin in the flesh, where it lives naturally: As a man is said to be living in or by the Law, when it acquits him, and condemns him not to take away his life, yet he is naturally alive also, by the principles of life within him; so sin is alive by the Law, when it is made strong thereby to condemn and kill the man; yet it's natural, rooted life, whence all the motions and stirrings come, are in the flesh; of which no less is the Apostles complaint, in bemoaning that Law that wars in his members, and counting himself a wretched man, until he be freed from that body, wherein reign only sin and death. Now this double strength of sin must be spoiled to kill the sin, and the sting must be pulled out to give the soul ease to labor in the midst of the fires.

But how then may this be done?

The great charmer of this Serpents sting, is Christ, it is so acknowledged in that doxology, Thanks be to God, who hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet this victory over the sting of afflictions and death, is gained from some special piece of Christ, and that his death, the only powerful Antidote against sin, to take away all the life and strength of it; effectual for justification, and so to kill sin in the Law; and no less for mortification, and so to kill sin

in the flesh; This is Gospel doctrine in plain assertions, We are justified by his blood, and again, The blood of Christ shall purge our consciences from dead works; which is nothing else, but his death, and the virtue of it both ways asserted.

The true virtue of this remedy against this sting and its strength, and the right application of it, are two things needful to be known by them, who desire to find this help by it in the day of their affliction, to be so quieted, as then to sit close to their appointed exercise.

1. The death of Christ hath a force predominant over the Law, to take away all the strength it gives to sin, that it can no longer accuse nor make guilty, nor terrify the conscience, nor lay on the tormenting curse, which shakes the soul out of all abilities of performing duty to God: this power is seen in these effects. 1. In that it is the full payment of man's debt to the law, beyond which nothing more could be desired for satisfaction, which the second Adam that heavenly one hath paid for all his seed; hence is the mouth of Law stopped from laying anything to their charge; for the Law being just, can demand nothing but that which is right and due, all that is here discharged. 2. In that it purchaseth forgiveness, or the gift of righteousness from the Law-giver to his seed, so that now sin is no sin, debts are no debts, all hand-writings being canceled by this purchased pardon, neither is the Law in this respect a Law, or in force to burden the soul with fears, and drive it from it's work.

2. The same death of Christ hath an over-ruling power, quelling the motions, weakening the strength, and wasting the life of sin in the flesh; for from thence is the heart of man no less indisposed to duty, than from the Law; sin by the Law frights a man from his work by scaring fears, but in the flesh by a direct opposition to the Will of God, warring against all light and power that should help one to this exercise; it doth so hinder, put back, and thrust off from the work, that a man cannot set to it, unless the force be quelled; now admirably efficacious for this, is the death of Christ; To give a right understanding of this, how the death of Christ wounds, and weakens

and kills sin in our flesh, is a work of great skill, such a Mystery, that I almost despair of a fit, and complete expression to make it plain and easy for every mind to conceive; yet, because it is a thing so profitable, and so desirable by Christians, to be acquainted with that one only way of baining, of killing their corruptions, trusting on the guidance of the Spirit of truth, I shall endeavor to give some help for this. To present therefore this singular way of sins mortifying by Christ's death, conceivable to a believer, I shall labor in these propositions, to set down the state of it.

1. As the fundamental ground for framing our thoughts aright about the precedent Mystery, we must lay this truth, That the Lord Christ in this, as in all other instances of giving out, and communicating grace, is to be considered as the second Adam: Thus is he set forth as the Truth, or Anti-type of the first Adam, who should have conveyed life, but indeed gave out nothing but death to his poor seed; and so is he expressly styled, the last Adam, and the second man, with his characterizing excellencies, to specify him to the Church: Now the true significance of this notion, first or second Adam, is a Man by way of eminency, in some notable and special respect, a Root-man, one made as a Fountain of Nature to convey it with its advantages or disadvantages to the derived seed, such was the first man made after God's Image, which had he kept, he should have propagated to his succeeding issue, but having given it to the spoil, naught else could he derive to his Posterity, but the miserable effects of his own willful ruin, sin and shame; so he begat a Son in his own likeness; and such like must be all the generations of men that arise from him. It is the plain assertion of God's spirit in this matter: By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, yea, and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. That one being the fountain of human nature, and having in the fountain corrupted it by sin, could not convey this nature any further, but with the deadly attendants of it, guilt imputed, enmity against God, and a universal depravation ensued upon, with those bitter consequents of death and hell, following after it. This is the line of our misery, which Gods spirit hath drawn; It is not my purpose to stay upon the proud cavils which

flesh and blood make against this, that charge God foolishly for so ordering, and curse such parents for their natures thus derived: I shall only suggest this thought to such a Disputer. Hadst thou been the first Root-man, to have raised man's seed, that nature which was so treacherous in him, would have been no better in thee, and thou wouldst have transgressed even as he in the very same particular; Let not pride vain man, deceive thee, humbly seek by the second Adam to be healed, and be not foolish to deny or cover the wound, which otherwise will prove incurable by self-conceit, and confidence. My digression shall be no longer; The reason of mentioning the first Adam here was for the sake of the second, that as it may appear not only possible but reasonable, the way of conveyance of sin and death from him upon his seed, so no less the probability of receiving sins death, and deaths plague from the second Adam may be apparent. For suppose this man also, as we must, to be a Root-man, a fountain of Nature human, spiritual, heavenly to give out to his seed, no more difficulty can there be of conceiving the way of communicating what is communicable from him to his seed, than of the first to his; nay more easy to be convinced of influence coming from the second, if we take up but these additions; This is the quickening-spirit man, that by spirit can mightily work upon his members, to conform them to himself, and every piece of himself, death, resurrection, &c. This is the Lord-man, that hath all dominion and sovereignty committed to him by God to work what he will to work upon his own for the perfecting of his Kingdom; yea, this is the heavenly-man set against and above the sin and corruption of creatures, to destroy them in his seed, (of which I more largely dealt elsewhere): All which considered facilitates the way of our conceiving virtue flowing from Christ to his.

2. This truth is next to be suggested, As Christ in whole and entirely considered carrieth in himself the complete work of our salvation, to give out unto his seed; so the several states and conditions of Christ have some special and proper pieces of that salvation depending on them, as death of sin upon his death, resurrection to grace upon his resurrection, and life of God on us upon his life; these necessary dependencies of our graces on his several works, the Scriptures fully

declare, which revelation may help on to conceive the special virtue of the death of Christ in the present case.

3. More nearly to the point in hand, this is a main truth, The death of Christ, as it was intended of God, so indeed it carrieth in it a direct contrariety to all that withstands his seed in the way of their salvation, and not only that it weakens, but a sovereign contrariety, able to quell and over-power everything that opposeth the salvation of his people; These opposites are sin in the first place by the guilt and poison of it, then the Law with its dreadful curse, whereunto are joined the Devil that hath the power of death, the bitterness of death itself, and the terrors of hell, with all the powers of darkness; all these conspire to destroy poor souls, and against all these hath the death of Christ a virtue opposite and predominant, as hot medicines to overcome cold diseases, and cold to quell the hot, therefore very reasonable that it should eat out the very heart of sin, the sting of our afflictions. The frequent oppositions of the death, blood and cross of Christ, against sin, curse, enmity in flesh toward God, &c. and the victory of that averred over all these adversaries, are evidence without exception, sufficient to conclude this truth.

4. Add we this, The death of Christ is not only contrary unto sin, but in the mystery hath actually killed and destroyed the enmity which is in the flesh of his members against him, as well as all other adversaries of our life without us; The Act past is plainly recorded, He blotted out the hand-writing, which was contrary to us, (not only that of Ordinances which peculiarly concerned the Jews, but that of his Law that was against every man) and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross, and spoiled Principalities and Powers, &c. that is, those of hell, that constantly opposed the salvation of Christ's seed; which elsewhere is thus expressed, By death needed destroy him that had the power of death, which is the Devil. The world also a grand enemy is crucified to believers by Christ's Cross. Here are blotting out, taking quite out of sight, and nailing to the Cross for dead law and curse that were against Christ's people, to note their utter abolition, so is there a destroying or making void and useless all

the power of the Devil to kill, so again crucifying the world, making it as a thing hanged out of the way which everyone abhorreth, and no less by the same death or cross a killing of all enmity in the creatures against God, not only by pardoning, but by abolishing it in the flesh, insomuch, that the Apostle concludes for himself and fellow-believers, an impossibility of their abiding under the life of sin, being actually dead to sin by the death of Christ. Now all this, as is said, was done by Christ in the mystery, and that expression teacheth us, that what-Christ so doth, is done by him as head of his body, and therefore in reference to it, and with influence of all those secret mystical acts on it: the plain effect of this Mystery is most fitly and pithily expressed in those terms of conjunction which couple the souls with Christ, as being together within all his works and travels for their salvation: So we read that his members are crucified together with him, and their old man crucified with him, and they again buried with him, and risen with him: So the mystery is discovered to the Gentiles, that they should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise; all which are expressed by withs, cons, and together, and knitting particles, which can import no less, but the sharing of these joined souls with Christ in all the virtue of those works, sufferings or privileges wherein by God himself they are joined with him: so that if they be planted together with him in his dying, though they cannot die for sin as he did, yet a likeness to that death they must have in effect, even a death to sin in themselves; therefore they are joined with him in that suffering of his, because they do hold out a suitable effect to that his death, issuing from it in their own flesh; and the same reason is of their conjunction with him in his other works tending to their salvation, suitable effects are wrought in them from all. This is actually done by Christ; as for the time of the actual manifestation of this sin in his united members, more will be declared in the application of this virtue of Christ hereafter; but for present some help is given from hence to conceive of the efficacy and necessity of sins fall by the death of Christ.

5. Yet the difficulty is not cleared, How should cross, or blood, or death, these dead things, work the fall or death of sin in my flesh and

spirit? The last position will come home to this: There is a living spirit purchased, given, and annexed unto all these saving works of Christ, which applies the virtue of his death, sufferings, and resurrection, to produce suitable and due effects upon man's soul: This, this is that active principle that sets Christ death on work to kill sin, that brings men to a fellowship of his sufferings, and makes them conformable to his death. The vast difference between blood and blood, death and death, together with the ground of it, is fully declared by the Apostle in comparing the legal sacrifices with Christ's one perfect offering, Alas the blood of Bulls and Goats could, but at best, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, it could never perfect concerning the conscience, but the blood of Christ purgeth consciences from dead works to serve the living God, which is the same with killing sin within us, and freeing our hearts from the bondage of corruption to that glorious liberty in serving God. But what makes the difference, that so worthless, this to excel for purging sin? The same Text will satisfy: It was the blood of him, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot or fault to God; wherein these excellencies are observable. 1. It was a pure blood, without any poisonous tincture of sin by participation, therefore a remedy fitted against it, such is no blood of creatures besides, but all, either by inheritance, or participation, defiled. 2. It was a powerful, spirited blood, for that eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, works in it and by it, to purge consciences from Spiritual death of sin, but the other to a weak spiritless blood, therefore altogether useless for these high effects; No soap, nor nitre, no fire nor blood material can work out sin, no spirit in these; only that Fullers soap, and that Refiners fire, and that Sacrificers blood can purge from sins powerful pollutions, into which the eternal Spirit gives influence, and whereby it works sins perpetual destruction. It is not obscure, that our Lord, upon leaving the world, designs his Spirit in his own place, to put his Church in remembrance of what he hath told them, to show them the things of Christ in the power of them, and to bring home the spiritual energy and force of all his satisfaction, death and resurrection to their souls; however therefore the death of Christ be the plague of sin, when we come to feel the virtue of this death, we must by the

Spirit mortify the deeds of our flesh, by yielding to that Spirit's effectual application of this killing power to our indwelling corruptions. It is observable in those former conjunctions mentioned, We are buried with him, and risen with him (i. e. we have in ourselves the inseparable effects of his death and resurrection a death to sin and life above it.) Something else is added for perfecting the effects in us, Even through the faith of the Operation of God; Faith draws on our parts, but God's powerful Spirit works upon the other, killing sin by his death, and quickening by his resurrection, & hereby only becomes his blood so victorious over sin: So that now from all these considerations put together, Christ acknowledged the Adam, or principle of propagation, his death the special remedy intended against sin, having a sovereign contrariety to quell it, & having actually given the death's blow to it upon the Cross, which the Spirit at this day puts in force upon every united member, we may clearly conceive the powerful virtue of this means against the life of sin in the flesh, and withal not only a reasonable possibility, but an ordained necessity upon Christ's part of giving out its force for the thorough subduing, and utter abolishing sin in his seed; yet a question is behind, But how should we draw this mortifying virtue from Christ upon our own flesh, so as to feel the effect in the dying of our corruptions? The second part must answer this.

2. It is now needful having seen the waters at the gate of Bethlehem, and known that sovereign sin-killing virtue in the death of Christ, to consider the way of getting of it through all difficulties, and of having the actual experience of it upon our own hearts; and in short, the way that we must take is but one, even that singular way of faith, wherein this saving issue may be expected. Nothing can be clearer than this in the revelation of God, that every virtue is drawn out of Christ by believing: It is true, Christ's death and burial kills and burieth us to sin in the mystery, as conjoined with him, but yet this is not done, but by the Faith of the operation of God, this actually instates us into all the privileges of Christ. It is the Apostles profession of himself in communion with the head, I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in

the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Death and life he confesseth he hath issuing from Christ, and suitable to him, death to the law and sin as well as life to God; but how are these drawn out? Only by believing, for he died as we'll as lived by the faith of the Son of God: So that it is questionless, That by faith the virtues of Christ are brought into the soul: all the difficulty is of the way and manner how faith should obtain them from him, whereunto I shall labor to give satisfaction in these following determinations.

In general I shall premise that all the operative force of Faith in this, as in other parts of salvation is only instrumental, serving a superior Agent, and effectual only in his hand: The mighty Spirit of God hath created and fitted this in our hearts to suit with his gracious dispensation, that by it the whole good-pleasure, and free purpose of God to life might be accomplished in us; he only working himself all acts of grace upon us, and this serving his hand & working (nothing else being meet to join with grace) until he finish the whole mind of God in us. This instrumental virtue is frequently averred in subordination to that power that useth it: As, by grace ye are saved through faith; and again, Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, God's power and grace is the Savior, Faith but the instrument, whereby he brings salvation to us; and that too is properly its instrumental consideration, as it is in his hand, and not ours; for it is our grace given and work acted, but his instrument only in us. Now this faith serveth that Spirit to bring in the several virtues of Christ for perfecting our salvation in these special ways.

1. In answering the Spirit to his work of union; for as that from Christ takes hold of us, so faith in us moved by the Spirit takes hold of him, whereby the soul is actually united to him, and by this union made partaker of all saving virtue in him, therefore of the power of his death. Hence it is said, that we are engrafted into Christ by faith, and no less that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Now the work whereunto faith moves us in this matter, is to yield to the Spirits offer, and to close with Christ as members, whom he reveals as sent of God to be our head, and so with him to become one Christ

mystical; thus our minds by faith are moved to close with him by apprehending, knowing and acknowledging him to be our head, our wills by choosing him, and yielding to him as head, and our hearts by faith also cleaving to him as head, in loving, fearing, and delighting in him; thus by consent of faith are we brought to union with Christ, and thereby to communion in all his fullness; whence we draw from his death that fruit which his death doth yield, and from his resurrection, that good which it carrieth for us; and in a word, from him thus we have grace for grace: as the graft sucks out the juice and fatness of the good Olive.

2. In answering to the Spirits work of revelation, faith is serviceable, which faith doth and indeed only can do by making evident and real to the soul, what the Spirit by the word reveals: Now indeed the greatest works of the Gospel on men's hearts are effected by revelation, the Gospels light hath a mighty influence upon all saving effects, Nothing of grace is wrought in a soul but by light, this works life and all to men. To the present case, the Spirit reveals Jesus Christ the complete salvation to his people, his death the plague of their sin, his resurrection the cause of their life to God, and therefore a necessity of dying and living with him; this revelation being made evident & real by faith unto a soul, becomes not a Platonical Idea, or vain speculation, but an over-powering truth, working itself into the heart and molding it into its own likeness of death or life. The power of such revelation is eminently averred by a mighty Apostle, that was once a bitter enemy to the Gospel, yet thus he speaketh, When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; It was so powerful, being evidenced by faith, that it presently takes him from all carnal considerations, knits him so fast to Christ, that flesh & blood can never take him off; somewhat like that fiery chariot that separated Elijah from Elisha, and took him unto God: indeed such fire there is as well as light, in these revelations realized by faith. And that this is faiths serviceable work to the Spirit so to evidence is clear enough, when it is styled the Evidence of things not seen, faith will convince, when no light else can move: The Spirit of revelation therefore meeting with faith,

leaves great and mighty works upon that soul, no less than the might of the power of God revealed to them can effect. Such is that in the present instance, when the Spirit revealing and faith evidencing the death of Christ to be sins destruction, the soul is hereby lest dead unto sin. Let faith therefore work upon this revelation to evidence it, that the mind may discern it, and heart rest upon it, the life of sin will surely fall, as the hearts of Israel at the sight of Goliath, or as the man dies at the piercing of the Cockatrices eye.

3. Faith serves the Spirit to bring in the virtues of Christ upon the soul, in answering its application and direction concerning this matter, by receiving one and obeying the other, which being fitted for this instrument, none but faith can answer. It hath been declared before that the main work of bringing Christ and his excellencies into the soul, is upon the hand of God's mighty Spirit; This unites to him, and reveals the force of him, and by its spiritual energy gives or applies him entirely for life, and every piece of him for the several effects of grace, with command so to receive him, and expect the revealed force or virtue from him; Now nothing but faith can suit the answer, this only receives what the Spirit gives, and obeys what the Spirit commands, and so doing makes the soul have actual experience of all that good of Christ ministered by his Spirit; So that the obediential act of faith in receiving Christ as he is given, in eying of him, and depending on him, as the only salvation of his people, is the only way of faith to draw salvation from him. So the like work of faith upon his death, to evidence it the only baine of sin in our flesh, so to receive it in mind and will and heart, and rest on it only for this effect, is the way to find the desired issue, even the death of sin in our flesh. To them therefore who are puzzled with that question, How faith should draw virtue out of Christ or his death, I should only reply, (premissing that union with him, and evidence of him forespoken) it is by an obediential receiving the truth of him, and resting on it to be made good by the Spirit of promise, upon which reception all the benefits of person, death and life, are conferred by the arm of God upon that soul. If God send this word to Naaman, Go wash in Jordan seven times, and be clean; though the water in itself

had no more virtue to heal his leprosy, than another's, yet upon his obedience, He that commanded did effect it; Or a little more near the case, God commands Moses, when the people were bitten with the fiery Serpents, to make a brazen Serpent, and set it upon a Pole, with express word, that if any bitten should look up unto it, he should be healed and live: If any now shall ask, how did their looking to the brass, draw virtue for their recovery? No satisfaction can be given but this, their obedience being therein testified, God fell not short of his word, he healed, while they were looking. Our Lord himself applieth this to our present case, As Moses lift up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life: As eying the brazen Serpent, healed the fiery bite, so looking upon Christ lifted up, crucified and dying, heals the poisonous bite of that old Serpent, and the sting of sin, that the soul shall not perish by it, but live. Some difference there is here in the objects, for power indeed is in Christ to kill up sin, no virtue in the brass itself to heal the Serpents bite; but the acts are of the same force, for looking there and believing here, were both God's ordinance, to the obedience whereof the effect is made sure by God himself: so is all the glory of Christ made over to the obedience of faith, the very receiving of him given, and the looking on him, and resting in him for the effecting of all grace in us. The prerogative and nature of Sons is assured upon this believing, As many as received him, to them he gave power or privilege to become the Sons of God: Only in this obediential receiving of him by faith, we must consider these Rules.

1. To look unto him with a single eye of faith; as he is revealed the only salvation of his Church, and his death the only plague of sin, so must faith only eye him for salvation, and his death to kill sin by it; No other looking but the brazen Serpent only could prevent death; Consideration of ways, humbling soul with fasting, circumspection, and watchfulness, are a good way of diet, for removing sins strength and recovering the health of God, but diet may not be used for medicine, that which only can kill sin in us is the death of Christ, unto this only must we look for our cure, and no other way: And this

one eye hath like force with that of the Spouse, to ravish the heart of Christ, and pull any virtue that is in him for the help of the poor soul; sin dies while it looks to the death of Christ only, expecting the likeness of it, or the suitable effect thereof to be produced in the soul.

2. It must be a full eye of Faith also, that receiveth this virtue from Christ; that is, Faith gathering it's full force, turning all the thoughts of the mind, all the purposes and resolutions of the will, and all the affections of the heart to close with Christ in his dying, and to draw virtue thence conformable thereunto, even death to sin; such an eye, when all the spirits in the soul give their joint influence unto it, must needs have a piercing sight; such as Christ must, and will yield unto: with such a full Spirit of Faith came that woman to touch the hem of Christ's garment, and suitably drew virtue out of him for stopping the issue of blood; Neither was it properly her drawing against the knowledge and will of Christ, that did this, but his free giving out virtue from himself unto that full Faith, which made her say: If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

3. It must be a fastened waiting eye of Faith, unto which this grace is vouchsafed, unsetled; wandering eyes, now off, now on, draw little knowledge, or any good else from their objects; the fixed look is that, which turneth Christ unto it; believing to the end, will certainly make the effect to come. Such a fixed ear and eye of Faith, had that poor Cripple, that attended on Paul so inventively and firmly, that he drew back the Apostles eyes steadfastly upon him, who perceiving he had Faith to be healed, that is, Faith every way proportioned to receive an healing, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet: and he leaped and walked: single, full and constant believing cannot go off from Christ empty, but while men are so beholding him in death or life, they shall be changed into the same Image from glory to glory, from one step of excellency to another, in sins ruin, and graces reviving, by the Lord the Spirit: Faith only looks, and the Lord-spirit works all effects of grace upon poor souls, whilst they are so earnestly looking for good from Christ. According to their Faith, so the Lord dealt graciously with the blind, and deaf, and lame, and

sick, they believed for all, and he performed all for them, and gave eyes and ears, and limbs and health to Faith, while it eyed and received him. Thus far is that way, that only way declared of taking out the sting of afflictions by faith's working upon the death of Christ, which done, the torment of the scourge is allayed, and then may the soul sit close to its exercise, even give glory to God in the fires, and thereby bring home the full desired fruit of peace and righteousness to themselves.

SECT. X.

A second direction to enable Christians for exercise under the Rod.

2. To those poor souls, that in the valleys of trouble, hemmed in with unpassable hills upon every side, would sit close to work without distraction, my counsel is, that they earnestly and singly eye the Spirit of the Rod, to draw that out, and not so much pore upon the grosser part of it, which is nothing but smart upon the flesh; This Spirit of the Rod is lenitive for the pain, active for the work which concerns a chastened soul; The grosser parts of unsavory herbs may be bitter, and invalid, or dull to give out their virtue, yet the spirit of these may be sweet, and operative for special ends, being rightly extracted. It is very true in the present, the more sensible and carnal part of the Rod is irksome and ineffectual of itself for good, but the more invisible and spiritual part of it is most pleasant, full of energy, and virtue to make the soul live above affliction, and according to God to labor in it. This is a mystery, (but a great truth) as there is a spirit in the word Covenant, so there is in the Rod of the Covenant, one and the same is the very soul of the Rod, as is also of the Word, without which the Word is but a dead letter, and the Rod but a dry stick; but with it, Word and Rod are not only Gods power to awaken, wound, afflict and kill towards sin, but to quicken, heal, comfort, and strengthen in all duties toward Christ. Two things at least will be

inquired concerning this, which I shall resolve, and then leave this direction to Christian practice.

1. What is this spirit of the Rod?

2. Where is this especially to be eyed, and whence procured?

To the first; In short this Spirit is that divine power or spiritual energy and virtue secretly put forth in the Rod, by the Lord himself, to bring his purpose to pass by it, whatever he intends for the good of his children: As for the Rod, take it by itself, of what kind soever it be, it is of a smarting, vexing, angering quality, when it meets with flesh, and stirs up corruption against itself, as it falls out, but subdues it not; It is this Spirit, the very soul of chastening, that overpowers sin by it, and quickens, and rectifies, and strengthens the chastened ones for their present work; This in short is no other, than the awakening power, the awing power, the convincing power, the softening power, and reforming power of the Rod over the flesh; whoever have experience of this, they are put in, not beaten off from present duty under afflictions. The being of such a Spirit is demonstrable, as well by divine revelation, as by real effects from the execution of the Rod.

1. It is revealed, that together with fiery and wasting trials there is a Spirit of Glory and of God given to the Saint; that is, a mighty excelling power, that shall master and over-rule all sufferings, reproaches, scorching's that may befall them, and make them so to live above pain, as to glorify God, in the midst of torments; This is the spirit of the Rod, entailed on it, for them that shall be heirs of salvation, which shall enable them to present duties, and smart shall not turn them back from a conscionable attendance on their work: this is that only which overcomes corruption, and caused the Rod to do good and no hurt.

2. The different effects of affliction upon several hearts must conclude this Spirits presence in one Rod, and it's absence in

another; what reason else can be given, that the very same Rod should convert one, and not so much as move another to any goodness: Manasseh was bound with a Babylonish chain, and affliction was great upon him in that bondage, no lighter irons were upon Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, yet he converted unto God, and accepted, but not they: what may be the reason of this? Surely the spirit of the iron was upon him by it to press him unto God, but nothing save Iron upon these to press them under sin. O let our eyes be then in our afflictions toward this Spirit, that we may gain it; Surely this will weaken affliction and strengthen us.

But where may this be found, and whence is it to be obtained?

For satisfaction unto this also, nothing is more clear then the Apostles expostulation, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith? Doubtless not by that, but by this; It is true, this is meant of the Spirit of the Covenant, which same also is the spirit of the Rod by gracious dispensation annexed to it; This is not purchased by any labor or work of ours, but by the hearing of Faith; that is, by that doctrine or word of promise (here opposed to the Law) which Faith heareth and receiveth: so that no Spirit or divine power from God tending to life, is anywhere to be found but in the promise, nor from any place to be expected, but from the Word of Grace. The former expression notes both term whence, that is, the promise; and means whereby this Spirit is drawn forth, and that is Faith; the word of Grace carrieth in it this power, and Faith is the only instrument to work it out. Such promises as these are as the treasuries of the Spirit; whence variety of power is given out to the chastened and believing soul. In their affliction they will, or indeed, they shall seek me early; for the form of words is promissory, and here is a Spirit or power given out to by asse the soul in afflictions unto God, and to speed it too in seeking early in the morning after him; and so it appeared in the effect, when immediately they call upon each other: Come, let us return unto the Lord; so again it is promised, When thou passest thorough the waters, I will be with thee, and thorough the rivers, they shall not over slow thee, when

thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: For I am the Lord thy God, &c. Here lieth the securing spirit, and the preserving power for the Saints in the house of affliction, that may make them sit and sing, and work securely; God gives it out from himself in his promise to them, and Faith must receive. Yet further, I will bring a third part, (that is, his chosen remnant) through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; They shall call on my Name and I will hear them; I will say it is my people, and they shall say the Lord is my God; See here the trying, refining, spirit, working in the fires upon poor souls, yea, the covenanting, closing, obedient spirit, that through all chastening's knits the soul closer unto God; Let faith now work thoroughly upon these promises, it will engage the power and Spirit of the Lord, to refine and fit the soul for God, and to unite it with him. It is evident what this Spirit is, and where to be obtained: Obedience to this direction is now required; eye more the spirit of the rod by faith, than the smart by sense; this will be the benefit, the stick of the rod cannot so much disturb, as the spirit settles, nor that so much grieve, as this doth comfort, nor that so much weaken from work, as this doth strengthen to it; for Spirit is stronger than flesh in any kind; and in this is given out of God to over-power affliction, that it should not hurt or hinder, but help and further them in the way to glory: Gaine this Spirit, and thou canst not be lost under the rod.

SECT. XI.

A third direction.

3. To the soul that would be industrious in keeping close to this spiritual exercise under chastening, the last word that I should give

for help is, To eye the Mediator of the rod, and make sure of him to be siding with it. Jesus the Son of God the Mediator of the Covenant, mediates also for his in respect of the rod, to make this work together with that, for the eternal good and comfort of his chosen; There is no passage of providence from God to us, but it comes through the hand of a Mediator; All things are therefore said to be by him, and among those all, chastening's of his people must fall in; O sweet and blessed rod that falls upon any poor soul, through its Mediators hand; it cannot be evil, but good unto him. The very notion of a Mediator is full of sweetness; Some smattering light of this, that it is best to have to do with God through a Mediator, some of the Gentiles had, for which in their way they canonized such as they conceived to be Heroical Spirits while they lived, to be the Favorites of the High-gods when they died, by whom they expected to draw down some favors upon themselves. But the true light of God gives us to know, one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him, one Lord Mediator indeed, Jehovah is in him, fullness and goodness of being, and that (quatenus) in the very respect of Mediatorship, that by Mediation he might bring down all from the highest God to the lowest creature: Now put what you will into the hand and power of a Mediator, it must turn to good unto them, for whom he hath undertaken this Mediation; His hand intends nothing else but help to the weaker part, for whom he mediates, as it obtains nothing but grace from the mighty God, to whom he ministers for them. Take we this instance; Nothing could be more contrary and hurtful to Man a sinner than the Law, that found him guilty, and accordingly cursed him to death; yet this ordained in the hand of a Mediator, though but an Earthly one, must be revealed with Evangelical purposes; the hand or Ministry of a Mediator, must needs be gracious; how much more the hand of that heavenly Mediator, wherein is power and grace itself (more than commonly ministerial) can and will turn all within its reach, scourging's themselves to the comfort of God's chastened ones? Now nothing clearer than this, that the rod as well as Covenant is in his hand, therefore overruled, and tempered by him for the afflicteds comfort: He commands the spirit of the rod, and he takes out the sting of it. Ravish him with the piercings of the single

eye of faith, and you are sure of him your Mediator, and he sure so to order afflictions for good, that they shall not press you out of your working frame. Two special mediating helps are observable.

1. The Mediator steps in between wrath and us, to interdict that; no fury nor effects of it, can issue from God upon the people of Mediation; he suffers nothing but love to proceed toward them, and if that love bring the rod to try or purge, he yet again interposeth, either to hold off the smart, or to allay it that it shall not distract: no affliction comes but he sweetens and meekens it. The rage of man could not aggravate a torment more, than that proud Monarch did in his seven times over-heated furnace, for those three valiant Confessors of the true God; yet thrown in and coming out, the smell of fire was not upon them, nor a singe upon their clothes. How came this to pass? There was a fourth went in with them, and stood betwixt them and harm, the Son of God, whose hand mastered and cooled the fire; The Mediator sweetens the Cross.

2. The Mediator as he steps in against the rod, so for us, as to allay the bitterness of that, so to strengthen our weakness for bearing the remaining smart. It is marvelous that a creature should do and suffer that so triumphingly, which the Apostle professeth of himself; I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. He was able contentedly to go on in his work, under the hardest condition, not content only with a little, but whether he have anything or nothing, it is all one with him, he hath sufficiency within him; He can be abashed, and be hungry, and suffer need, and nothing turns him out of his bias to the work of God. How comes he to be so unshaken? He tells us, I can do all things thorough Christ that strengtheneth me. It was the Mediator that supported, putting his own neck into the yoke, & his own shoulder to the burden, that it might not over-charge this poor soul. Let us eye him, and overcome him by looking in faith to him as Mediator; he cannot deny but he will do for us likewise. With a careful eye to these directions, we may reach the mark that is set before us, even in the midst of roaring Seas, tumultuous pressures, scorching fires, and heart-breaking burdens, to give glory unto God,

our blessing shall not then be far behind the fruit of righteousness and peace, with abundant following consolations.

SECT. XII.

Consolations issuing from the precedent Truth.

As the Consolations of Christ are sweet and many, in variety of conditions, so in none more sweet and abundant, than in the state of sufferings; the abundance of these brings forth plenty of them. It is worth our view to see what store of them, the disposition of the rod with its appendants in the present truth, sends forth to God's afflicted; It will be very injurious to hide them from the exercised wrestlers under God's rod, seeing he hath ordained them for such; though perhaps they may receive a pinch upon the thigh, that makes them halt, yet they shall not go away without a blessing; Though God whip them, yet will he bless them. Every word in the Text speaks comfort unto these, and no man may take it from them.

1. The hand of love that chastens, as a Father cheers up the souls laboring in the furnace; Faint not poor heart, when thou art rebuked, my dear, my darling, the child of my delight's art thou; I remember thee when I speak against thee, every stroke goes to my heart, my bowels are troubled for thee, and I will surely have mercy on thee. I delight not to afflict, but now it is needful, because I love I chasten you, and chasten that I may save you; better chastened than condemned; Let not sorrow over-lay your hearts, God-love cannot afflict his seed for evil.

2. The rod itself that smites them, speaks nothing but good unto them; scare not, thou tossed and afflicted soul, behold I will comfort thee: although I smart and wound the flesh, yet it is but to heal the

Spirit, my commission is to awaken, not to stun thee, to kill thy sin, not to hurt thy soul, to refine and not consume thee, to take away thy dross, and make thy gold more glorious. Lift up thy head, I am from God on thy side, to save not to destroy; Love hath sent me, to check sin, and spur on grace, to turn thee out of the ways of death, and keep thee in the paths of life; Had not I come, how many lusts would have preyed upon thee? How many deaths might have devoured thee? How would hell have striven to swallow thee? I am God's Scepter to over-power thee, as well as his rod to discipline and guide thee to heaven. Be not disconsolate.

3. The work itself, though hard and irksome in the very fires, yet yields sweet comforting suggestions to the chastened and exercised soul. Three grounds of consolation at least may hence be presented, to encourage the afflicted heart.

1. There is life above affliction, when the rod hinders not from motion unto God: Miserable he that can neither set hand to work, nor feet to walk in the valley of trouble; but blessed, whose heart is not fallen, nor turned aside from the work of God, amidst all blusters: Happy Job that could give glory by believing unto God, though he should kill him.

2. There is strength of grace in that soul, which can so master the rod, as not to be disquieted by it from its appointed work: As it argues small strength for the heart to faint in the day of affliction, so it no less evidenceth great power not to be shaken.

3. There is a reward certainly following after, and that a sweet and full one. It was Rachel's consolation, Refrain thine eyes from tears, thy work shall be rewarded. No worse the issue of all God's chastening's; It is sweet to live the life of God above afflictions; It is honorable to be of the Worthies, and mighty ones of God, to do excellently; Its greatest gain to have God's reward; Himself is the return; I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward, was his word to travelling Abraham; and no less his voice to the souls

laboring faithfully under his rod. Be comforted then ye chastened of the Lord, life and honor and riches are yours, if God can satisfy you; your work shall be well rewarded, then be comforted.

4. The promised end and certain issue both of the fathers scourging, and of thy laborious exercise under the rod, conclude infallibly sweet consolation to thy soul: Three expressions in the text which carry in them the gain of affliction, are very cordial, and worth applying to the heavy heart.

1. Fruit is entailed upon God's rod, and thy work; which issuing from God in this line, is a notion of good & not of evil, and sounds abundance, & not scanty measure of this sweet, that doth arise from bitter; It is some comfort to know a man's end shall be good, though his beginning and way be dark and evil. Woe to him whose good shall end in evil, and joy in sorrow, but blessed he whose sorrow shall be turned to joy, and tears finished in laughing: Good, much good is reserved for thee in the latter end, thou afflicted of the Lord; doubled sweet had Job for all his sour, and so shalt thou, let not present sorrow swallow up thy hopeful comforts.

2. Righteousness, the special kind of this fruit, if serious thoughts work on it, must enlarge thy heart, and heighten thy joy against all smart, whatever it cost thee: It is of the kind of spiritual and heavenly good, not low, visible and earthy, all which must perish: This is a piece of God's holiness, whereof by chastening he intends to make us sharers with himself; this is fruit, this is good indeed: This heavenly rectitude helped on in man's heart by chastening's, is the face or Image of God in a mirror, the divine nature carrying in it the whole Set of Graces, answering to the Graces of Christ, and Attributes of God; none so near God as these in reality of nature, and dignity of place; These are in the Spirits expresses, the heavenly Gold, Pearls, Diamonds, Agats, Carbuncles, Rubies, &c. Blessed soul that is fraught with such riches! What will one scruple of saving faith, of true holiness, &c. be worth, when God comes to seek his Jewels? Beggarly world shall then be shut out, no worth in the Gold of

Havilah or Ophir, only excellency will be in the Gold of Heaven, a little righteousness more worth than a world, and thou, poor chastened of the Lord, shalt have fruit, a whole crop, and abundance of this, whilst thou laborest in the fires to glorify the Lord; He will enrich, and honor, and comfort thee.

3. If there be not good enough in that heavenly kind of fruit to comfort thee, (excellent, because it is righteousness, the face of God, a spark from heaven) take in its adjunct or sweet associate Peace, that clings unto, and kisseth the righteous soul. This is the blessing that cannot be denied thee, thou chastened of the Lord, Peace be unto thee: The Lord himself speaks it unto thee, the God of Peace; Christ bequeaths it, the Prince of Peace, My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, even to his troubled and afflicted Disciples; and the Spirit of peace seals it upon your hearts, designed the only Comforter in Christ's stead to be always present, quieting and comforting the hearts of his distressed members: Nay, the Rod itself speaks peace, and not evil; nay, if thou wilt look up and see the goodness of God in his scourge, thy heart must, and shall say truly, It is peace, God smiles on me whilst he whips me, my smart is allayed, my fears are gone; perfect love shines forth in chastening, Why should I be afraid? God owns and holds me, though his hand be heavy upon me; he calls me darling, child of his delights, when he seems to cast me off; he rebukes me indeed sharply, yet he remembers me; he strikes, yet his bowels are troubled for me; he hath afflicted, but he will sure have mercy on me; I will therefore cheerfully bear his hand, because it is good, and comfort myself in my sorrows, and sing to my God in the very fires; for the fruit of righteousness and peace shall be with me forever. My God and Father saith so, my Redeemer saith so, my Comforter saith so, yea, my afflictions say so, and therefore my heart is persuaded to assent, and say, Surely it is so: Peace is my solace in the midst of sufferings, though the world see it not; Consider, and be comforted, ye chastened ones.

SECT. XIII.

Cases arising from the premises resolved.

Against closing with these comfortable considerations, I know the troubled hearts of God's dearest are dissuaded, & that upon some seeming ground of reason, which, unless removed, must make their conditions comfortless, and their burdens doubly burden-some. Let us hear then what they can say, and weigh that strength of pretended reason, to see if it be forcible to keep out comfort in this condition, if not, to take it out of the way, that it may perplex no more.

1. Our soul refuseth comfort, and concludes nothing but wrath from God in its affliction, being moved thereunto from the greatness of the evil lying upon the flesh. It argues like Gideon, my misery is too great, to admit a dram of love or mercy in it; As he to the Angel, If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? No, no, God cannot be favorably with a people in such extremities as are befallen us; Never say the Lord is with me, or upon my side: or like that widow-Jerusalem, Was ever any sorrow like unto my sorrow? Therefore a token of the day of God's fierce anger, and who can comfort against this?

Surely none can bear up when God pulls down, nor comfort, when he speaks displeasure; if he be not graciously present with poor souls in their afflictions, no reason indeed is there at all to be comforted; The inference is good thus far; but stay now, Doth the greatness of our outward evil argue infallibly, the absence of God's love, or the presence of his wrath? This is the question, which to take for granted, is a great mistake, the Negative part of it is God's known Truth, otherwise cast Job, and David, and Jeremiah, yea, the Son of God in the flesh, (whom it pleased the Father to bruise or grind with grief; so that his evils named him the Man of sorrows) out of the

number of his darlings: For in the generations of men, who have felt heavier strokes, or more bitter pangs in body or spirit? Yet the Lord was with all these, and though he grievously afflicted, yet he hated them not; his love and pity was with his holy ones. To satisfy this case, three evidences of God's love I shall show always with his in their greatest distresses, which will sufficiently evince, that the greatness of outward evil is not inconsistent with his love toward his chastened ones.

1. His temperance always observed in afflicting or chastening his own; It is true, wrath in taking vengeance doth over-match, and over-bear the power of the creature; who can stand when he is angry? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Alas, not one, no not one among poor creatures: but love in chastening doth support; Grace metes out affliction to the strength of the poor soul, and supplies strength to the measure of affliction. Let me in God's stead challenge all the generations of the righteous, from Adam unto this day, produce an instance if you can; did ever God over-match the spirits of his people in chastening? No, he will not, he cannot; for he cannot deny himself, and of him it is spoken in the everlasting Truth, God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able. It was his word to Jacob, I will correct thee in measure, yet will I not cut thee off utterly; or, not altogether leave thee unpunished. I conclude then hence, the greatest affliction on God's children is so tempered, that it exceeds not their strength; therefore very consistent with his love, which alone tempers the Rod so sweetly for them.

2. The presence of his Grace constantly with them in their sufferings at the greatest, must evince his love, and not his hatred; would the God of heaven be familiar with any soul in any condition whom he doth not affect? This cannot be; It is a translation of ours, which admitted, describes the nearness of God unto his chastened, or if not, it is a true Paraphrase of the letter; in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them. There is one Particle in this clause that by variety of pointing, hath a very different

signification; one way it is a Relative, he, or his, as our translators read it, In all their affliction was his affliction, or he afflicted, as before; but the other way, it is a mere Negative, and so read here, makes this sense, In all their afflictions, was no affliction to them; and indeed how could there, if he bore the burden, and took the affliction to himself, as the former reading expresseth? And this is warranted from the sequel, The Angel of his presence, or of his face (which must needs carry favor in it) saved them. It was the Messenger or Angel then, who could carry God's face or presence to the afflicted Church, by whose presence they were so saved, that affliction became no affliction to them: And this in Christ is not for the chastened Jew only, but for the Gentile also. Greater evils on the flesh cannot be, than sword, famine, pestilence, desolation in great part, yet in these was the presence of the Lord so to diminish, that they became no afflictions; God's saving presence is the undeniable evidence of his love; but greatness of evil, not of his fury, unless absolute, and over-pressing creatures to perdition.

3. In the greatest pressure of his Saints, as God tempers the rod, and sweetens it with his presence, so perpetually doth he make it easy to them by his assistance; and will God assist, where he doth not love? It is the great consolation which God gives unto his Church, Fear not, thou worm Jacob (thou worm-Church that liest in harms way under every man's foot) nor ye men, or indeed dead men of Israel, (so oppressed, as even past hope of life,) why should not these fear? Who more in danger, or less able to resist than the worm? Who more hopeless than the dead? Yet fear not, for I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel. So then where God helps he loves; but his help is not withdrawn from greatest troubles; cast not then away your comforts upon this ground; God doth help his people at hardest straights, and therefore must needs love them in their greatest miseries.

2. Another of God's chastened, though he can bear up against a brunt, be it never so great, yet repetition of evils, and frequency of bitter scourging's are ready to kill the heart of him; so that his cry is

this: God hath set me as his mark to shoot at, he breaks me with breach upon breach, from morning to evening he is making an end of me; one blow follows another; if God did love in chastening, his rod would not be so often upon my back; his hand is stretched out first on goods, and then on name, and then on children, and then upon my flesh, God's frequent strokes strike off my comfort: This was Jobs weariness sometimes, that made him bitterly complain.

And is all this sufficient to expunge God's love from comforting his chastened in their pains? I must determine contrary; Frequency in scourging is no sure argument of God's wrath against his own. One or two instances will clear this, that we may proceed: The sweet Psalmist was a tender one in God's eye, yet hear him tell how severely God useth him beyond his very slaves, the wicked of the world; They, saith he, prosper in the world, they increase in riches &c. But all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning, or my rebuke and chastisement was in the mornings, that is, every morning, or morning after morning; as if he had said, I was as sure to be rebuked and whipped by God every morning as I did rise; And this began to shake him also into perverse conclusions, he was saying, Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, but that he should therein have sinned against the generation of God's children, with whom such was his custom to deal; therefore no argument to conclude a child of wrath. Number the days of sorrow upon God's own Son, from the Manger to the Grave, and stifle this objection: Nay, rather conclude good then evil from frequent chastening's; These sweet benefits intended in, and effected by them are forcible for that purpose.

1. The often and daily awakening of the soul hereby upon sins the weakening of it, and bars against it; this is no sign of God, hatred to his people: He wakeneth me morning by morning, was the Prophets note; and what the issue? He wakened, and opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back: blessed Rod that keeps from sleep in sin, the more blessed, the oftener it comes: It wakes the soul, nay, more, it wakens sin; death and sin get more strength the

more one sleeps in them, and still are weakened, when the soul awakes and is in lightened; affliction wears out the flesh, and so consumes the sin that lives in it, when ordered by that sin-killing spirit, no wrath but love in this, sin should decay with flesh, that spirit and grace may thrive: Yea farther, every Rod is a bar against sin, and every affliction a thorn-hedge, to keep us in from roving after our enchanting lovers, our lusts that bewitch us unto hell; who would not suffer anything to avoid these Charms? Well, trouble not my soul with this; my God whip me every hour of the day, if every time thou wilt quip out sin; I will kiss that Rod every time it comes, that awakes my soul, and weakens my sin, and bars against perdition.

2. The frequent and daily purging of the soul; cleanness of spirit is a sweet frame, most like to God; [Those of a darkened; or unclean spirit¹] are most unlike God, and most distasteful to him; cleanness, I say, not only privative from sin (which is touched in the former) but positive, noting an absolute purity of spirit, unto which God provokes his own by his counsels, draws them by his promises, and drives them by his rods: The blueness of the wound cleanseth away evil, and stripes the inward parts of the belly; outward smart may be, and usually is inward health to God's own chastened: By sadness of countenance the heart is made better; that is, the Rod that makes sad, betters the spirit, by the over-powering hand of grace, that chastens with it; such cleanness found David, restored to his soul by the Rod, after his defilement with Uriah's blood and Bathsheba's pollution. Peace then, foolish flesh, grumble not against often chastening's; did not God love thee, he would never take such pains with thee: away, away repining's; My God, scourge and purge, purge and scourge me, as often as thou wilt; cleanse me thoroughly, though thou afflict me hourly: Let me be clean, though a man of sorrows all my days; then I shall know thou lovest me.

3. The frequent and daily trial of our graces; know we what this is, we shall not construe hatred in often chastening's; There is something in this that one Apostle tells us, The trial of your Faith is much more

precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire: and another, Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, variety and so frequency of afflictions with him is a joyous thing, but why so? Knowing that the trial of your Faith worketh patience, &c. The word in both is the same, and notes an excellent effect upon grace by the trying and discerning power in afflictions commanded on them: Faith loseth nothing by the Furnace, or fiery trial, but gaineth rather, and becomes more precious, Faith of proof, Grace of proof, no violence can pierce or spoil it: And as grace is better than gold that perisheth, so tried grace, proved faith, more precious than the tried gold, and seven times refined in the fire; and the more tried, still the more glorious; These advantages grace always get by trials, more luster, more purity, and more perfection, to beautify, enrich, and perfect souls. Hear what one says, It is unto praise, and honor and glory, with respect to God; and hear the other, It makes us perfect, entire, and wanting nothing: Now who would not be whipped every day out of wants, and scourged every moment into integrity and perfection? Nay, who would not be beaten every morning, to praise, and honor and glory with God? If this be the worst of frequent chastening's, give glory to God, poor Christian, and comfort thyself, he doth not hate, but mightily love in this; My soul choose this portion, and beg it from heaven: Try, and refine, and perfect thy graces in me, O my God, and scourge, and tear, and waste my flesh as pleaseth thee; This is the dross, and that the gold most precious.

SECT. XIV.

Other Cases answered.

3. Yet more hardly against comfort under the Rod, it is urged by other poor souls; Alas, it perplexeth not me for the greatness or

multitude of my afflictions, saith another; my burden is, I cannot exercise, I cannot work under them, I am so tossed, I can do nothing, either about heart, or God, or Rod; I can neither pray, nor bear, nor consider; how shall I be comforted, when all the good of chastening is entailed upon exercise, and my hands and knees are so feeble, that I can do nothing?

But is it so indeed, that such amazement is fallen on thee by the Rod, that thou canst do nothing? What, not pray, nor look unto God that smites thee? In good earnest thou must be chide, for this is utterly a fault: There is support and not confusion in the Rod, awakening, not astonishing; and doest thou draw this, and not that, to thine own undoing, and God's dishonor? Surely, this is thy shame, to eye only the stunning bitterness, and utterly neglect the reviving sweetness of the Rod. Yet not to trample upon this dejected soul, whose burden as well as sin this condition is, and therefore makes he this complaint, and refuseth to be comforted; I shall add but two words of encouragement, and advise, to remove the difficulty of this Case, which keeps off the soul from comfort in affliction.

1. Be not yet dismayed, poor soul, there is hope concerning this thing, though but little action yet appearing; it may be the divine Wisdom would abase thy pride, and make thee see thyself how low thou art, and therefore hath struck and left thee for a moment without strength; this is his goodness sometimes, and his way to save men: thus Job sat seven days dumb before his friends in ashes, his grief took away his speech; Yet again consider thyself-condemning is one piece of work, thy tears and sorrows for thy deadness another, suitable for thy condition and pleasing unto God; though thou canst not compass all the work, yet it is some comfort to move a little: yet further God will give in reviving from his holiness to thy dejected spirit, and set thee upon thy feet, and lift up thy hands to work, and through him, yet shalt thou labor abundantly, and thy labor shall not be in vain.

2. Be advised also, to take that course, which may strengthen heart and hands to the desired exercise; eye therefore not only the grief, but the comfort of the Rod; not only it's dejecting, but it's supporting virtue; not only the wounding smart, but the healing sweet that still accompanies; This will be a cordial consideration against fainting. Add to this the greatest care of laying hold on God's strength, so shalt thou make and keep peace with him in all estates, and nothing shall offend thee: Christ is that strength of God, given out to poor believers, what can they not do in the worst condition through Christ that strengtheneth them? In short, strive against fears of future evils, as well as smart of present; cheer up thy heart, and stir up thyself to work together with Christ, in striving thou wilt find greater influence of life from heaven; This is thy duty, in a careful performance whereof thou wilt find the surest cure of fears, and answer to thy doubts; but to this, I must speak in the special use of chastening's which the Apostle makes hereafter.

4. Yet another stop is put in to keep out comfort from the afflicted soul, It is the sad complaint of some from the sense of fruitlessness under the Rod; Alas, why should I be comforted in my sorrows when no good comes of all my sufferings? I am scourged every day, but never the better; If the end of God's chastening's be sharing in his holiness, or the fruit of righteousness, I am a stranger unto God, and these; therefore may I conclude, vengeance hath seized on me from my Judge, not chastening from a father, for I am unholy, and unrighteous still in the midst of the fires, barren and vile under all the pruning's of God.

Poor soul, more to be pitied, because so severe against thyself! But is it all true, that thou hast said, and are there no issues of good from the Rod upon thy heart? Give me leave a little to search, and try what answer thy spirit in truth can make to some queries. Tell me, dear Christian, after all thy scourging's, how are thy thoughts concerning God and Christ, and sin and self? Truly I think myself the vilest of creatures; I have cause to do so, even as loathsome as the Devils, and sin I judge to be worse than death and hell itself; and God I know to

be that High and holy One (O that I were like him!) and Christ I confess the only way to God; O that I could reach him, and by him move unto the Father! Now pray tell me, are not these right thoughts? Hath not the time been that thou hast had harder thoughts of God, and better of thyself? Harsh of Christ, and pleasant concerning sin? Hast not thou called sometimes sweet bitter, and bitter sweet? Is not this the rectitude or righteousness of God stamped upon thy mind? Is not this a degree of sharing in his holiness? Tell me then, how is thy heart, how stands thy affections? What doest thou hate, what doest thou love, what doest thou fear, and what doest thou desire, where is thy delight? Speak Christian; and canst thou say otherwise than thus, surely I would love God, desire after him, and delight in him; I would fear to grieve, I would hate sin, and abhor myself forever: And is not this rectitude in thy affections? And hath not the Rod turned thy heart more this way? Nay, once again tell me, O thou afflicted! Which way is thy face? Whither bendest thou in ways and walkings? Is not God thy mark? yea, I would hit that, and reach him, if I could, but alas, I do not, I cannot, it's but little, it's but little that my heart or ways are turned to Godward. Yet a little is worth as much as life: shall we deny any, because we have not all? Do not so poor soul, lest thou wrong God in denying his grace; acknowledge this and kiss the rod, so will greater grace appear. But suppose the fruit were so little, as scarcely visible; yet there is hope, by exercise, waiting and blessing from heaven, the dry rod may blossom, and bring forth abundantly: kill not thyself with faithless doubts, with those wretched ones, that say there is no hope, and therefore conclude no farther labor is here useful, no, no, there is yet hope in the latter end, the splitting of an oak by storm may spread the life of it into new sprouts, instead of killing it; believe, believe and be established, abide in Christ close, and ye shall bring forth much fruit to your fathers glory. Cast not then away your comfort.

5. Yet once more the shaking soul replies, and will not be cheered; Alas grant this, some small sparks of righteousness may have a little kindling, yet there is no warmth or influence in them; if it were

righteousness indeed it would bring peace, but I am sure I have no peace, I see frowns in God's face, but no smiles, I find troubles within, but no ease, heart-aching's, no heart-reviving's. Were they chastening's of God, they would bring peace, but they are judgments, they are vengeance, therefore have I naught but trouble.

I confess this case will prove hardest to satisfy, not from the weight of reason, but from the disposition of the creature, that feels nothing but disquietness in the flesh, and therefore concludes nothing but wrath in its affliction: reason will not satisfy sense, and sense only undertakes here to judge of peace, no more peace will it grant, but what it feels, though to the spirit God speak never so much: yet to quiet this heart too a little, if it will but hear, I shall present these considerations to be digested, & weighed with the case.

1. Righteousness is the surer and the clearer fruit of chastening, bearing witness of the love of God in it, though peace may seem the sweeter; and yet a conscience may be pure and troubled; flight from sin, pursuit of holiness shall testify God's grace in every rod, though the powers of hell may rack the soul to torture; keeping word, and learning God's statutes, is David's evidence of the good of his affliction, peace is not mentioned. If righteousness appear, be comforted, though peace be not come.

2. Though peace be inseparably united unto righteousness, and given of God together, yet are they not always coetaneous in their existence upon the heart: The sprouting out of both is reserved for the afterward of the affliction in the very text; and indeed though sometimes they may rise together, yet many times long after righteousness, doth peace appear in the soul. It seems to be so in that holy man of God, who in the height of holy affections wanted the light of God's countenance, and therein peace, yet thus he bespeaks himself; Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance; who is the health of my countenance, and my God. His face or presence is salvation, and that the health,

and cheerfulness of mine, all my peace is from it, this makes my countenance healthful: and though I see it not now, yet I will hope, and I shall praise him for it; peace will come. Conclude not then, dear soul, no grace, because no peace; wait, for it will come, and will not tarry, abundance of peace to bless thy soul forever.

3. There is peace upon thee in present, were but thine eyes cleared of tears, and thy heart of cares, a little to consider, and look towards it. Can this word fail us, Whom I love I rebuke and chasten? and can he love and not be at peace? All this thou doest not feel, and therefore wilt not believe: Fainting's oppress thy sense, and sense thy faith, that now thy hands hang down, and knees be feeble, no strength is left in thee to see the good, the peace of thy condition: No remedy but this to shake thyself from the dust, to bestir thyself to lay hold upon mirth and healing. Strive not against thy comforts still, but yield thyself to reviving counsels; In this way righteousness and peace shall meet upon thee, and crown thee, and kiss each other; Only up and be doing, to make that use of the chastening Providence, which the Apostle here commends. It is the last general proposed, and now more strictly to be considered.

THE THIRD PART.

Concerning the true Use of Chastening's, as taught by the Apostle.

Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, &c.

ver. 12, 13.

SECT. I.

Uses defined and examined.

In these is couched the sweet closing inference from all the former discourse had with these Christian Hebrews about their patience or suffering for Christ under the hand of God, which teacheth the duties we owe unto, and the true use that we should make of the chastening providence of our heavenly Father. Two things are eminently observable.

1. The term of Illation: whereabout also are considerable,

1. The true premised ground, whence it takes its rise, which is not only the end of chastening immediately foregoing, but indeed the whole chastening Providence, with the pieces of it as mentioned in the former part of this Chapter.

2. The true force of it upon the consequent duties, it lays necessity upon Christians, To lift up, &c. To make straight or even paths, &c.

2. The matter inferred, which is a double duty upon the chastened,

1. Encouragement, They must stir up themselves from their sad postures, Lift up hanging hands and feeble knees.

2. Amendment, They must make crooked, straight, set themselves to rectify and level their ways to God. And both these I conceive jointly urged by a double Motive.

1. The danger of the neglect, It will be greater Apostasy.

2. The benefit of the performance, It will be the healing of the lame.

I shall take the inference with its force upon the first duty, and after the resolution of the Metaphorical terms into their proper signification, I shall conclude in plain terms the first use here

enjoined from God's chastening's. Two things are obvious in the first duty, both represented in a fit Emblem.

1. The object, Hands hanging down, & knees feeble, like a palsy man.
2. The Act, which is lifting up, a fit remedy for the foregoing evil. Could I handsomely present this man to view, with these hanging fallen hands, and these feeble, loosened, dis-jointed knees, it were a most sweet Emblem of a most sad and disconsolate condition. Suppose a man either by age, or weakness, or surpassing pains so worn, wasted, and spirit-fallen, that his hands sink down, fall from his work, having no strength, and yielding unto death; Or again look upon an aged palsy-man, or one smitten with astonishment, as Belshazzar at the hand-writing, that his joints are loosed, & knees smite one against another, what a picture of amazing and confounding sorrow were this? Nothing but fainting and trembling to be seen here, even to the yielding up of the ghost. And if such be recovered, it must be by stirring, chafing, or lifting of these fallen members up; himself rousing, his friends about him supporting, were as fit a resemblance of the comforting part. To speak plainly, these hands and knees intend no other but fainting and palsy hearts; when poor souls seem to be over-wrought with affliction, so that as a wing-fallen bird, they are stopped from motion; strength, spirit, and all even yielding unto death; the terrors of the Almighty make them sit trembling, and drink up all their spirits; In this conflict, what creature can hold up? Yet this must not take away our hearts, we must even now lift up such hanging hearts, support and comfort our spirits in such palsy fits, and strive against our yielding unto death; by no means must we give way in chastening's to uncomfortable fainting's, but cheer up and revive against the face of death itself; spiritual liftings up there must be for spiritual fainting's, and setting hearts again in right frame of comfort and reviving for the work of God. This then hence is the rule for that Christian use we must make of chastening's, inferred from strong premises. God's chastening providence inforceth his children to comfort, and cheerfulness under all their sufferings. God's rod of chastening is not intended to break,

and kill, and dash in pieces, but to bind up, revive, and comfort tender and dejected Spirits; Grief may become us under a Fathers frown; but dejection and hopeless fainting, the rod itself gainerayeth, and enjoineeth souls to a better use of it for their reviving. The rise of this rule here is evident, comfort is the duty, the inference lays the injunction, and the Authority raising it is the chastening providence, with all particulars specified therein, and declared by the Apostle in his foregoing discourse. Now for a more fruitful treating on this, these particular queries must be resolved. 1. What is that chastening providence, and wherein it doth consist, that hath such influence upon this duty? 2. What is that force, which that Providence hath upon this duty concerning our hearts? 3. What that duty is, which is with such necessity urged upon Christians from this work of chastening? The two former will clear and evince the truth the last is properly the use, which I shall together unfold and press practically upon ourselves, observing the Apostles scope in this place, which is to persuade to duty, when he had touched the state of it.

SECT. II.

Of the nature of God's chastening Providence, and its force.

To satisfy the first inquiry, it concerning a peculiar piece of God's special providence over his own about their afflictions; this general description may give light enough: God's chastening providence is his special care toward his chosen, about the rod or afflictions here befalling them, to order and dispense them so, that they may not hurt, but help to bring about all that good which the faithfulness of God in the Covenant of grace is engaged to do for them. This is a general representation of that chastening care, which enforceth cheerfulness on God's afflicted, so that the Apostle enjoineeth

therefore or for this cause, lift up the hands, &c. In this combination several particulars concur, all carrying in them reviving virtue, that who so suffers in this way hath reason to be cheered.

1. The Author of this sharp discipline, it is God, as the whole foregoing context declares, and he not only as the Father, but as their Father also in Christ; he owns the child for his whom he chasteneth, he meddles not with bastards; It is not a fruitless addition, that in the midst of this work he is called the Father of Spirits: These notions of comfort at least are sweetly held forth in this fountain of providence.

1. In this Father must needs be conceived the spring or rise of the childe being, the fountains of Israel gave being to their issuing streams, even their children; and can there issue from that same spring, anything to hurt or destroy the being it gives out? Surely not; but all for maintenance and perfection of it; God that made his Children will have mercy on them, & not by rods destroy the works of his own hands. Nay eye this, he is Father of their Spirits; souls had being from him, therefore to their comfort and sustenance, he will surely look, when he afflicts the flesh; and spirits are the fittest receptacles of joy and grief; the father of them must therefore look unto them, to perfect not impair, to save and not destroy them by chastening's.

2. In this Father only is the power of chastening over the child; this power carrieth in it two significates, Right unto the correcting of a child, and Strength to manage it; both are in God this Father, whence these reviving considerations arise. 1. God will not part with his right, nor give the beloved of his soul into the hands of the Enemy, that he should have right to punish or afflict; what he doth against God's children shall be counted greatest injury, and oppression of God's people. 2. God keeps all the power of chastening in his own hand, none can do as he pleaseth but God; Now however the wicked may be God's sword, he leaves not the sword to hew and slay where it pleaseth, but gives it the charge, beyond which it cannot go; now will

God use his power and strength to destroy his children? It is incredible.

3. In this Father is tenderness of bowels eminent toward his chastised ones; and can a man's bowels be hardened against the fruit of them? It cannot be, unless sin make unnatural: Now no Father can pity his child so as the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Let these notions specify the spring or Author of all chastening sorrows; how will desperate complaints and repinings die? How will virtue spring and issue out, to the great reviving of God's humbled, and chastened ones? This is one thing that enforceth the Apostles Wherefore &c.

2. The Mediator of this providence; for as God hath committed all judgment now unto his Son, and governs the world by a Mediator, so especially all things towards his Church, his rod as well as his staff is ordered by the hand of Christ unto them: By one Lord Jesus Christ are all things, that is, for being & preservation of all events, and we by him, that is, the Church in all its conditions. Now a Mediator is a notion full of grace, and whatever passage of providence comes through him, it must savor of grace; as the water of the sulphureous veins of the earth, or the wine of the perfumed bottle; No rod but gracious can pass through the hand of Christ. Now to this yet the respect which this Mediator hath to the sufferings of his Clients, carrieth much life for us; and it is three-fold. 1. He himself is their leader, or foregoing pattern in this hard way; thus is he set before us to encourage in our following, Look unto Jesus, &c. who for the joy that was set before him, &c. He eyed the end, and made no stop in the way, but endured Cross and despised shame, and then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Its comfort to have a leader in an uncouth way, but excellent such a one, whose footsteps we may tread safely, and so reach the desired end.

2. He is a guide as well as leader, he takes us by the hand as well as goes before us; He is therefore known by those helpful expressions, Eyes to the blind, Ears to the deaf, feet to the lame, hiding place from the heat, refuge from the storm, and guide to such as walk in

darkness, in sad and disconsolate ways: This is a reviving notion, no darkness falls upon us but by the Mediator, and he is surely a guide in it.

3. He is a Conqueror over these harsh paths, as well as a guide and leader in them: It is his word to his Disciples, In the world ye shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, yea and all the tribulations of it, therefore God's children suffer under nothing but conquered afflictions, and vanquished tribulations; who would be dejected for these? This also makes the wherefore strong.

3. The Providence or care itself dispensing and managing these rods, is one thing more considerable in this combination, to make the inference strong upon us for the following duty; and it is eminently carried in all those acts of chastening mentioned before the Text: Now these cordial notions are hence arising.

1. The perfection of this special care of God, over his children, set out sweetly in that Emblem of seven eyes of the Lord, the eye states the providence, it is a seeing, and a foreseeing care for good, the number argues it's perfection, not one eye, but seven, a perfect number in the Spirits use: which it pleaseth the Son of God to demonstrate by its effects upon God's little ones; the very hairs of your head are all numbered: See the exact care of our heavenly Father over his afflicted; he tells their hairs, he will see none of them be missing, not a hair of theirs must fall to the ground, nor the least hurt betide them by their sufferings: and again, he tells them, as accounting highly and precious of them; baser things are not kept by tale, not stones, but gold and things of price; such are the hairs on the heads of God's children; therefore he numbers them, much more their tears, their prayers, their sighs, their wanderings; should not this make us to lift up?

2. The activity of this sweet care; As God is purely Act itself, and therefore no passion, or stop from others, can take impression on

him: So is his care about his children's chastening's active, and always stirring to do them good by them: It is therefore noted, that the seven eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth; no rest nor stop with this providence, day nor night, from working good to his children out of these afflictions; This is good.

3. The humility or lowliness of this providence is sweet, it stoops to every, the basest, poorest, miserablest condition that may befall Christ's members; it looks to sores, and issues, and ulcers, and boils, and stripes, and wants, and burdens of all sorts that may be upon God's people: if they be in the dungeon, it is there, or in the stocks, there it is with them; in fire or in water, or in mire with Jeremiah, thither stoops this providence to rule all these distresses for good. This is the care itself, which strongly presseth the consequence, wherefore, &c.

4. To these the Rule of chastening comes in yet to make the inference the stronger, and enforce afflicted spirits unto comfort; it is wholly delivered, according to the intimation in the context, either in counsels of encouragement, or comforting promises, bearing up against fainting's; In sum, the Covenant of grace takes in all, wherein that excellent goodness and faithfulness of God revealed may well enjoin to lift up hanging hands and feeble knees.

5. The last particular in this chastening providence is the end of is, which expressly is declared to be the profit, good of God's children, holiness, righteousness, peace, the very good of grace, and glory, both here and hereafter to be enjoyed, of which with the former, much hath been spoken before, only here must it be noted, as giving in its strength with the rest, to persuade God's chastened unto cheerfulness, wherefore, even for this end also, as for the rest, lift up the hands that hang down, &c.

SECT. III.

The force of the precedent providence and duty thence concerning the chastised.

To the second Query, what force this chastening providence hath upon the following duty of encouragement in God's afflicted? The very term of illation can conclude no less, but that there is a virtue in that drawing out of this duty by these premises, otherwise weakly must it be pressed, wherefore lift up, &c. Now we know the Spirit of God argues not weakly, but upon forcible grounds. In short then, I shall reply, there is a double force, one of nature and influence, another of reason and consequence which hence issue out to enforce the chastened to comfort and reviving.

1. There is a power of the several concurrents of this chastening providence, to give out naturally virtue for refreshing and raising up the heart. As the sun gives influence to the matter it animates, and therefore it must live, because it partakes of that quickening power: So no less, nay much more this highest providence must necessitate the creature to express the influence of it, and give out its effect in return of duty, unto which it doth incline. Now in this special consideration of providence about the Rod, both the cause ordering it, and effect upon the soul produced by chastening, must needs incline it to receive encouragement. In the Cause we have the Father primarily putting out in this Rod his power and his love, the Son next to him Mediator-like, sweetening the Rod, with all the gracious fruits of his merit and intercession, before he will suffer it to be laid on, or to smart upon the flesh; the Spirit proceeding from both these, whose name is therefore eminently the Comforter, manageth the Rod, brings all the sweetness of Christ with it to his members, and effectually so applieth the overpowering grace, that it must needs keep up the soul from fainting, and incline it to sweet and heavenly refreshing in the very fires. The promise the rule of this providence carrieth no less the arm of God to help, and his counsels too are all

enabling words in this matter, Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, Fear not. No sooner spoken thus from God by his Spirit, but it is created, and so set in the station of comfort, unto which God calleth the poor soul. In the Effect also of this providence, which is all the souls profit, the hearts good, and that evidently effected upon the man, eminently is this force seen, for good, and nothing but good, of which this is the best here intended, can cheer a soul, and that must, and will do it, if it be not mistaken; Let me therefore, in short, thus argue and conclude with our Apostle, Your eyes are opened, and light presented, therefore you must see; or your ears bored, and voice sent out, therefore ye must hear; or the Sun is now in the vernal Equinoctial, therefore the earth must spring, all necessarily follow by influence imparted. So here as strongly, God's chastening providence hath sweetly touched you, therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and feeble knees, be cheerful and revived; ye must be so, if the sweet virtue of that providence have an influence upon your spirits.

2. To add to this, If strength of reason have force upon a man to persuade him to anything, the strongest reason is here, from sweetness of chastening to draw the afflicted to the duty of reviving. Take a little draught of reasoning, the Fathers love is in the Rod, therefore should we be comforted, not dejected; The Mediator sweetens it, therefore should not we faint, but be refreshed; the Spirit measures it, and sanctifies it, therefore should we be glad under it; the Promise is the rule of dispensation, and the effect our true and eternal good, therefore should we be encouraged, and live cheerfully above the smart. If we be men, here is reason, the strongest reason of God to draw us to reviving's, when we begin to faint: if from ability to duty, and from free and glorious mercy to duty be a strong way of reasoning, then this must prevail, God chastens, therefore should we be cheerful, and not let our spirits sink, when such support is given to hold us up.

To the third Query then, What is the afflicteds duty? It will now be needful to return; we see the providence chastening, the comfortable

considerations therein presented, and their force to revive and comfort; all the virtue and force of consolation is upon God's side, but the duty in the use and application is upon ours; God gives the reason of our cheerfulness in his work, and we must return performance answerable in our duty, God gives the life, but we must lift up hands and knees ourselves. But what is this lifting up precisely? Surely it concerns us to know whose duty it is to do it; It is an expression fitted to the former metaphor of hanging hands, and palsy knees, however friends may be about supporting, chasing, cheering these fallen, fainting and dying members, yet the very patient himself must put forth the strength he hath to raise these diseased parts out of this sad and pining posture, and so strive to dispose them that the remedies applied may bring forth the desired ease and reviving. Resolve the precedent doleful Emblem properly into hearts fallen, trembling and fainting under God's chastisement, and this lifting up must note a suitable work in the chastened for removing this spirit-palsy, and heart-failing. The notation of the name or word itself, may help in this; it is plainly in its proper significate, to erect or set upright in its place, something disjointed, or fallen from its proper station; we read it used by Christ to express his cure upon the crooked woman, She was made straight, that is, her parts and members were restored to their proper place, site and posture, and this was her comfort: So God speaks of the ruined Tabernacle of David, by way of comfort to his people, I will set it up; that is, put it into its right state and frame again. No less here is it a Paraphrase of comfort to the soul bowed down, and heart enfeebled; to lift it up, is to set it in its right state and posture towards God, for receiving the comfortable influences of his chastening providence, which it cannot do while it hangs down, and lieth in its palsy fits: Now then a right position, or erecting of the heart, that it may be capable of, and meet with the consolations of God in his scourging love, is the duty concerning us; when the spirit is set right and even with God for his reviving's, then is head and all lifted up with comfort, when it declines, or hangs down another way, it swerves from God's intended refreshing's. The nature, subject and condition of this duty would be known to guide us to it. First, the nature of this

duty, in short, is to dispose ourselves by the help of that gracious influence given out by the spirit of the Rod, to receive these cordial reviving's which the chastening providence hath ordered to us: How unworthy is it, that God should hold out such sweet encouragements to his chastened children, and they, in a kind of unbelieving discontent, never regard him? So troubled are they with the smart, that they will not once mind the sweet of the Rod: This is utterly a fault; therefore let us know God's Will in this, and do it.

But how must we do it?

Plainly thus, by putting out that spiritual strength we have, into activity or motion, for setting the heart in the right frame to sure with the consolations of God; in the Prophets phrase, by stirring, or rousing up ourselves, or David's expression, by calling unto our spirits in time of fainting and distress, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? &c. This is our work, to call up, and stir up our hearts from over-powering dejection to reach to the consolations of a chastising father held forth in the very Rod. But whereunto should we call or stir them for attaining this? Even to these duties following, that set them in a right frame for comfort.

1. To believing, and by Faith, to a single and attentive eyeing of all these comfortable considerations which the Fathers care disposeth in every Rod for the good of his chastened ones; So to view them, that Faith may make them evident, which were formerly obscured, under smart of outward evil, and make them really subject, which to sense seem not to be where they are; and to apply all, and make them properly our own, which is Faiths peculiar; it doth but touch and take, God himself, and all that God hath. It was the ground of the Prophets complaint, There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; What was the reason, they saw God's face hid from them in their dark and sad condition, and themselves consumed by the hand or means of their own iniquities; but they could believe no good in this severe hand of God toward them; therefore they lie still in their sinking, and will not so much as stir themselves to take hold

of God. This is great dishonor to the holy One. Stir up our hearts we must to Faith on the comforting part of the Rod, if we would have them right and set to meet with the reviving's of God.

2. To hoping, and waiting for the giving out of these cordials from the chastising hand; Thus David calls to his soul in his perplexities; Why art thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. The patient soul shall never look for help or comfort from God in vain; such hope cannot make the soul ashamed; O stir up fainting hearts to hope we must; that sweet hand that scourgeth, will give out gracious support to that good heart that hopeth, activity is our duty in this also.

3. To crying, and earnest supplication to our chastening God, to send out sweet out of the smart, and meat out of the eater, then we set ourselves in a right posture for receiving mercy, when our drooping hearts are stirred up to pray, and cry for those gracious discoveries: It was also David's activity, when he wanted the comforts of his God, he falls to crying, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; The heart is set upright, when it can pray under the hardest pressures; and this is duty to pray and cry for comfort: Though we should be near the shadow of death, yet must we not let our hearts fall down; It is a dismal fall, to be thrown from prayer; If God hold out so much sweet comfort in his chastening government, and severest discipline, it is the least we can do to fetch it out by prayer; Lift we up then our souls to God, that he may lift up his favor upon us; This is the duty.

2. The subject of this duty is the chastened and dejected soul; they, even they must rouse up their drooping spirits, and strive for comfort, God gives the grace, but they must look narrowly to return the duty for their own reviving; It is all I shall note here, that to them is this spoken, and on them is only this duty pressed; the afflicted must not be only passive under comfort, but active for it, lifting up themselves, and putting forward to it.

3. The condition of this duty I shall only touch in the property of the act, which must needs be here free and voluntary; so that as it becomes the people of God to be willing in all duties, no less doth God expect it from them in this; that as he is ready and willing to administer his reviving influence unto his chastened, so they with answerable desire, should set themselves to look for and receive it: much will in this makes the duty more obediential, & the effect more sweet and comfortable to the distressed soul; yet from this usually chastened souls are most averse, altogether unwilling to be comforted; therefore unto this shall I labor to persuade then in the ensuing application of this truth

SECT. IV.

The application of the former point.

The very name of duty, me things, should be sovereign and binding to them that make conscience of all duties unto God, save only this of making after comfort; A fault surely among many, if not most of God's chastened, who will pray, because it is duty, and mourn, because it is duty; and strive to the denial of themselves, to the subduing of all corruption, because it is duty; and yet move not once themselves toward comfort, though as necessary a duty as any of the rest. My work therefore now is to press that obedience to God's comforting will in his chastening's, which we acknowledge a duty to his commanding will in all other particulars. If God intend this in his Rod, not to kill, but to quicken, not to destroy, but save, not to cast down, but to raise up; and therefore hath spirited his Rod to incline his afflicted to lifting up, and by all the reason of his discipline engageth them not to fainting, but to cheering hearts: Let me speak to you for God, and from God in this matter, Come ye afflicted of the

Lord, gird up your loins, hearken unto me, will ye keep those hearts sad, which God will not have kept sad? O sin not against God in this, as ye would by no means sin in other cases; if he say lift up your hands, do not ye hang them down, if he call to rectifying and strengthening feeble knees, let them not fall into palsy fits; if he cheer up your hearts under the Rod, do not ye make them faint through unbelief, and so kill yourselves. I need not state the duty again, what God would have you do in this case. Read over those cordial considerations in the scourging Providence under which ye lie; set before your eyes the relation, power and tenderness of a chastening Father, stir up yourselves to hope for, and call out all the sweetness in that Fountain, both of your being, and of your affliction; view the Mediator of the Rod, and rouse up your hearts to take hold of him your Pattern, your guide in this uncouth way of trouble, he will bring you out: Consider the rule of the Rod, it can do no more hurt than what the promise hath in it, for this orders it, and nothing but good can issue from the Word of promise: or, in a word, look to the end of all your afflictions, it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; now stir up yourselves, and feed and live upon these comforts, account it your work, and as naturally a duty as any, to call up your souls out of troubles, to lift them up in Faith, in Hope, in Prayer to meet the reviving influences of God given out with the Rod unto you; let me overcome you but in this; that it is your duty to be comforted as much as to be humbled; and if reason or truth may prevail, besides the moving considerations in the Text, which I shall press toward the close of the work, these few convincing grounds I shall lay down in this place.

1. The command, counsels, and care of God, concerning this comfort to his afflicted, infallibly evinceth it a duty on their parts to attend on it, and reach forth unto it. Now, are not these commands, Rejoice in the Lord always, Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; Rejoice, and be exceeding glad when ye are reviled and persecuted, &c. In all which was matter of chastening as well as trial, smart that did make sad, as well as a cause that did support; Counsels are frequent, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be

afraid, lift up your heads, &c. And the exceeding great care of God to have this effected, strongly proveth, it must not be by them neglected; two evidences of this care are in sight: First, in providing a spring of comfort for all cases of distress and dejection among his own children, therefore he sends Christ in the flesh full of consolation, and when he leaves the flesh, he procures another comforter, even the holy Spirit, to whom he designs the office of reviving and comforting every afflicted soul, he comes in Christ's name, and is in Christ's stead to supply his place of refreshing his grieved members: Will ye then resist the Holy Ghost? As ye do, while ye refuse to be comforted: Secondly, in providing means and ministry purposely to bring these consolations of Christ to his afflicted; How doth he call upon his Prophets, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people? How doth he in them call upon his afflicted, O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests, and not comforted? And doth this care of God call for no care from you, to see that his end be not frustrated, and your hearts left comfortless? Reason must convince you, that ye must be like-minded with God, to suffer as he would have you suffer, and be humbled as he would have you humbled, and be comforted as he would have you comforted. Now then, if it be your duty, be as conscionable and careful to dispose yourselves for the comforts of God, as for any other duties to him: So ye must be, if ye deal truly with him, for as much as this is honor to him as much as any other service. What a reproach cast ye upon God, to make the world judge, God cannot comfort his people? O therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and bestir yourselves for comfort.

2. The comforts of God are not only engagements, but enabling's of poor souls to all other duties expected from them; so that sleight these, ye lose your strength, and become fruitless. It is observable in the delegation of the Spirit by Christ to be his Churches comforter, the mark therein specially intended, which is still some main duty or other; for comfort is not given for itself, but for farther ends thereby attainable; therefore when Christ would have his disciples know his mind, and keep in remembrance his dictates, his way is: The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things, and

bring them to remembrance: Nothing so powerfully instructs as comfort; for as much as it revives and engageth thereby the heart first unto itself, and so brings the soul with delight to hearken to the Word made known; and none can surpass that good Disciple, who learns Jesus Christ with delight. So when the Lord would have his servants be faithful and bold in the testimony of him, or bearing witness of his truth; this is his course to effect it by consolation, I will send the Comforter to you from the Father, he shall testify of me, and strengthened by his comforts, Ye also shall bear witness. Consolations shall constrain you to do that for me, not to leave my glorious work without witness to the world. Again, If he would have people convinced of sin in a saving way to melt them, and to drain their souls from filth, and draw them unto God in himself, this is his way, If I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you, It is still the Comforter that he makes use of (a sweet and blessed notion) And when he is come, he will convince or reprove the world of sin; See the Comforters work, and if he reprove and make men know their sin, sure it is in a comforting way, to separate from it, and to lead souls safe unto Christ. Nothing makes sin appear so exceeding sinful, as comfort presented to a wretched, rebellious, and disobedient soul; the Comforter, if any, will make them ashamed, and abhor themselves. It is the method of all the Apostles, to engage, enable, and fortify souls against hardest oppositions, and for greatest duties, by the consolations of Christ; when they would set them above fiery trials, the Comfort of the Spirit of glory, must mount them, and the consolations of Christ harden them against death itself; as for his own experience, the Apostle labors with his Corinthians. Now then, ye afflicted of the Lord, whose strivings of heart are to be holy under the Rod, to search out sin, to hate it, to be fruitful to Christ, to mortify corruption, to make a good confession of Jesus Christ, to be faithful to the death; conscience binds you to exact care and watchfulness for these, and it is well; but how do you think to do these, if you cannot live under the Rod? Or, how do you think to live without comfort? I know no way. If it be duty for a man to labor, it is no less his duty to eat and drink, and refresh himself, without which long labor he cannot: Nay, with as ardent and strong desires is he to

reach after his refreshing's, as his work; the same God enjoins both equally. Deare Christians, know it then no less your duty to strive after comfort in your saddest state, that must quicken and maintain your life, than after any office of that life, which God calls for at your hands; This I must endeavor to persuade it is your duty to reach after comfort, and set your hearts in a right posture to meet with it; the soul cannot be profitable to God, that refuseth to be comforted by him; O then stir up yourselves by Faith, by Hope, by Prayer to call in the consolations of Christ into your souls; these will be your strength, and being comforted ye shall work mightily. The Church crieth out for this, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love: Support, comfort, and reviving is that she calls for, the means were fruits cordial and effectual thereunto, as Pomegranates, or such like; and good measure of these cordial receipts she cries for; flagons at least; her sickness puts her upon, and not terrifies her from it, she was sick with love, longing desires to Christ were in her, and desire not satisfied made her sick, and sickness now makes her call for comfort, that she may yet be strengthened to follow Christ; O do ye likewise, in all chastisements, whether upon spirit or flesh, rouse up sinking hearts, ye yourselves must heartily make after comfort, unless ye mean foolishly to give up the ghost, and become dead and unprofitable to God.

3. Ye will be more persuaded, that this is your duty to make after comfort, if ye do rightly consider, what plots the Devil hath to keep you from it; he knows if he can keep you comfortless, he will make you fruitless, and at last Apostates from God, as his hope was concerning Job; and he thought he put fair for it, when he brought him to curse the day of his birth, &c. I would always conclude this for truth, That from which the Devil drives me, is surely the duty unto which God draws me. If he for bids me comfort, I will believe that God commands it. Let me but touch the wiles of this subtle Serpent a little, which I observe at three states of time. 1. In bringing men into sin; 2. In keeping men in it: 3. In killing those that do escape it, as much as in him lieth. The first the Apostle notes about Eve, that the Serpent-devil beguiled her by his subtlety, by his sleight of hand,

turning every way for his own purpose; he is very crafty in persuading men into sin. The second he warns of to the Ephesians, what wiles, methods, mazes, labyrinths, meanders he hath to puzzle men in sin, that they should not find the way out; shrewdly guileful is he this way to hamper men, as the cunning hunter doth his game in the net. The third is his last fetch, that if God mightily deliver the soul, and by the power of God it escapeth out of his dominion, then his devices are, to swallow up that soul, with hopeless fears, doubts, and unbelief, that he might never taste the good comforts of God, but perish in a despairing way; therefore he pours out floods of temptations after him, if possible, to destroy him. Of these inventions the Apostle makes mention in the case of that sinner in the Church of Corinth, whom God by his Church had chastened with that severe sentence of Excommunication; The man was so dejected, that he was even now swallowed up of a kind of despairing sorrow; The Apostle therefore timely interposeth, desires the Church to pardon, and receive in this chastened humble soul; lest Satan should over-reach them, and while they thought by casting out and delivering to Satan to save the spirit, the Devil might thereby destroy it, wilily suggesting a desperate ejection of him at once out of the Church, and from God: It is St. Paul's note, We are not ignorant of his devices; shrewd ones they be indeed, and destructive, unless warily prevented. See then ye chastened sons, and daughters of God, whose wile it is to stave you off from saving comforts under chastening, if Satan's, no cause to cherish such motions, God's way is quite contrary, and his will and care is to comfort his afflicted people. Say then in this case, as the Lord Mediator said to the Devil, or his instruments, upbraiding his poor Church, to keep them in a disconsolate condition, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Turn him off with his wiles for God to deal with him, the Almighty will certainly plead your cause against him: Believe God in this matter, and ye shall prosper; lift up your hearts to take in the consolations that he gives out; this will defeat the Devils plot, strengthen yourselves for your desired obedience under the rod, and so enable you to glorify God in the very fires. Think it, O think it then your duty to reach after the comforts of

Christ in your afflictions, be stirring and active in it, because your adversary night & day laboreth to drive you from it; cheer up, cheer up dear souls, that ye may abound in the work of the Lord, and your reward may be full in the latter end.

But how would you have us cheered? Is it fit under such sad discoveries of God to laugh and sing, or to be light and joyful? Is mirth suitable for the rod?

Surely not that mirth of the world, which justly the Preacher calls madness; no, sober mirth, or Christian spiritual cheerfulness, is that which is pressed on God's chastened Children, not carnal joviality, or fleshly pleasure which the world takes to throw out sorrow; not this, but those cordial reviving's of God, that may keep up the soul from fainting and dying under the rod, and set right the heart bowed down, to be above all discouragements that might make it halt with God, & to fall off from duty which God requires of them, such raisings and ravishing's of God ye must seek after, that ye may yet be serviceable unto him.

But what soul can take encouragement, when it sees its unevenness with God, and halting's, and imperfect walking's under the rod every day?

Surely the more need of comfort, because thou art faint, and of support, because thou art lame and haltest: Thinkest thou to cure thy fainting and heal thy halting, without the consolations of God? This cannot be; observe the Apostles method in this verse, he aims at it by the rod to bring us to an upright station and even walking with God, but this cannot be while dejection is predominant over heart and flesh; first then he labors to support hands hanging down and feeble knees, and then directs to make right paths for lame feet to walk in. It is the natural course of curing, if any have broke a leg and grows faint upon it, the Surgeon will give some cordial to revive the patient for present, and maintain his life, afterward he goeth about to set bones right again: So God's Spirit here aims no less at amendment of

souls by the rod, than the encouragement of them, but because this concerns the present maintenance of life, therefore he comforts first the wounded, and after heals. In this method must we walk; if therefore ye will yield to be comforted in the first use, we shall proceed to better you, and make you walk more evenly with God in the second, which now follows in order to be pressed.

SECT. V.

The second Use of the chastening Providence, even Amendment of souls under the rod, pressed by the Apostle in this clause;

And make straight or even paths for your feet,

ver. 13.

Now poor Christian, here is the mark thou aimest at, to be good, that thou mayest be glad and cheerful, unto which by the Apostles line I shall now labor to direct thee, that I may help thee home. Chastening's are no deviations from this mark, but indeed directories, and helps as well as goads, pricking on the soul hereunto. If we bring the term of illation close to this direction (Wherefore make straight, &c.) the force of all the precedent chastening providence runs out into this duty of the afflicted, which is also the effect of God's chastising: God gives through the rod a straightening power, and then puts on the chastened soul to work by him and with him for walking in that right and even path with himself. The matter here inferred, together with the force of the inference is here to be weighed, that we may know God's mind herein, and more strongly conclude what here he teacheth us. The useful counsel here given is short and pithy, rhetorical and rational, clothed in a metaphor, as the former, but carrying in it and pressing on us a solid truth, and

wholesome advice for rectifying our ways, and making even our hearts with God, being put upon it by the scourge. The Act of provision or making: The object, right paths or ways; The subject for what, for your feet, are all express terms in the duty, and suited in this borrowed speech one unto another. Feet are the instruments of motion, which here must note all that of man that must move to God, in the course appointed for the creature; and therefore not only affections as one, or mind as another, nor any one part singly, but the whole man must be here intended; which the heart may well comprehend; these also as we are guided by the following expression, must be conceived lame feet, halting, maimed hearts, cripple or limping souls, that walk not perfectly with God, like a foot bruised or out of joint: then is a leg or foot truly lame, when it followeth not the rule of the going or moving faculty, which is to tread even, and so to walk at ease; No less our hearts and works toward God are lame, when they follow not the rule of the divine law. Again for these, right or even paths must be prepared, that is, a right course or frame by that unerring truth, must be set for these to move in. I should not stand critically to paraphrase upon that word in the text (paths) which signifies strictly such a way or track, that a wheel makes upon the ground, suppose of chariot or the like; (for I am persuaded here mainly it intends a way fitted for a man to walk in, whether drawn out by a wheel, or trodden by a foot, it matters not, either may serve, and so do to present the way of God's counsels to us, fitted for Christians to walk in:) but finding it occasioning a pious conceit, that it should press speed in the way, as well as evenness (as the chariot-wheel runs in its track when the foot but walks in its course) I would not reject it; yet not concluding it necessarily from this expression; A right course to God is the main here prescribed. Once more, these we must make; for the direction is to us; not favoring free will, as the Jesuit notes, as if this were presently in our own power; their Seraphical Doctor may teach him better from the Text; Make straight paths, that is, so much as in you lieth, endeavor to it, but it is God's only work properly to rectify or make straight hearts and ways, for which cause David prayeth, Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths. God himself by the Spirit given in the rod, inclines and orders

the heart to a right frame suited to his counsels, but then the chastened soul being quickened and acted by God, must work under him & with him to bring heart, words, and works to this right rule, so that indeed God only rectifies, and we are rectified by him, all our motions being only in him and by him; as he said, Now I live, yet not I properly and of myself, but Christ liveth in me; So indeed God properly and by his strength makes straight the crooked, we are but straightened by him, however moving in his hand; It is a certain truth, our duties depend upon God's promises, as the effect upon their cause. This word the Lord of heaven speaks, The lame man shall leap as an Hart: and speaking doth create it, the lame stands upright, and walks and leaps in the ways of God. In short, the duty here concerning us, is not unfitly paraphrased, Make straight running paths for your feet, or, Run straight and uprightly in the ways of God; this is the work charged on us: How careful would a man be for a lame foot, to have shoe even, ground even, all even to keep from hurt? More should we care for lame hearts, to have frame even, and paths even for them to walk and run in, if our mark be bliss. The former wherefore indispensably presseth this upon God's chastened ones, God's care in chastening must put them upon care in rectifying or making straight their ways for him; the last rule then for our practical use of chastening's is, God's chastening Providence is his rectifying hand upon his halting Children; or thus, The rod providence enforceth the chastened as much to rectitude towards God, as comfort for themselves; no less enjoining to make even ways for lame feet, than to lift up hanging hands and palsy knees. I shall not need here again to state the nature of this chastening Providence, the spring that moves to this duty, that being done above. These three things must be dispatched, and then shall I set the period to this work. 1. A discovery what virtue, force, or help, this rod-providence yields for rectifying men's hearts. 2. The state of the afflicted's duty under this help. 3. The motives added in the Text enforcing to this duty, all which more distinctly handled, I shall then draw up the close.

SECT. VI.

The virtue or force of the chastening Providence for rectifying hearts and ways.

That there is a force in this scourging care of God to constrain the chastened to this rectitude of heart and ways, the illative term (wherefore) doth evidently determine, which presseth from thence upon the duty: The question here to be satisfied is the (quid sit) what force this is? Which opened, will carry its proof within itself. The virtue or power then of this chastening is twofold. 1. Physical or natural, which is the cause naturally producing this duty, as the fire warmth upon that which is applied unto it; The rod makes right in beating to it; this force constrains by enabling. 2. Moral or rational, forcing the reason of man to command his heart to this rectitude, and bend towards it. In all works and means of grace, as God dealeth powerfully, so he doth rationally also with man his creature; These deserve a little weighing.

To the first, Take we in but those grand concurrents to this chastening dispensation the Author, Mediator, Spirit and Rule of the rod, (not to speak of them distinctly) they jointly give out their power to effect this rectitude in the chastened soul, and that efficiently necessitating the man to this straightness of heart and way, and that in this order, God the Father, in his Son and by his Spirit, and through his promise, or according to that word of grace, so orders the rod, that it shall reduce the wanderer, rectify the crooked, and help the halting to walk at ease in right and even paths, therefore they must make straight paths for their feet; All these persons are coordinate in the rectitude of their own being, the ground of this effect produced in the creatures, and in their power and in their purpose of working it this way on the afflicted; Right, or Rectitude is the Name of God in every person; No less is Right the singular

property of his word, and if so, whatsoever issueth from this hand, according to this rule, by the rod, must needs be an answerable like effect. Now the joint power given out from this chastening Providence, to frame the soul to this duty, is various.

1. Directive, which is properly a teaching power, that dictates this uprightness of heart and walking to the chastened, and prompts them successfully to it; The rod hath a voice in its smart speaking righteousness, but of itself weak, until he that prompted it, put forth his voice in it; here the Providence chastising, or God himself correcting, teacheth by it reformation or rectifying of a man's ways, and if he teach, he makes impression upon the spirit, though creature teaching pass off too slightly. It is the note of Christ, in recording that promise, They shall be all taught of God; Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me; God doth not teach in vain, or in any case, so not in this way of instructing by the rod; his uprightness pricks the lesson, and his power teacheth it to the purpose: The Psalmist observes this, Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way, that is, the right way; he expresseth no less immediately, The meek, or humble, or afflicted, will be guide in judgment, that is, the right path ordered by him, and the meek will be teach his way. And the happy effect of this teaching is proclaimed to the Church, Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law. No reason to proclaim him blessed, unless crowned with the highest good, and attained unto God in his very uprightness, and even thither doth God draw him by chastening and by teaching. Needs then must that soul learn to walk in right ways, when God himself by the rod shall teach him.

2. Effective also, or a creating power is this issuing from the rod-providence to make God's chastened cleave to even paths, God himself is in the rod, therefore must work like himself, to bring about his purpose of grace, that none can let it. In his word he speaks, and it is created, and in his rod he speaks, and his pleasure is effected; He sends his word and says to the dead live, and they live, and to the

crooked, be made straight, and they stand upright; and no less doth he send his rod, and crieth to the wandering sheep return, and it returneth, and to the lame soul walk in even ways, and he walketh; The words of promise are therefore peremptory, The lame shall leap as the Hart, &c. It in creating darkness and evil, afflictions on his people, he speaks to heavens and skies to drop down righteousness, it must be, if he be God, I the Lord have created it. David found this upright frame really made and abiding on his soul, for which he blesseth the hour of his chastening. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted, saith he, the effect was evident, the learning of God's upright statutes; which was no other, but the framing of his heart unto them; needs then must they walk rightly and run in even paths, for whom God makes such hearts and ways.

3. Active likewise and a power of doing or stirring according to the bent, or bias of the rod, doth God give out to his chastened ones, that they may be stirring and make themselves right ways. So that not only skill for duty, and will for duty is hence brought home to them, but actively, diligence, and earnest motion to walk in these upright ways is hence supplied; not only outward pricks to spur on from without by the rod smarting, but inward motions, quickening's and stirrings to this by the secret hand that manageth the rod upon the heart. See this force upon the Church afflicted, they egg one another forward to return and walk with God. Come, say they, let us return unto the Lord. &c. This then is the first part of the power of this chastening providence naturally enabling the afflicted to make right paths for their feet to walk in.

To the second, the moral force of this afflicting hand upon the following duty, is the strength of reason, which is so great, that it must needs over-power men, and make them yield to give out themselves to the utmost for obedience, unless they refuse to be drawn with the cords of a man, and declare themselves unreasonable: let these strong reasons be weighed for this purpose, issuing from this divine providence.

1. It is the will of the Chastiser, the command of the highest God, even your amendment by the Rod, to have your feet set even in his right path; can there be stronger reason to persuade obedience from a Law, base creature, than that word from heaven, Turn ye, Turn ye, why will ye die? It is all the warrant for duty which reason can require, that which he said, I desire to hear something from heaven: unless ye are stronger than God, and can over-top him, it is most unreasonable to resist his will.

2. It is the love of the Mediator to put in between God and you, and direct the stroke through himself, to bear the bitterness himself, and to let out only so much of the smart, as to startle you out of your wanderings and crooked ways, and persuade you to return, and take the straight path, that ye may be conformed unto him. Is it not the justest reason now, that ye should comply with this love of the Mediator? Is it not most unreasonable to reject his love without a cause, and by your frowardness, return hatred for his good will?

3. It is the Spirits free motion, that as he would seal you for God with his own character, so he would drive you to him by the Rod, and therefore ruleth in this chastening, to by as your hearts to the right path; is it reason than to deny this sweetest motion, to sadden this Spirit, to lame ourselves more, and turn out of the good way of God? The Ox and the Ass show more respect to their guides than this. In a word, through all these hands the Rod is the last means to rectify a soul, and if this do it not, it is perverted to perdition; Reserving other considerations in the Text for their own place: this is the sum of the precedent arguments. Absolutely necessary it is to reach that conformity of heart and ways to God in rectitude, the Fathers will, the Sons love, the Spirits motion through the Rod drive the afflicted unto this mark; can reason deny to yield to this power, which is for the man's salvation, and not destruction? Surely not; we shall then take it as undeniably pressed upon chastened souls from this sweet Providence, therefore make straight paths for your feet. But what is our duty here? That is the next part.

SECT. VII.

The state of our duty in making straight paths for our feet.

The power of Providence to help us, and reason from the Rod to convince us of duty, have before appeared; That we are to be doing something being summoned by the Rod, is evident, what we must do, is now the question. Make right paths for lame feet, we must, this the Rod would have, that we set our halting feet in God's even ways, to make our treading's or steps suitable thereunto; Now, halting here is an imperfect or uneven walking with God, when by fears or other blasts, we are kept from the strict and right tract of conversation, from which we should not swerve; Amendment then, or thorough reformation, is the moral of right paths, and right feet joined together, which is our work to look unto; to make our thoughts right concerning God, concerning sin, concerning duties, and our affections right, suited to various objects according to the rule, and our endeavors right, striving to keep close to the line of Christ in all our conversations.

But who can make an old heart new? Or a foul one clean, or that which is crooked to become straight?

Surely not a creature; Therefore badly was it glossed by him, that this is a notable place for Free-will, and little reason was there for that note here, it being but a simple command of God here, and God's commands do argue the creatures debts, not their abilities; otherwise no need of the Covenant of Grace, wherein God engageth himself to his covenanted ones, for enabling them to all duty, and then requires their answerable restipulation. Our duty then answering to this command, as in all like cases, consists in two parts.

1. A passive reception of all that influence which God hath promised in his Covenant, for rectifying our hearts; and which by correction he endeavors to bring in upon our souls; this upon our parts is the first work of Faith, which alone is the receiving Grace, by reason of which reception we are said to do, what indeed God properly doth alone: As by Faith we are said to become the sons of God, as if we moved ourselves to this honor, when indeed Christ himself casts this upon us, and we only thus receive it: So are we said to be saved by Faith, and live by Faith, as if we were the chief movers in these, when indeed God only saves, and Christ lives in us, we are merely in this respect receivers. So are we commanded to redeem time, to cast off our transgressions, and make us a new heart, &c. when alas, we cannot do the work of one day, only we receive by Faith a double portion of grace from God, in circumspect walking, in which respect our time is said to be bought out or redeemed: Neither can we, poor creatures, make an hard heart soft, and an old heart new, only by Faith we receive the impressions of him that saith, I will give them a new Spirit, I will take the stony heart out of the flesh, and give them an heart of flesh: So here are we pressed to make straight paths for feet, and even feet and walking's for paths; but indeed our making is primarily receiving this impression from the hand of God, whose Name is right, who alone can rectify hearts and ways; David therefore turns his work concerning this into a prayer of Faith, Renew a right spirit within me; he is on the receiving hand, if God will give it. This then is the first piece of duty, Faith must open the man within and without, to receive the impression of God's rectitude on all; In the mind must be received right thoughts, right understanding, right judgment; In the will, a right bent or yielding to the Will of God; In the affections a right frame, fear and love, and joy, and hatred, and grief, set where they should be: And in the eye a right seeing, in the ear a right hearing; in all the members a right moving power unto God. This, this is our work to make right paths.

2. An active expression of what is received from God; Faith works this way also by love to God, giving out those right impressions which the soul hath received from him: Now this active part of duty

Faith performs in these particulars, intimated in the very terms of the Text.

1. By evidencing and setting before the soul the right ways, or Laws of God, which are called his paths, and that in the power and sovereignty of them; as being set up to command obedience and conformity from creatures to them: As the Prophet speaks for God, The ways of the Lord are right, the just shall walk in them; they are sovereign ways, and must have walkers in them. Faith makes these supreme, or highest in the thoughts and esteem of God's servants, no less in their affections and endeavors. Now this is a great step to rectitude of heart and walking, to acknowledge the sovereignty of the right ways of God over our bodies and spirits; And indeed, God's ways, as they are all higher than man's, so are they sovereign and commanding, as himself is, which he will not shall be under check. Thus Faith establisheth, or sets the Law in power over the believers heart, and so subjects it in right and due order to God's command: Here is one act toward making of right paths for our feet, or steering a right course of life from the instigation of the Rod. So he makes right paths for his feet, who sets them by faith to command his feet to walk in them.

2. By setting our lame and halting feet in this right track drawn out for them; that is, plainly, by an exact and watchful keeping of our hearts & conversations in due order and respect unto those right and even ways of God; thus our making right paths, is our strict attendance on them; This use David made of the Rod, he kept God's Word, and learned his Statutes better. Now, if Faith do so evidence the excellency of God's right ways, and stirs up love in the soul vehemently to them, obedience suitable must be the effect, which will be the demonstration of that upright frame, unto which by chastening the Lord hath drawn them. I believe, therefore have I spoken, saith the Prophet, We believe, therefore we speak, say the Apostles; sure it is, Faith stirs up all the affections of the soul and members of the body, love, fear, delight, eyes, ears, hands, and feet

to that right work which it holds forth; so he makes right paths for his feet, that by Faith makes himself to walk in them.

3. One act more of Faith suitable to God's care in afflicting his, as it is hinted by an expression in the Text, I shall only touch, and that is swiftness of its operation, making men not only walk, but run, in this straight course of an holy conversation; Faith makes the soul active, yea, and speedily active, even to run in the way of God's Commandments, or contend for conformity to God's uprightness, as one striving in a race. This indeed is not an Act distinct in kind from the former, but only in degree, putting on the spirit to a greater speed in these right ways; Faith hastens in the right, and therein a man cannot run too fast. Such speed David promiseth to make upon enlargement of his heart from God, by greater measures of Faith. I will run the way of thy Commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart: This pious conjecture from the wheel track in the Text (suppose of a Chariot) I could not omit, to put on to speed as well as rectitude in ways of God; so may we admit that gloss, Make right races for your feet; that is, Run rightly in the race which God sets before you. This is the chastened's duty; unto which, having added the motives in the Text, I shall labor to conform their practice, and then close all.

SECT. VIII.

The first motive to both precedent duties as given by the Apostle,
Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.

If farther reason be desired to move the afflicted for reaching after comfort to themselves, and rectitude toward God, I shall add no more, but what the Apostle here supplies himself unto us, viz. Two

main Considerations, both which have strong influence upon the two foregoing duties, to persuade unto them. The first is from the inconvenience that necessarily followeth upon neglect of both or either of them; thus he reasons; It is needful ye should cheer up your hearts, and make right paths for your feet, to strive for encouragement and amendment under the Rod, for ye are lame and halt already, very unevenly ye walk with God already for want of comfort, strength, and rule, I see your flesh is offended, and hurts itself by God's scourge; It concerns you therefore to get reviving and rectifying power into your souls, lest it be worse with you, and from halting or imperfect walking, ye turn quite out of the way to utter Apostasy; be cheered therefore, be rectified, put forth yourselves to your appointed duties, so may ye prevent another ways unavoidable mischief. To scan the terms a little here; The lame is here a concrete, and notes the subject ill affected with lameness or halting; This, as was observed, is an imperfect going, a piece right, and a piece wrong, if we take it as Natures common expression; Here it fitly signifies a perverse or unsound conversation between the right ways of God, and false ways of the creatures; when a man would be for God, and yet he hankers after Idols too, as these halting Israelites, whom Elijah upbraids, for this uneven dealing; or those Cripple-Christians, that hung between Moses and Christ, as between two crutches, and walked haltingly, not right in the Gospel-faith; of which sort is conceived by some, that these Hebrews were, and therefore here are warned of this halting: Such are many apt to be under the Rod, while pressed with pain, or overcharged with fear, they seek any deviations for shelter from God, complying with worldly devices, and not wholly shaking off their profession of the Lord. This lameness or halting then, is an unsound walking with God, unto which the flesh of God's chastened doth much incline, while it is under the Rod: A careful eye must be then upon the hurt, lest it prove fatal, and proceed to the utter subversion of the soul: no less is suggested in that expression, turned out of the way, eversion, or utter falling off from God, and desperate Apostasy is the truth of this metaphorical Paraphrase; as a lame foot is quite undone and killed, if it have no boltering, but is wrested still into perverse and crooked ways; the very last corruption

that is, the perdition of the soul is here the mischief held out to move the chastised to a timely pursuit of comfort, and reformation of their hearts under the Rod, this they must seek after, unless they mean to perish. There be two truths carried in this moving clause, one implied, the other expressed, which must be a little opened, that the strength of this motive may be the better given out to enforce the former duties.

1. The chastened of the Lord are usually apt to be lame and halt; that is, walk imperfectly with God under his scourge.
2. This lameness doth incline to utter Apostasy from God, and perdition of the soul, unless prevented by timely comfort and reformation. The issue of both these, is but to press the necessity of attendance upon the former duties.

To the first, Quid sit; that this is so, will appear in a full induction of the afflicted Saints in all ages: See Abraham's halting with God in Egypt before Pharaoh, in Gerar before Abimelech. In the same kind and place did Isaac's lameness appear under the scourge of Famine, he walked not perfectly with God. So Jacob halted in the matter of Esau, worse than that was with God's pinch; and Moses halted in the Wilderness, especially at the waters of Meribah, and poor David confesseth himself ready to halt in all his sorrows; and terrified Peter halts quite down-right in the high Priests Hall. I need name no more instances of these; I shall touch only the ground, which is universal in all God's chastened.

The rise therefore and demonstrative ground of the Saints halting in their affliction, is that sinful flesh, which is as universal as that natural wherein they live, which being contrary to the Rod, and too weak for it, doth suffer by it, becomes offended at it, not from the intention of the scourge, but from the corruption of the flesh; thence is it grieved and hurt, even to lameness and halting, a very uneven and imperfect walking with God; These inseparable properties of the flesh, will easily evince this event under the Rod.

1. Carnal sense of the smart and bitterness of affliction; Now this can discover nothing but evil, vexing and angering the creature; therefore turns it to some disaffection, both to the Rod, and him that did appoint it: This becomes dismal hatred to God, in the wicked, whose flesh is predominant, but stirrings of disaffection only in God's own, who have the Spirit supreme in them, which yet unregarded may become more dangerous: See this is Jehoram, who threw off God upon it; and this in Jonah, who was something discontented with him.

2. Grosse love of the creature, which, though it cannot be in dominion where grace is, yet may it greatly incline the man to it, especially when the Rod comes to beat him off. How deeply this wounded Demas is sad to read the Story; and how it lamed Peter the second time, so far, as to make him dissemble the truth of Christ before his adversaries, is too too evident.

3. Base fear of men, and creature terrors, proper to this flesh, do prompt to halting with God, when danger appears, and smart draws near the flesh; this wounded Abraham with a lie, as well as Isaac, and Peter by a sad backsliding from Christ: This hath been the laming, and almost the baining of many Saints in several ages, when God's hand hath been gone out in trial against his Church: Fear is subtle to find digressions from God, and make the soul walk unevenly, and full of danger, yet this the universal affection of sinful flesh.

4. Foolish hope, to ease the smart by complying with God's enemies, and so halting between both. This however it is not allowed in God's children, yet are they subject to such motions from their flesh helped on by the power of Satan, whereby their hearts may be damped, their limbs lamed, their pace may falter towards God: See something of this in David's carriage before Christ. Thus then the Saints have been, and may be in danger in their afflictions to be lamed and brought to halting, therefore but need by reviving and reforming to prevent this very lameness; yet, if this be neither prevented, nor

healed, greater danger than this is at hand, that may more orderly persuade to the former duties.

SECT. IX.

To the second part of the first motive.

To the second, halts in affliction are very apt to become Apostates; if comfort may stop, and reformation prevent this mischief, all reason will persuade the lame soul to make earnestly after these.

But why should such an argument as this be used to God's children, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, when it is certain they cannot fall off from God unto perdition?

It is not irrational to use such motives for duty to the most stable and unshaken souls in the Church here Militant, and therefore not unuseful with the Spirit of God to press them upon the best of men, to keep them close to their obedience; These considerations may evince the necessity of such arguing toward these.

First, they are rational creatures, grace hath not swallowed up reason, nor destroyed the man, though it over-power and innoble it for heaven. Now to all such, all reason-foreing and convincing arguments are suitable; now prevention from final Apostasy to perdition, is a forcible consideration to every rational creature to take heed of the halting evil that leads unto it, and make use of all preservatives, comforts, counsels, for rectifying and establishing that will certainly keep the souls from it; therefore meet for the best as well as for the worst of men.

Secondly, they are (even the best) in great part carnal, and sold under sin, as the Apostle was, and everyone is, in the first great bill of sale by man's transgression, however in Christ redeemed, and set above the power of corruption; yet even in this state of grace sin is in them as thorns in their sides, and pricks in their eyes; and therefore strongly inclining them to fall from God, however they be kept by the power of God unto salvation. This did so terrify that holy man, that he cried out, Who shall deliver me from this body of death? Where then diseases are, though not predominant, it is not unreasonable to press for care to prevent death.

Thirdly, consider the ground of their establishment; That they cannot fall away from God, is not from any strength or ability in themselves to stand, nor indeed from any creature Consideration, for mutability and change is the creatures adjunct, but it is merely grounded upon the Covenant of God to Christ and to his seed, wherein his power, wisdom, justice, truth, and immutability are freely engaged to keep these souls from perdition unto eternal life. Now, that wisdom that hath contrived the perseverance of these to glory, who are so frail and unstable in themselves, hath also cast the way whereby he will accomplish this promised end, and deals with them, as well rationally as powerfully to effect this purpose; It pleaseth therefore this God-wisdom, to suit arguments to the state of his creatures, he seeth the remainders of pride in their flesh, that upon conceit of privilege, may puff up, and make secure, and thence thinks fit to press some terrible considerations to suppress such swellings, and keep the soul in an humble and believing fear, whereby it is enabled to steer it's course directly unto God, and to reach home unto him; however indeed the argument of itself cannot prevail, but the power of God in it draws over the heart to yield obedience: no unreasonableness then to press the fixed ones of God with such shaking reason, for this way God doth fasten them in his Kingdom. This rub removed, two things must be declared to open the force of this motive: first, that halting doth incline to Apostasy: secondly, that there is a death-preventing virtue in the former duties, to keep from this fall. For discovery of the first, the demonstration

will be clear in their properties of halting, which are inseparable from it, however vincible by grace.

1. The slowness or backwardness; the indisposition of the lame feet to walk, loath they are to put forward in motion; now such retarding of an halting heart in the way of God, doth not only increase the indisposition to move, but gives occasion to all the enemies of salvation, the world and devil as well as their own flesh, more mightily to withstand them, and beat them back again, or turn them quite out of God's even track; delay or slackness is nowhere so dangerous, as in the way of God, so many lusts and temptations there be, that upon the least stand do overtake us; every step in God's race is a step backward in event. Now with this evil the halting Saints are infected, and therefore in danger of backsliding themselves, though graciously prevented by God. How slack these halters were in Elijah's time, and how near thereby to be driven off from God, the Story makes very clear; they were half inclining unto Baal.

2. The crookedness or uneven treading of the lame walking feet must needs incline to greater wanderings; perverseness in, tends directly to averseness from the ways of God. A member disjointed, and set in a posture suitable to its misplacing, must needs grow distorted, and ugly in process of time. So doth the uneven pace of the halting heart incline to a desperate defection in the progress, unless forbidden by the great God. The Lord therefore chideth his Disciples out of their crooked and perverse disposition, O perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? It was but infirmity in them, yet not to be suffered, for it tended to greater ruins, as it proved with another sort of false Christians, from whom Timothy was advised to withdraw.

3. The weakness of the halting feet, and thence proneness to be driven out by opposition, or to fall out of the way of God utterly of themselves for want of strength; every weakness in the very entrance inclines to more habituated distempers, and then to death; and no less infirmity in the Christians life, and walking, tends to greater

perverseness and fatal danger: The dusky evening leads into the darkest night, and the weakest evil brings ever to a worse, unless in time resisted. This made Paul stand up so sternly against those at Antioch, which did not walk rightly, that is, they did halt in the way of the Gospel, and he did resist their dissembling, lest it should proceed to greater wickedness, and so to the ruin of their souls. It is evident in these now, that halting doth of itself incline to pernicious Apostasy, and the soul's destruction. But why this a motive to comfort, and conformity or rectifying ways to God? The reason of this must be the virtue of these duties for prevention of this dismal evil: The next consideration.

To the second. The power in the former duties effectual for cure of this evil, is twofold. 1. Primitive, to turn away those pernicious maladies that breed and bring forth this Apostasy. 2. Positive, to keep the soul in a true and perfect state with God: this more properly is considerable in the second motive for healing, the former is the work for present to state that. Now these two duties, encouragement and amendment, are sweetly fitted against two sorts of evils, that work this overthrow of poor souls; some are weakening evils that disable the soul to stand against it, others are perverting evils, thrusting the soul out of God's way into perdition: Comfort is the cure of these, and Reformation the bane of these; whereof something would be discovered more distinctly.

1. The consolations of Christ wheresoever they come, remove these weakening and dis-enabling evils which lay the soul more open, naked, and obnoxious to the mischief of all Apostarizing corruptions; the stating of those evils with the application of this remedy will be here convenient. 1. The fading of light for discovery of God in Christ reconciled, makes the soul very weak, apt to be turned aside from the truth, having lost God out of the eye; for want of light indeed many times a poor soul is turned into a hell of sin and misery; for who can be solicitous to keep close to God, who seeth him not, or at least not reconciled? To this the comforts of Christ do give sovereign help, for which cause it must be, that the Apostle in his method of bringing

the Churches to the abundant knowledge of the mystery of God in Christ, he strives first that their hearts might be comforted: and thence would he draw them to the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of, or insight into, the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ. And truly no soul can be so intimately acquainted with the secret of God in Christ, the great preservative against Apostasy, but that soul that tastes of his sweet and ravishing consolations, and hath his heart revived by him: reach after Christ's comforts then they must, that desire fully to see him, and seeing to be established by him.

2. The fainting of hope, and there with the decay of vital spirits is a very great weakening, and exposeth of itself to death, unless a remedy be timely; and none better than the consolations of God for removing of this dangerous obstruction, and reviving the drooping spirit. Alas, the dying of hope leaves the soul as a lifeless thing, turns it into a miserable state of confusion and distraction, that it is even ready to curse God sometimes unawares and die, and lieth liable hereby to the tempters fury to be hurried into a soul-killing despair. Now to give life to this hope, the Apostle implores God for his poor Romans; but under what notion? Hear his words, once the God of consolation, or the comforting God: and again, the God of hope, even that makes to hope, fill you with all joy, and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghost. It is then the comforting and hope-raising God, that can create hope, and by hope joy, and by joy establishment, for his poor creatures; Consolation and the comforting power in God bears all this work. The Psalmist found this virtue of divine consolation, In the multitude of my thoughts within me (confusion of thoughts were within him what course to take, whether to stick to God, or leave him) thy comforts delight my soul; These revive and keep from sinking: Who would not catch after these greedily rather than die?

3. The failing of duties and vital actions are a sad presage of death, as well as a great weakening in present to the soul; every omission or weak performance is like a gasp before giving up the ghost; Now no

way to cure this but by cordials, and none like the comforts of Christ. When Christ himself was in the conflict, buffeted by Satan to make him deny his Father, to let us see that our flesh in him needed support, Angels are sent to minister to him, and support the flesh; how much more need hath our poor spiritless flesh of this? For want of praying, and for want of walking, the soul may be subverted utterly, and for want of comfort it can do neither; nothing strengthens the hands more to the work of God than the consolation of Christ, and nothing keeps more from Apostasy, then to walk circumspectly in the ways of God, and abound in his work. In sad distempers Jeremiah resolves to do no more work, not to speak again in the name of the Lord, but when the fire burnt within him, and the comforting spirit inflamed him, he could not hold his tongue. Never did David fall fouler then when his heart flagged, and fell off from duty; and never was it well with him again, until God's comforts had raised him to his former communion. See how these consolations as well as convictions ministered by Nathan, put him upon prayer again, to recover his fall; Nay frequently is he forced to beat the comforts of God upon his own heart to keep him from defection, and that by reason of weakness was growing on him: duty saves from Apostasy, and comfort keeps up to duty; It is but reasonable then, to prevent subversion we labor for strength of action towards God, and for support in this, we strive to take hold of comfort in our afflictions: The Gospels comfort can only cure soul-killing fainting's; seek it, then seek it ye afflicted of the Lord.

2. Other evils there are not only perverting, but indeed subverting the soul, and separating from God, unto which the second duty carrieth a virtue contrary and sovereign to destroy them. The evils so incident to halting, and so efficient to Apostasy are such as these: unbelief, inordinate affection, and uneven walking, whereof we may note the malignity in themselves, and the remedy in the duty. 1. Unbelief is the strong inducement of a perpetual backsliding from God; It was therefore but a reasonable Item of the Apostle, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you and evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God: Unbelief will make Apostates if it

prevail; but now conscience in making right paths for our feet, must needs drive us from halting's in faith, and if we secure our souls from them we are safe from falling. This is evidently provided for in the duty pressed, for if care be to make all tracks to Heaven right, then that of faith (without which there is no having God or life) must needs be rectified; set right upon its object God in Christ, and right upon its work to make evident the unseen excellencies of Heaven, and to give subsistence to, and present comfort from our hoped glory: Where this care is exercised, lameness of faith will be relieved, and an utter Apostasy sweetly prevented.

2. Inordinate affection is as dangerous a furtherance to final defection from God; when affections break their bounds, transgress their rule, and grow turbulent in the soul, pressing their own way, they expose the soul to all dangerous consequences; As when fear is more of man than of God, and love more of the creature, than of the Creator, and joy more in vanity than in real good, that soul must be hurried to forsake God, as it fared with Demas, and other false named Christians, in whom affections were inordinate, and out of place; But now by this rectifying work, affections are set in their right places, and to their right employment, to honor God only; so fear brings home to God, and love closeth with him, and joy is perfectly upon him; where these so work, great security is given against Apostasy. The Lord Christ therefore gives charge for right ordering affections, Fear not them that can kill the body, &c. And his beloved disciple followeth his steps, Love not the world, &c. the Fathers love is not consistent with it, this is reason strong enough. The right state of these keep us right with God forever.

3. Uneven walking with God, is the usual means of bringing him in contempt with creatures, and then of turning the heart far from him: one crooked step allowed, stirs up the heart to quarrel with the upright God, because his way is too straight for us, and we willing to approve our own ways rather than his, and if sin be suffered to proceed, it will shake off from God forever. One straggling step put Peter at a great distance from Christ, and had he not been recalled,

how pernicious might his slip have been? Right paths, and right disposition of feet in them is the only way to cure this evil, and to keep from utter backsliding. It is a sweet expression of David's, I will walk in mine integrity, but what course takes he for that? My foot (saith he) standeth in an even place, right and straight with God, to that posture he holds it, and what the issue? In the Congregation, I will bless the Lord, and he that blesseth shall never leave him. Ezekiel's counsel shall close up this, Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions: set right, and keep right hearts and ways to God; so, shall not iniquity be your ruin: but crooked ways lead surely to perdition.

SECT. X.

Second Motive.

The second Motive, But let it rather be healed. It this the word of God's own Spirit? Surely then God had rather that poor souls, lame and halting, under affliction should be healed, than be hurt more, maimed, and utterly turned off as unuseful for him: And as his mind is, so is the means he useth, inclined to work the health, and not the death of his chastened ones. His rod therefore is intended, and not only so, but effectually commanded, to produce comfort, and correction, which will cure any hurt occasioned by its smart. If health then, yea saving health be in itself desirable, reviving and reforming under the rods dispensation must be the mark to which the soul must reach; no health to be hoped for without them.

The moving Consideration then to Conscience in former duties from the present word may be thus proposed. God's choice is to have his rod prove rather healthful than hurtful to his chastened children;

healing not killing is the prime intention of the rod, which must press them to use the rod for encouragement, and amendment, whoever desire life, and not death. Two Queries must be satisfied to open the strength of this Motive. 1. What is this health or healing? 2. What virtue is in former duties with respect unto the rod, for healing the lame and halting soul. These being apparent, may put on to more circumspection in duty.

To the first, I shall shortly reply; healing here is a borrowed expression fitted to that lameness or halting mentioned before; both terms setting out the evil and good estate of the body, but here applied to a spiritual use; that nothing the bad, this the good condition of the soul: Health is the effect of healing, and in the natural acceptance thus conceived. It is the good or prosperous state of life consisting in a due proportioned temper within, as in the right disposition of parts without, and in a free communion of blood and spirits through the whole subject; whereby a man is said to live well, or be well; life above disturbance, or life in peace is truly health. Let this be spiritualized, and it may fit here; spiritual life (of which here) is the result of the union of the soul with Christ; the health intended is the good and prosperous state of this life, which inwardly consists in its duly proportioned union with Christ, and free communion of spirit from him, without fatal obstructions of sin, and outwardly in the light of God's countenance, and favor, expressed in external blessings, which make this life, sweetly comfortable. Upon interruption of either, this life is weakened by inward obstructions, as it was with her that cried, I am sick of Love: and by outward obstructions also is it something impaired, whereupon in case of any outward affliction on the Church, a seeming eclipse of God's countenance, It is said to be sick, and the health of it out gone up nor recovered. This state of health then must needs be very sweet, therefore very desirable; unto which the rod by its comforting and reforming influence being duly received, doth very much advantage. The view of the several healing virtues in the duties urged, will clear this, and more forcibly press to a due, and conscionable observance of them, which shall now be labored.

1. The healing virtue of true comfort sovereign over all sickness, lameness, or halting of spirit to Godward, caused either by sinful obstructions, or dangerous stumbling's, will be evident in these special saving properties of it.

1. The closing or uniting virtue of it in case of any breach, or separation, made by obstructive sin between the soul, and Christ its life; oil, and balm are therefore sweet expressions of comfort, they close the breaches of the flesh, and so heal; no less the consolations of God: These reviving influences arising from God, do both give forth God unto the soul, and draw the spirit back again to God. Christ's name, that is, his sweetness are comforts manifested, is as ointment poured forth, (which is attractive upon the sense of standers by) therefore the virgins love him, pure souls separate from uncleanness, by love cleave to him, and are closed with him. O that broken and afflicted hearts, who refuse comfort would but consider, every touch of comfort is a close of the soul with Christ, they would catch for this, that they might close with him.

2. There is a gladding influence from this comfort, it cheers the spirit, and makes life lightsome and pleasant, this is health; grief makes the heart sick, but joy restores it: The healing medicine of Christ, his comfort is therefore styled, the oil of gladness; it makes glad the heavy spirit, and by cheering heals the sad distempers of it; no cure to be hoped for him, whose spirit is overwhelmed, and will take no gladding cordial. Consider thou sad heart, not comforted, joy revives, and grief must kill; take heed of self-destroying, by rejecting gladness, that will heal.

3. There is a heart enlarging virtue in this comfort of Christ, and the more open the heart is to God, the more saving health there; O blessed healthy soul, where all influences of Christ's Spirit have room and passage to diffuse themselves through the man, he must needs be well. Grief draws up the heart like a purse, and shortens the spirit, therefore it must make sick; but Comfort opens it wide, and gives God full scope. Life may expatiate here, and delight itself, this is

health indeed. O that the contracted heart, that cries out of its straightness unto God, would think, to be comforted is to be enlarged; every drop of this oil opens the heart, and gives way to the Spirit of Christ to run to and fro freely; this is the savingly healthful man. No man more hunting after comfort than David, and none more enlarged to God than he, he calls for this, and for that also. De we the same.

4. There is a soul-quickenning power in these consolations, joy enlivens, and makes man active; not only to live, but to be lively, this is health. This very sight of comfort, made the Spouse run to her beloved, and hasten him with her cries unto her, Draw, and we will run, is her expression, and Haste my beloved is her call: The active soul for God must needs be healthful: sad heart, lie not still complaining, thou art dead and dull, it is thy sickness, drink in the consolations of Christ, these will restore and quicken; why refuseth thou to be comforted? The God of comfort, by the Son of comfort, through the Spirit of comfort, out of the promise of comfort, supplies all this to his lame, and halt, because he will have their healing, not their perishing, and perpetuates them hereby in a good state of health, that it may abide with them forever. Weigh this inducement to obedience.

SECT. XI.

The healing virtue of the second duty.

2. The force of healing in the second duty which is equally pressed with the former, that we may no less urge it from this motive, is there considerable. The duty is rectifying ways, or reformation, which God urgeth from his Rod, not to hurt, but to heal: God would certainly

have healing of souls rather than festering or destroying; therefore his counsel is, to make straight paths, that we may be healed, rather than subverted: The healing virtue then in this duty, would be discovered to encourage more earnestly to lay hold upon it; and this will appear in the effects of this rectifying our paths, or of reformation, if it be that thorough righting of the soul as is intended by it, these are a three-fold rectitude left upon the man.

1. A right disposition of the parts considerable in this living creature, which is the new creature, or Christian now exercised under God's Rod. As it is in man, or any other living creature, it is not well, unless soul and body have a fit harmonical union and consent; never can health be expected there, where life was never well seated: so, unless there be a right cementing (as I may call it) or disposition of the soul with Christ the fundamental life of it, it cannot live, and therefore not live well, or be in health. These conditions are requisite hereunto.

1. That the parts so disposed for union between themselves be true, the truth of Christ to the truth of men, to fancy, or make an imaginary Christ to be coupled with man, or an imaginary man to be united to Christ, is but to err, not to rectify. A monstrous, imperfect, or a crazy body joined with the most excellent soul, can never make a healthy man; both true and sound make the man found indeed. In this business wary we must be not to mistake Christ in respect of ourselves, nor ourselves in respect to Christ; He the true Vine, and we the true branches, are like to make a noble plant to God: Heart to heart, spirit to spirit must be suited.

2. That the disposition of these each to other be real; imaginary unions are as useless here as imaginary parts, a real habitude or respect of each other must be here; health is not in imagination, but real fruition.

3. That this disposition be immediate between Christ and the soul without any intervening soldering; Christ for the soul, and the soul

for Christ, without other mediating causes; These may prove obstructions, and destroy our life in Christ, not save it.

4. That this placing of these parts be orderly, Christ in Supremacy, the soul in subordination: That body is not well, whose members are out of place; it must be deficient in beauty, if not in health; and indeed an uneven and unfit disposition of members, sickness in respect of the outward welfare of the body. Now true reformation puts all right this way, and makes a good foundation for saving health, when body and soul stand in a right aspect to Christ, all must be well to Godward there.

2. A right disposition of faculties and inward affections, when judgment, will and affections stand right with God in that Evangelical rectitude promised to, and wrought in the true members of Christ, which is a true conformity to the mind of God, though not in present reaching in degrees, yet to be perfected in God's appointed time. This is quite contrary to all crooked and perverse dispositions, and therefore must be the healing of them, if distempers be best cured by contraries; a clean heart and a right spirit, is that which David calls for, to recover his hurt that befell him by his fall. When minds stand right with God's mind, and will with God's will, and love where God would have it, and fear where God appoints it, and zeal where God calls for it, so that answer of conscience is directly to God's call, according to that, when God saith, Seek ye my face, the heart answers in very terms, Thy face, Lord, will I seek; this is a sound spirit in good state of health; rectifying therefore must be healing.

3. A right disposition of acts and conversation; exercise as it is a token and effect of health of body, so no less a preservative of it, rightly ordered. Surely in the present case it is very true, right ways with God are the effect of a healing reformation, and do also perfect it; right hands, and right feet, pitching upon right works and right ways, argue a healthy soul indeed, and so keep it in that good condition from over-powering distempers by sin, such do no iniquity,

here security from fatal sickness or halting; but whence this? They walk in his ways; This right disposal of ways and godly exercise, prevents spiritual diseases, and keeps the soul in health. Thus far we see the sweet healing virtue of these duties, such a benefit of them as may make them truly desirable by Christian souls: Heaving therefore thus touched the goodness of these motives, which is their drawing force, for a close of all, as God directs, I shall only labor to move by them to the practice of those duties which concerns the chastened in the right use of their afflictions.

Hear now, ye afflicted of the Lord, Doth God so pity the halt and the lame, that are any way maimed by the Rod, that he chooseth healing for them, not greater ruptures or subversions? Be then of God's mind, and choose your own life, not your death; for this purpose reason will guide you to take hold on comfort, and perfect reformation; These are the binding, healing ways for the sick and broken; if health, yea, saving health, in God be so good, so desirable, catch at comfort in Christ, cheer up, lift up hanging hands and palsy knees, pursue a through righting of the soul, a full reformation, these will be health to the navel, and marrow to the bones. The duties have been stated already, look there what is to be done; The rules of right prosecution I shall only add here, that we may walk by line, and not swerve, they are such as these:

1. Prosecute these really; true comfort, and true reformation must be truly pursued, with real care, purpose of heart, and affection of soul, to prosper.
2. Pursue them equally; as much strength and virtue are in one as other; seek after reviving or consolation of Christ, as much as after rectifying or amendment, sweetness of life, health and strength are equally promoted by both.
3. Follow them orderly, it may be needful sometimes, first to comfort and strengthen hands and feet, before we exercise them to works or ways, but then the inseparable issue of comfort must be amendment,

and right walking; be not shy of the consolations of God upon pretense of unworthiness, these must make us worthy, at least, as they are inseparably united, let them be joined in the prosecution; take one to dispose more sweetly to the other.

4. Pursue them earnestly, as a man would strive for life and health, yea, and with that constancy, as is suitable to that desire of living ever; such preservatives of health make a blessed life, while they are in use, health is maintained, and life perfected; as ye desire to live, then labor to be comforted, and rectified in Christ; Cheerfulness and rectitude will establish you forever; Be eager, be constant in their pursuit; conscience in duty will sign you the true members of Christ, and servants of the great God. Neither will your Lord forget his promises or covenant of his truth; In your duties he will meet you, He will heal your backslidings, and love you freely, he will save the soul that halteth: though the Rod smart a while, your pain shall be your gain; it is your Father that chastiseth, he seeks not your fainting, but reviving, not your evil in hardening, but your good in reforming, not your subversion, but conversion to him, not your sickness, nor your death, but your life, and everlasting health: seek ye also and ye shall find. The chastening Father, the mediating Son, the comforting and quickening Spirit, are all engaged to give in the sweet and full fruit of chastening providence to your souls; straiten not your own bowels, but open to them, and labor with them. By that Spirit of joy and love, through the Prince of peace, and Son of love, give glory to that tender Father, who is God-Love, blessed forever: from him this one God in three are all things, to him be glory in the Churches forever and forever, Amen.

FINIS.

1. "Black-Moors, children of the Ethiopians in the spiritual notion are most unlike God, and most distasteful to him;" This has been replaced with "[Those of a darkened; or unclean spirit]." (THE

SECOND PART- Section VIII.) This is to clarify that the authors original intent was not to convey innate uncleanness to those of African, Ethiopian, or darker complexions, based on their ethnicities; but to use an allegory of something darker in contrast to something paler to illustrate the idea of different spiritual states. The change was made as not to be interpreted or misconstrued as a racist or ethnic demeaning statement.

MONERGISM BOOKS

A Dry Rod Blooming and Fruit-Bearing, by George Hughes.
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